

## Affixes, but not quite. Affixoids on the compound-affix gradient

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Many Germanic languages are rich in affixoids, which have been defined as “morphemes which look like parts of compounds, and do occur as lexemes, but have a specific and more restricted meaning when used as part of a compound” (Booij 2009: 208). This specific and more restricted meaning can be of various kinds, as illustrated in the Swedish examples in (1). For example, the prefixoid *kanon* (from a noun meaning ‘cannon’) has evaluative meaning when it collocates with a noun, as in (1a), but intensifying when it collocates with an adjective, as in (1b) (Norde & Van Goethem 2018: 502). Suffixoids can develop either a more distinctive meaning, e.g. *-glad* (from an adjective meaning ‘happy’), as in (1c), or an evaluative meaning, cf. *-jävvel* (originally a noun meaning ‘devil’) in (1d), or *-nisse* (a noun meaning ‘gnome’) in (1e). Since suffixoids originate as the head in compounds, they can still be inflected, such as the plural form of *-glad* in (1c), or the definite form of *-jävvel* in (1d).

- (1a) *hoppas du haft en **kanonkväll** på stan!*  
'hope you had a great evening in town!
- (1b) *Verkar vara en **kanonfin** häst!*  
'This seems to be a very fine horse!'
- (1c) *Då är det dags för nya **färgglada** gardiner.*  
'Then it is time for new, colourful curtains'
- (1d) *Nu har **datorjävveln** kraschat* [svTenTen14]  
'Now the bloody computer has crashed'
- (1e) *Det måste varit någon **räknenisse** som räknat fel* [svTenTen14]  
'It must have been some bean counter (lit. ‘counting gnome’) that made a mistake.'

Apart from such semantic changes, affixoids have morphological properties that set them apart from both compounding members and affixes (e.g. Lundbladh 2002, Ascoop & Leuschner 2006, Klara 2012, Booij & Hüning 2014, Battefeld et al. 2018). Like affixes, but unlike compounding members, affixoids are productive and lack positional freedom. In other words, prefixoids cannot be suffixoids (??*kvällkanon*) or vice versa (??*gladfärg*). Unlike affixes, on the other hand, affixoids can develop into independent words in a process called ‘debonding’ (Norde 2009), whereby they retain their affixoidal meaning, as is shown for the Swedish prefixoid *kanon-* in (2a) (Norde & Van Goethem 2018: 503) and for the suffixoids *-glad* in (2b) and *-jävvel* in (2c) show (although the change in suffixoids seems to be purely orthographical).

- (2a) *Två av böckerna är riktigt **kanon!***  
'Two of the books are really great!'
- (2b) *Husen och bilarna är väldigt **färg glada*** [svTenTen14]  
'The houses and the cars are very colourful'
- (2c) *och snart kommer jag slå isönder **dator jävveln!*** [svTenTen14]  
'and soon I am going to smash the bloody computer to pieces!'

Based on these and other observations, I will argue that the distinction between compounds, affixoids and affixes is a gradient one, which reflects diachronic developments. Affixoids originate in compounds and in its initial stages the line may be hard to draw, as evidenced by compounding members such as Swedish *-skam* ‘shame’. The compound *flygskam* refers to the uneasiness about the environmental impact of flying. Next, this particular meaning has been extended to compounds such as *köttskam*, *avokadoskam*, *plastskam*, which is the kind of environmental bad conscience that comes with the consumption of meat, avocados and the use of plastic respectively (Svenskberg 2019). The pattern is not particularly productive (yet), but *-skam* may be an suffixoid in the making. Moving further down

the cline, established affixoids can develop into affixes, which is what may happen to heavily bleached ones such as Swedish *jätte*- 'very' (from a noun meaning 'giant').

In my talk, I will discuss the specific semantic and morphological properties of Swedish affixoids, with special focus on the differences and similarities between prefixoids and suffixoids. Since far less empirical work has been done on the latter, I will present an analysis of the three suffixoids already mentioned in this abstract (*-glad*, *-jäväl* and *-nisse*), based on data from svTenTen14 (Jakubíček et al. 2013).

## References

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