

Historical Support for Affixoids in German

Affixes Conference

University of Turku, Finland

Friday, August 18, 2023

Douglas Lightfoot

The University of Alabama, USA

lightfoot@ua.edu

Outline

- What is an **affixoid** according to German literature?
- Stance from representative traditional 19th /early 20th century German lit.
 - This is mostly Grimm, but Paul and Wilmanns are also notable
- The **anti-affixoidal** stance
 - This is mostly Fleischer and Barz, and Schmidt
- Incorporating remarks of the earlier scholarship creates better-understood categories of the German **affixoid** (**prefixoids** and **suffixoids**)

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Morphosyntactic category in the transitional area between a word and a derivational affix (where the former is developing into the latter)
- Word -----> Affixoid -----> Derivational affix
- Germanic **haubida* 'head' --> 15th/16th/17th century High German *Haupt* 'head' existed alongside the prefixoid *Haupt-* (cf. *Hauptsache* 'main thing', *Häuptling* 'chief', *Hauptwort* 'noun')

But note also recent studies

- Norde (2009), Norde and Van Goethem (2014), Van Goethem and Hüning (2015), etc. point to some German examples of bound affixoids undergoing *debonding*

- Bound affixoid → Free morph

- *Riesenaufwand* → *riesen** *Aufwand* (< NOUN *Riese* ‘giant’)
‘huge effort’ ‘huge effort’

*Connecting element *-n-* tells us free form emerged from compound

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Per Stevens (2005)
 - Affixoids not just serial, but usually very productive.
- Fleischer and Barz note for *Haupt-* that it has exhibited over 200 word-formations
 - *Haupt*arbeit 'main work'
 - *Haupt*düse 'main jet'
 - *Haupt*film 'main film'
 - *Haupt*autor, *Haupt*person 'main author, main person'

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Per Stevens (2005)
 - Affixoid exists alongside a formally identical, usually free, “parent” morph.
 - *Haupt* existed as a free word & affixoid
 - (1419) *hals und heupt*
‘neck and head’
 - (Luther) ...*ihr häupt auf seine verwundete füsze legt...*
‘lies her head at his wounded feet’
 - (Luther) *die hauptartikel seines katechismus*
‘the main article/writing of his catechism’
 - *Hauptarzenei* ‘medicine for the head’ > ‘general/main medicine’ (17-19th cent.)

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Per Stevens (2005)
 - Affixoid meaning more generalized/abstract than parent forms.
 - *Haupt-*'s original lexical meaning of 'head' moves from that concrete meaning to the more generalized 'main' meaning.
 - *The head is a/the main body part, thus 'main' meaning extrapolated to other domains.*

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Per Stevens (2005)
 - Shift in meaning in relationship of the two parts...the other component determines the basic meaning; inability to paraphrase
 - *Hauptarznei* 'head medicine' more of a compound with full lexical semantic weight with 'head'
 - *Hauptarznei* 'main/general medicine' becomes literally more generalized in meaning, thus losing a degree of lexicality; *arznei* carries word's basic meaning; cannot be paraphrased as *'Haupt von Arznei' *'head of medicine' or *'Arznei für den Haupt' *'medicine for the head'

What is an affixoid in the German literature?

- Per Stevens (2005)

- Affixoid must be in competition / complementary distribution with affixes (and I would expand this to “or with affixoids”)

- *Haupt-* competes with *Grund-* and with *Kern-* and *Schwer-*

Hauptfrage / *Grundfrage* ‘main question’

Hauptgedanke / *Grundgedanke* ‘main thought’

And systemically, we see *Haupt-* functioning in an antonymic way with:

Neben- *Neben-/Haupteingang* ‘side entrance/ main entrance’

Bei- *Bei-/Hauptkoch* ‘assistant cook/ head cook’

Vor- *Vor-/Hauptkampf* ‘prefight/ main fight’ (Fleischer and Barz 2012: 257)

Where the German language's notion of *Affixoid* comes from

- Schmidt (1987) did not support the notion of *Affixoid* in German work, but he wrote an oft-cited summary of much mid-century affixoidal work.
- Stevens (2000, and then revised in 2005) largely refers to Schmidt (1987) when consolidating his *affixoidal* characteristics.
- Neither Schmidt nor Stevens make substantive mention of Grimm, Paul, Wilmanns, or others of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Jacob Grimm, Hermann Paul, Friedrich Wilmanns' contributions to *Affixoid* study

- Cautionary remarks...ACHTUNG!
- This scholarship is from the 1820s, 1880s, 1890s, early 1900s.
 - Pre-empirical, pre-linguistic science, pre-evidence driven
 - Example: "...a compound element *loses the feel* of connection with the originally [formally] identical word" (Formally? Semantically? Both? Who loses this? When?)

