Lexicology

LITERATURE

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What is lexicology?

- the study of lexis i.e. its vocabulary or lexicon
- Greek *lexis* is 'word'
- *logos* denotes 'learning, a department of knowledge'
- Vocabulary = lexis = lexicon is the total word stock of the language
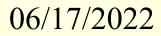- **Lexicology is 'the science of the words'**

Lexicology studies

- not only the simple words in all their aspects
- but it deals with **complex and compound** words,
- **the meaningful units** of the language
- **etymology**, the study of the origin of words

Lexicology as a branch of linguistics

- has its own aims and methods of scientific research

- **Its basic task** is a study and systematic description of vocabulary in respect to its origin, development and current use .

Lexicology is concerned with

- words,
- variable word-groups,
- phraseological units,
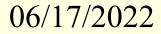- with morphemes which make up words

Two principal approaches

- In the framework of lexicology, both
- **synchronic** (Gr *syn* "together","with" and *chronos* "time")
- and **diachronic** or **historical** (Gr **dia** "through")
- suggested by the Swiss philologist Ferdinand de Saussure
-

The synchronic approach

- is concerned with the vocabulary of a language as **it exists at a given time**, for instance, at the present time.

- It is special **Descriptive Lexicology** that deals with the vocabulary and vocabulary units of a particular language at a certain time.

- A Course in Modern English Lexicology is a course in special **Descriptive Lexicology**,

- as its object of study is the English vocabulary as it exists at the present time.

The diachronic approach

- deals with the changes and the development of vocabulary **in the course of time**.

- It is special **Historical Lexicology** that deals with the evolution of the vocabulary units of a language as time goes by.

An English Historical Lexicology

- focuses on   the origin of English vocabulary units,

- their change and development,

- the linguistic and extralinguistic factors modifying their structure,

- meaning and usage within the history of the English language.

Branches of Lexicology

- The general study of words and vocabulary, irrespective of the specific features of any particular language, is known as **general lexicology**.

- Linguistic phenomena and properties common to all languages are referred to as **language universals**.

- **Special lexicology** focuses on the description of the peculiarities in the vocabulary of a given language.

- **Contrastive lexicology** provides a theoretical foundation on which the vocabularies of different languages can be compared and described.

- Its **priority** is the correlation between the vocabularies of two or more languages.
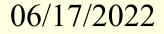
- Lexicology studies various lexical units:
- morphemes
- words
- variable word-groups
- phraseological units

- Vocabulary studies include such aspects of research as
- **etymology**,
- **semasiology**
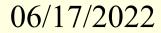- **onomasiology**.

Etymology

- The evolution of a vocabulary forms the object of **historical lexicology** or

- **etymology** (from Gr. etymon "true, real"), discussing **the origin** of various words,

- their **change and development**, examining the linguistic and extra-linguistic forces

- that **modify their structure, meaning and usage.**

Semasiology (from Gr. **semasia** "signification") is a branch of linguistics with subject-matter of the study of word **meaning** and the classification of changes in the signification of words or forms, viewed as normal and vital factors of any linguistic development.

It is the most relevant to **polysemy and homonymy**.

- **Onomasiology** is the study of the principles and regularities of the signification of things / notions by lexical and lexico-phraseological means of a given language.

- It has its special value in studying dialects, with relevance to **synonymity.**

A word is a fundamental unit of a language.
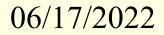
Ambiguous

- The real nature of a word and the term itself has always been one of **the most ambiguous** issues in almost every branch of linguistics.

The word has acquired **definitions** from the

- syntactic,
- semantic,
- phonological points of view
- as well as a definition combining **various approaches**.

syntactically defined

- *"the minimum sentence"* by **H.Sweet**

- *"the minimum independent unit of utterance"* by **L.Bloomfield**

- **E. Sapir** concentrates on the **syntactic and semantic aspects** calling the word

- *"one of the smallest completely satisfying bits of isolated meaning, into which the*
- *sentence resolves itself".*

Semantic

- A purely **semantic** treatment is observed in **S. Ullmann's** explanation of words

- as *meaningful segments that are ultimately composed of meaningful units*.

- The prominent French linguist **A. Meillet** combines **the semantic, phonological**
- **and grammatical criteria:**
- *"A word is defined by the association of a given meaning with a given group of sounds susceptible of a given grammatical employment".*
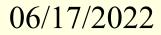
- **Our native school of linguistics** understands the **word**

- *as a dialectical double facet unit of form and content, reflecting human notions, and in this sense being considered as a form of their existence.*

The nature of the word

- **First**,the word is a unit of speech which serves the purposes of human communication.