ACHTUNG continued...

- What is the object of study called for those early scholars?
- They refer to derivational suffixes, prefixes, (2nd) members of compounds, and word-formation elements—never the modern terms *Affixoid*, *Suffixoid* (as found in the *Kluge* etymological dictionary of German today, and in the *Duden Grammatik*, but note that *Kluge* (1995) uses several terms for this!)
- Perhaps the earliest to name this phenomenon was Friedrich Kluge (1926: 84)—he wrote of *scheinbare Suffixe* ‘apparent suffixes’

Grimm's related remarks on what we see as *affixoidal* phenomena

- Abundance of examples of **suffixoids** implicitly supports criterion of productivity: circa 89 *-man* examples given (1826: 507-508)
- And we note p. 544 with discussion of 3 of the most productive **suffixoids**: *heit, schaft, thum* cognate with English *-hood, -ship, -dom*
- Abundance of **prefixoids** likewise supports productivity: circa 29 *haupt-* examples given (1826: 461)
- And we note p. 542 and elsewhere where Grimm lists at least 15 typically occurring Old High German **prefixoids** that serve as **intensifiers**

Gems of observations from Grimm

- Grimm posits that the High German *world* word, *welt*, can be prefixoidized more readily than in North Germanic / Old Norse due to its “more altered/disfigured” form. It has been more simplified formally. (1826: 481)

Germanic: wira-aldō ‘man-age, age, world’

Old High G: **wëralt** > Middle High G: **welt, wer(e)lt** > Mod. G: **welt**

Old Norse: **veraldir** PL ‘worlds, ages’ remains with a “compound feel” instead

Semantic similarity of parts involved

- Grimm also notes: With **affixoidization** as a process, the most prolific German examples, *heit*, *schaft*, *tum*, are historically in blurring competition with one another. (Similar with some **prefixoids**.)
- *christenheit* AND *christenthum* ‘Christianity’
- *wisheit* AND *wîstuom* ‘wisdom’ (544)
- *dietrîh* AND *irminrîh* ‘ruler’ (*diet* ‘people’, *rîh* ‘power’, *irmin* ‘great’) (of [all] people connotes something great or powerful) (542)

Grimm asserts an affixoidal rule

- When two parts of a compound are semantically general enough that both of them could in theory affixoidize, **it is the second member which does so.**
- That is, suffixoidization takes priority over prefixoidization. (543-544)
- Old English: *mägen-scipe* ‘power’ (*mägen* ‘power, strength’)
- In other instances, *mägen-* could undergo prefixoidization, but this “Grimm’s Law” ;) of sorts dictates that it does not
- Cf. Grimm pointing out that OHG *magan-* is a typical prefixoid (542)

Grimm remarks on categories of affixoids

- Tendency for prefixoids to take on function of intensifiers (443)
- “... *das erste wort das allgemeiner, bloß zur verstärkung des zweiten vorgesetzte...*”
- ‘...the first word preceded the second for a more general [meaning], just for intensifying.’

Grimm remarks

- Tendency for **suffixoids** to take on **semantics associated with people** (497, 520)
- *“Es binden sich in der regel persönliche woerter...”*
- **“As a rule, personal words bind themselves...”** (497)
- *biscofheit* ‘status/rank of a bishop, bishop, bishopship’
- *gomaheit* ‘status of a person, human nature’

Grimm aware of gradual, transitional change

- “*allmählig*” ‘gradual’ change toward derivation (543)
- “*leblös werdende zweite wörter*” ‘second words **becoming** lifeless’
- Ex: *-lîch, -sam, -los, -bære* ‘-ly, -some, -less, -able/-bearing’
- This speaks theoretically to something akin to gradual development along a grammaticalization cline

Grimm and *Persistence*

- Gradual semantic change is not a zero-sum proposition of all or nothing—as a word develops over time into an affixoid, it may retain a small sense of its original meaning.
- *“Leise nebenbedeutungen in dem ersten wort sind jedoch nicht abgeleugnet.”* (443)
- ‘Subtle connotations in the first word, however, are not to be denied.’
- Context here: *worolt-* as a prefixoid
- Another instance of fluidity of categories, much akin to grammaticalization thought.