- Thus, the word can be defined as **a unit of communication**.

- **Secondly,** the word can be perceived as **the total of the sounds which comprise it.**

- **Third**,

- the word, viewed structurally, **possesses several characteristics**.

External + internal

- A)The modern approach to the word as double-facet unit is based on distinguishing between

- **the external**

- and **the internal structures of the word**.

- **The external structure** is **its morphological structure**.

- E.g. in the word *post-impressionists* the following morphemes are distinguished:

- **prefixes** *post-*, *im-*

- **the root** *–press-*

- the noun-forming **suffixes** *-ion*, *-ist*

- and the **grammatical suffix** of plurality *-s*.

- **The internal structure of the word**, or **its meaning**, is commonly referred to as **the word's semantic structure**.

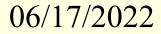- This is the word's main aspect. Words can serve the purposes of human communication solely due to their meanings.

Unity

- b) Another structural aspect of the word is **its unity**.

- The word possesses both its **external** (or formal) unity and **semantic** unity.

- The formal unity of the word is sometimes interpreted as **indivisibility.**

a blackbird vs *a black bird*

- **The word *blackbird*, which is characterized by unity, possesses a single grammatical framing: *blackbirds*. The first constituent *black* is not subject to any grammatical changes.

- **In the word-group *a black bird* each constituent can acquire grammatical forms of its own: *the blackest birds I've ever seen*.

- Other words can **be inserted** between the components :

a black night bird.

semantic unity

- The same example may be used to illustrate what we mean **by semantic unity.**

- In the word-group *a black bird* each of the meaningful words conveys a separate concept:

- *bird* – a kind of living creature;

- *black* – a color.

- The word *blackbird* conveys only one concept: the type of bird. This is one of the main features of any word:

- it always conveys **one concept**, no matter how many component morphemes it may have in its external structure.

susceptibility

- c) A further structural feature of the word is **its susceptibility to grammatical employment**.

- In speech most words can be used in different grammatical forms in which their interrelations are realized.

To sum up the formal/structural properties of the word

1) **isolatability**

words can function in isolation, can make a sentence of their own under certain circumstances;

2) **inseparability/unity**

words are characterized by some integrity, e.g. *a light – alight (with admiration)*;

3) a certain **freedom of distribution**

exposition in the sentence can be different

4) **susceptibility to grammatical employment**

5) a word as one of the fundamental units of the language is **a double facet unit of form** (**its external** structure) **and meaning** (its **internal/semantic** structure).

- Thus**, a word** is the smallest naming unit of a language with a more or less free distribution used for the purposes of human communication, materially representing a group of sounds, possessing a meaning, susceptible to grammatical employment and characterized by formal and semantic unity.

4 basic kinds of words

1) orthographic words –

words distinguished from each other by their spelling;

2) phonological words –
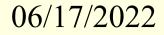
distinguished from each other by their pronunciation;

3) **word-forms**

which are grammatical variants;
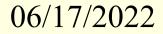
4) **words as items of meaning**,

the headwords of dictionary entries, called **lexemes**.

- **A lexeme** is a group of words united by the common lexical meaning, but having different
- grammatical forms. The base forms of such words, represented either by one orthographic word or a sequence of words called **multi-word lexemes** which have to be considered as single lexemes (e.g. phrasal verbs, some compounds).

- Any language is a system of systems consisting of two subsystems:

1) the system of words' possible lexical meanings , **the semantic structure**

2) the system of words' grammatical forms , **its paradigm.**

- **The problem of word-building** is associated with prevailing morphological word-structures and with the processes of coining new words.
- **Semantics** is the study of meaning. Modern approaches to this problem are characterized by two different levels of study: **syntagmatic and paradigmatic.**

- On the **syntagmatic level**, the semantic structure of the word is analyzed in its
- linear relationships with neighbouring words in connected speech.
- In other words, the semantic characteristics of the word are observed, described and studied on the basis of **its typical contexts**.

- On the **paradigmatic level**, the word is studied in its relationships with other words in the vocabulary system.

- So, a word may be studied in comparison with other words of **a similar meaning** (e. g. *work,* n. – *labor,* n.; *to refuse*, v. – *to reject* v. – to *decline*, v.),

- **of opposite meaning** (e. g. *busy*, adj. – *idle*, adj.; *to accept*, v. – *to reject*,v.),
- **of different stylistic characteristics** (e. g. *man*, n. – *chap*, n. – *bloke*, n. — *guy*, n.).
- Thus, the key problems of paradigmatic studies are **synonymy, antonymy,and functional styles.**

Inner structure of the word composition. Word building.
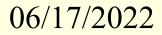
The morpheme and its types.

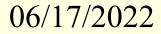## Morphemic analysis of words.

Affixation.

- The word consists of **morphemes**.

- The term **morpheme** is derived from Greek **morphe** (form) + **-eme**.

- The Greek suffix **-eme** denotes the smallest significant or **distinctive** unit.

- **The morpheme** is

the *smallest meaningful unit which has a sound form and meaning* and occurs in speech only as a part of a word.

- **A morpheme** is an association of a given **meaning** with a given **sound** pattern.

- But unlike a word it is **not autonomous.**
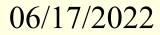
Morphemes

Morphemes occur in speech only as

- **constituent parts** of words,

- **not independently**,

- although a word may consist of a single
- morpheme.

- They are **not divisible** into smaller meaningful units.
- So the morpheme is the minimum **double**-**facet** (form/meaning)meaningful language unit that can be subdivided into **phonemes**
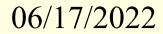
- **Phonemes** are

the smallest single-facet distinctive units of language with no meaning of their own
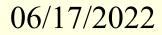
- So there are **3 lower levels** of a language –
- a phoneme,
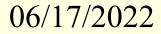- a morpheme,
- a word.

Word building

- **Word building (word-formation)**

 is the creation of new words from elements already existing in a particular language.

- **A form** is considered to **be free** if it may stand alone without changing its meaning;

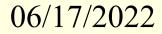- if not, it is **a bound form** because it is always bound to something else.

- For example, *sport, sortive, elegant* may **occur alone** as utterances,

- whereas their parts ***eleg-,-ive, -ant*** are bound forms because they **never occur alone**

- A word is, by L. Bloomfield's definition, a **minimum free form**.

- A morpheme is said to be either **bound or free**.
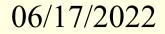
The method of morphemic analysis

Words are segmented into morphemes with the help of **the method of morphemic analysis.**

Its **aim** is to split the word into its constituent morphemes and to determine their number and types.

Immediate constituents

- This is accomplished by the procedure known as

- **the analysis into immediate constituents** (IC's),
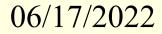
- first suggested by **L. Bloomfield.**

- The procedure consists of several stages:

- **segmentation** of words;

- **identification** of morphs;

- **classification** of morphemes.

- The procedure generally used to segment words into the constituting morphemes is

- **the method of Immediate and**
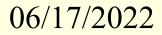
- **Ultimate Constituents**.

- It is based on a **binary principle**, i.e. each stage of the procedure involves two components the word immediately breaks into.

- At each stage these two components are referred to as the **Immediate Constituents** (ICs)

- Each IC at the next stage of the analysis is in turn broken **into two smaller meaningful** elements.

- This analysis is completed when we arrive at constituents **incapable of any further division**, i.e. morphemes.

- They are called the **Ultimate Constituents** (UCs).

The analysis of the morphemic structure of words reveals

- the **ultimate** meaningful constituents (UCs),
- their typical **sequence and arrangement**,
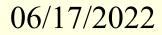- but it does not show the way a word is constructed.

Derivative structure

- The nature, type and arrangement of the ICs of the word are known as its **derivative structure**.

Though the derivative structure of the word is

- closely connected with its morphemic structure and often coincides with it,

- it **cardinally differs** from it.
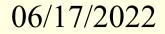
The Derivational Level

- The derivational level of the analysis aims at establishing **correlations** between different types of words,

- The focus is on **the structural and semantic** patterns

Word Segmentability

- **segmentable words**, i.e. those allowing of segmentation into morphemes,

e.g. *information, unputdownable, silently*

- **non-segmentable words**, i.e. those not allowing of such segmentation,

 e.g. *boy, wife, call*.

Types of Segmentation

Three types of segmentation of words:

- **complete**

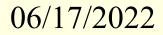- **conditional**

- **defective**

Complete segmentability

- **Complete** segmentability is characteristic of words whose the morphemic **structure is transparent** enough

- as their individual morphemes clearly stand out within the word lending themselves easily to isolation.

- Its constituent morphemes recur with the same meaning in many other words,

- e.g. *establish**ment**,*
-     *agree**ment***
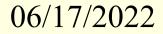
Conditional segmentability

- **Conditional** morphemic segmentability characterizes words whose segmentation
- into constituent morphemes is **doubtful for semantic reasons.**

- E.g. *retain, detain*, or *receive, deceive* the sound-clusters [ri], [di], on the one hand, can be **singled out quite easily** due to their recurrence in a number of words,

- on the other hand, they have **nothing in common** with the phonetically identical morphemes *re-. de-* as found in words like *rewrite, reorganize, decode, deurbanize*;

Neither the sound-clusters [ri], [di]

nor the sound-clusters [-tein], [si:v]

have any lexical or functional meaning of their own.

Pseudomorphemes

The morphemes making up words of **complete** segmentability do not reach **the full status of morphemes** for the semantic reason.

They are called **pseudomorphemes** or **quasimorphemes.**

Defective morphemic segmentability

Defective morphemic segmentability is the property of words whose unique

- morphemic components **seldom or never** recur in other words

- e.g. *cranberry, gooseberry, strawberry*
- Defective morphemic segmentability is obvious due to the fact that the morphemes
- ***cran-, goose-, straw-*** are unique morphemes

- Thus, on the level of morphemic analysis there are two types of elementary units:

- **full morphemes** and

- **pseudo- (quasi-)morphemes**

- a great number of words of **conditional** and **defective** segmentability reveal a complex nature of the morphological system of the English language,
- representing various **heterogeneous layers** in its vocabulary.
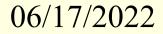
Identification of Morphs

- The second stage of morphemic analysis is **identification of morphs**.

- The main criteria here are **semantic and phonetic similarity.**

- Morphs should have **the same denotational** meaning,
- but their **phonemic shape** can vary
- e.g.   *please, pleasing   /i:/*
- *pleasure, pleasant   /e/*

Allomorphs

- Phonetically conditioned positional morpheme variants are called **allomorphs**.

- They occur in a specific environment, being **identical in meaning or function** and

characterized by **complementary distribution.**

- e.g. the prefix **in-** (*in*transitive) can be
- represented by **allomorphs**

- **il-**   *il*literate
- **im-**   *im*possible
- **ir-**   *ir*regular

Complementary distribution

- **Complementary distribution** takes place when two linguistics variants cannot appear in the same environment .

- Not the same as **contrastive distribution** by which different morphemes are characterized,

- i.e. if they occur in the same environment, they signal 12 different meanings (e.g. the suffixes **-able** (capable of being): *measurable* and **-ed** (a suffix of a resultant force): *measured*).
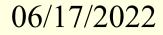
Classification of Morphemes

- **The final stage** of the procedure of the morphemic analysis is **classification of morphemes.**

- Morphemes can be classified from different points of view (POV).

1. Semantic POV:

- **roots and affixes**

-

- **A root** is

   the **lexical nucleus** of a word bearing the major individual meaning common to a set of semantically related words, constituting one word-family

e.g. *learn – learner - learned - learnable*;

heart,hearten, dishearten, heart-broken, hearty, kind-hearted etc.

- with which no grammatical properties of the word are connected.

- The **peculiarity** of English as a unique language is explained by its analytical language structure – morphemes are often **homonymous with independent units (words**).

- A morpheme that is homonymous with a word is called **a root morpheme**.

The difference between a root and a stem

- **A root** is

  the **ultimate constituent** which remains after the removal of all functional and derivational affixes and **does not admit any further analysis.**
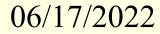
- **A stem**

  is that part of the word that remains **unchanged** throughout its paradigm (formal aspect):

- *heart – hearts - to one's heart's content* vs. *hearty – heartier - the heartiest*

- It is the basic unit at **the derivational level**, taking the inflections which shape the word grammatically as a part of speech.
- There are **three types of stems: simple, derived and compound**.

- **Simple stems** are semantically non motivated and do not constitute a pattern on analogy with which new stems may be modeled
- e.g. *pocket, motion, receive*

- **Simple stems** are generally monomorphic and phonetically identical with the root morphemes (*sell, grow, kink,* etc.).
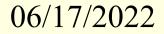
Derived stems

- **Derived stems** are built on stems of various structures, they are **motivated**,

- i.e. derived stems are understood on the basis of the derivative relations between their immediate constituents and the correlated stems.

- Derived stems are mostly **polymorphic** (e.g. *governments, unbelievable*, etc.).

Compound Stems

- **Compound stems** are made up of two immediate constituents, both of which are
- themselves stems, e.g. *match-box, pen-holder, ex-film-star*, etc.
- It is built by joining **two stems**, one of which is **simple**, the other is **derived**

- **The derivational types of words** are classified according to the structure of their stems into
- **simple,**
- **derived**
- **compound words**

- **Derived words** are those composed of one root-morpheme and one or more
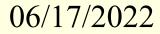- derivational morphemes.

- **Compound words** have at least two root-morphemes, the number of derivational
- morphemes being insignificant

Four structural types

- **4 structural types of words in English**:
- **simple words:** single root morphemes,
- e.g. *agree, child, red*, etc.
- **derivatives:** affixational derived words consisting one or more affixes:
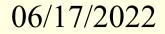- e.g. *enjoyable, childhood, unbelievable*

- Derived words are
- **extremely numerous** in the English vocabulary.

Simple words

Root word has only a root morpheme in its structure.

This type is widely represented by a great number of words belonging to the **original** English stock or to **earlier borrowings**:

e.g.house, room, book, work, port

- In Modern English, it has been greatly enlarged by the type of wordbuilding called **conversion :**

- *to hand*, *v.* formed from the noun *hand*

- *can, v*. from *can,* n.

- *to pale,* v. from *pale*, adj.

- *a find,* n. from *to find,* v.
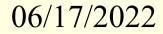
Compound Words

- **Compound words** consist of two or more stems

- e. g. *dining-room, bluebell, mother-in-law, good-for-nothing*

- Words of this structural type are produced by the word-building process called **composition**

-

Derivational Compounds

- **Derivational compounds are words** in which components are joined together by means of compounding and affixation:

- E.g. *ovalshaped*

-      *strong-willed*

- **Phrasal verbs** :
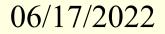- *to put up with*
- *to give up*
- *to take for*

- **The affix,** which is a type of morpheme,
- is generally defined as the smallest indivisible component of the word possessing a meaning of its own.

Meanings of affixes

- **Meanings of affixes** are specific and considerably differ from those of root morphemes.

- Affixes have **widely generalized meanings** and refer the concept conveyed by the whole word to a certain category, which is all-embracing.
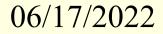
■ The noun-forming suffix **-er** could be roughly defined as designating persons from the

object of their occupation or labor:

 painter – *the one who paints*

■ or from their place of origin

southerner – *the one living in the South*.

- The adjective-forming suffix **–ful** has the meaning of "full of", "characterized by": *beautiful, careful*
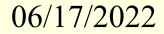
- **-ish** may often means "simply insufficiency of quality":
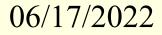
greenish – green, but not quite.

- There are numerous derived words whose meanings can really **be easily deduced**

from the meanings of their constituent parts.

But such cases represent only the first
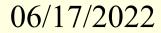
stage of semantic readjustment within derivatives.

The constituent morphemes within

derivatives do not always preserve their current meanings and are open to subtle and

complicated semantic shifts (e.g. *book**ish**:*

 (1) *given or devoted to reading or study;*

(2) *more acquainted with books than with real life, i. e. possessing the quality of*

bookish learning).

- The semantic distinctions of words produced from the same root by means of different affixes

- Compare: *womanly* (used in a complimentary manner about girls and women) –

- *womanish* (used to indicate an effeminate man and certainly implies criticism);

- *starry* (resembling stars)
- *starred* (covered or decorated with stars).

Semi-affixes

- There are a few **roots** in English which have developed a great combining ability in the position of the second element of a word and a **very general meaning** similar to that of an **affix**.

semi-affixes

- These are **semi-affixes** because semantically, functionally, structurally and stylistically they behave more like affixes than like roots,determining the lexical and grammatical class the word belongs to.

- ***-man***: *cameraman, seaman*
- ***-land:*** *Scotland, motherland*
- ***-like***: *ladylike, flowerlike*
- ***-worthy***: *trustworthy, praiseworthy*
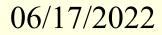- ***-proof***: *waterproof, bulletproof*

2. Position POV

- according to their position affixational morphemes fall into

- **suffixes – derivational morphemes following the root and forming a new**

- **derivative in a different part of speech or a different word class.**

- *E.g.writer, rainy,magnify*

- **infixes – affixes placed within the word** *e.g. adapt-a-tion, assimil -a-tion*

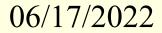- **prefixes** – **derivational morphemes that precede the root and modify the meaning** e.g. ***de**cipher, **il**legal, **un**happy*

- The process of **affixation** itself consists in **coining a new word** by adding an affix or several affixes to a root morpheme.

- **Suffixation** is **more productive** than prefixation in Modern English.

3. Functional POV:

- **derivational morphemes**
- **functional morphemes**

Derivational morphemes

- **Derivational morphemes** are affixal morphemes that serve to make a new part of speech or create another word in the same one, modifying the lexical meaning of the root

- e.g. *to teach - teacher*

     possible - impossible

Functional morphemes

- **Functional morphemes**, i.e.**grammatical ones/inflections** that serve to build grammatical forms, the paradigm of the word

- e.g. *has brok**en**; ox**en**; clue**s***

- They carry **only grammatical meaning** and are relevant only for the formation of words.

■ Some functional morphemes have a dual character. They are called **functional word-morphemes**– auxiliaries :

e.g. *is,are, have, will*

■ The main function of them is to build **analytical structures**.
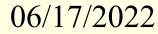
4. Structural point of view

- **free morphemes** which can stand alone as words in isolation

- (e.g. *friendly, friendship*)

- **bound morphemes** that occur only as word constituents

- (e.g. *misinterpret*)

- In modern English there are many morphemes of Greek and Latin origin possessing a definite lexical meaning though **not used autonomously:**
- *tele-*   *far*   *(television)*
- *-scope*   *seeing* *(microscope)*
- *-graph*   *writing* *(typography)*

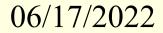- Such morphemes are called combining forms – **bound** linguistic forms

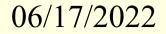though in Greek and Latin they functioned as i**ndependent** words.

5. Etymological POV

- native

- borrowed

Frequent Native Suffixes

- **-er** *worker, miner, teacher, painter*
- **-ness** *coldness, loneliness, loveliness*
- **-ing** *meaning, singing,reading*
- **-dom** *freedom, wisdom, kingdom*

- **-hood** *childhood, manhood,*
- *motherhood, e*

- **-ful** *joyful, wonderful,sinful, skilful*
- **-less** *careless, helpless, cloudless*
- **-y** *cozy, tidy, merry, snowy*
- **-ish** *English, Spanish, reddish,childish*
- **-ly** *lonely, lovely, ugly, likely*
- **-en** *woolen, silken, golden*
- **-some** *handsome, quarrelsome,tiresome*
- Verb
- **-en** *redden, darken, sadden*

Frequent Borrowed Affixes

- **Latin Affixes**
- The prefix **–dis**   disable, disagree, disown
- The suffix **-able**   curable, capable, adorable
- The suffix **-ate**   congratulate, create, appreciate
- The suffix **–ute**   contribute, constitute, attribute

French Affixes

- the prefix **en-** enable, ensure, enfoldment

- the suffix **-ous** joyous, courageous, serious

- the suffix **-ess** hostess, tigress, adventuress

6. Productivity POV

- **productive** and **nonproductive**

- **Productivity** is the ability to form new words after existing patterns which are readily understood by the speakers of a language.

Productive

- **Productive** affixes are those which take part in deriving new words in this particular period of language development.

- The best way to identify productive affixes is to look for them among **neologisms** and the so-called **nonce-words**, i. e. words coined and used only for this particular occasion.

- E.g. an *unputdownable thriller* is evidence of the high productivity of the adjective-forming borrowed suffix ***-able***
- and the native prefix ***un-***

- *Professor Pringle was a thinnish, baldish, dispeptic-**lookingish** cove with an eye like a haddock.*
- *"I don't like Sunday evenings: I feel so **Mondayish**".*
- *Mondayish is a nonce-word.*

the productivity vs frequency

- There are quite a number **of high-frequency** affixes which, nevertheless, are **no longer** used in word-derivation

- e. g. the adjective-forming native suffixes -
- *ful, -ly*
- the adjective-forming suffixes of Latin origin *-ant, -ent, -al*

Productive Affixes

- **Noun-forming suffixes**
- -er, -ing, -ness, -ism -ist
- **Adjective-forming suffixes**
- -y, -ish, -ed *(learned)* able, -less
- **Adverb-forming suffixes**
- -ly

- **Verb-forming suffixes**
- **-ize/-ise** *(realize)*
- **-ate** (facilitate)

- **Prefixes**
- **un**- *(unhappy)*
- **re-** *(reconstruct)*
- **dis-** (disunite)

Non-Productive Affixes

- Noun-forming suffixes **-th, -hood**
- Adjective-forming suffixes
- **-some, -en, -ous**
- Verb-forming suffix **-en**