Paul and Wilmanns (circa 1880-1900/1920)

- Highly descriptive language parallel to Stevens (2005) re. [affixoids](#).
- Especially Paul (1920: 347) (also Brugmann 1891: 7)
 - Productive
 - Exist alongside etymologically-related, free 'parent' form
 - Affixoid's meaning is more generalized than that of free form
 - Non-affixoidizing element comes to hold the basic meaning
 - Systemic competition of affixoidal units noted (Paul 1920: 82-83) (Wilmanns repeatedly uses notion of *competition* referring to these and other units 1896: 384 ff., 531)

Paul, Wilmanns continued

- Analogy can take place at various junctures – new constructions do not have to keep coming from original compounding (1920: 347)
- At some juncture, we can expect that the free form can cease to be in use (347)
- Varied degrees of semantics may be lost, depending on the affixoid/construction (Wilmanns 1896: 6)
- This is not simply historical, affixoidization is an ever-developing phenomenon (Paul 1920: 349). This suggests we can expect to find various levels of stages in any given era.

Does the scholarly record need correcting?

- Yes.

Does the scholarly record need correcting?

- Yes.
- Stevens (2005), Fleischer and Barz (up until 2012, to be generous), and many others (presumably Donalies 2018, Olsen 2014, etc.) reflected the anti-historical stance of Schmidt (1987) when denying the utility of the category *affixoid*.
 - *But they do not comment on the overall context of Schmidt's chapter...*

Looking only at Schmidt's *Affixoid* chapter, it is clear he is against its usage

- Schmidt's recommendation: „...sich von der grassierenden Affixoidomanie nicht anstecken zu lassen.“ (101)

- ‚...not to get infected by the rampant affixoidomania.‘

•

GABRIELE HOPPE / ALAN KIRKNESS /
ELISABETH LINK / ISOLDE NORTMEYER /
WOLFGANG RETTIG / GÜNTER DIETRICH SCHMIDT

Deutsche Lehnwortbildung

Beiträge zur Erforschung der Wortbildung
mit entlehnten WB-Einheiten im Deutschen

Affixoidomania charge is all the more curious

- ...When we see the group project volume in which it appears sends conflicting signals:
 - Kirkness claims a “general goal of the work is a synchronic-diachronic representation of contemporary German” (10)
 - Diachrony is taken into account (17)
 - Older handbooks of German word-formation are taken into account (22)
 - Wilmanns, Kluge, Paul, etc. are referred to scantily (22)---proved themselves unuseful / unproductive (“*unergiebig*”)
 - Schmidt makes no mention of Paul et al’s many comments on what we can consider affixoidal phenomena

- Thank you for your attention! ;)

References

- Brugmann, K. and Delbrück, B., 1891. *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen: kurzgefasste Darstellung der Geschichte des altindischen..*(Vol. 2, No. 1). Trübner.
- Donalies, Elke. 2018. Wortbildungsaffix. In: Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache: "Systematische Grammatik". Grammatisches Informationssystem grammis. <https://grammis.ids-mannheim.de/systematische-grammatik/488>
- Fleischer, Wolfgang, and Irmhild Barz. 2012. *Wortbildung der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. 4th ed. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Grimm, Jakob. 1826. *Deutsche Grammatik. Zweiter Theil. Drittes Buch. Von der Wortbildung*. Göttingen: Dieterich.
- Kluge (1999) *etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*. E. Seebold, et al (eds). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Norde, Muriel. 2009. *Degrammaticalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norde, M., & Van Goethem, K. (2014). Bleaching, productivity and debonding of prefixoids: A corpus-based analysis of 'giant' in German and Swedish. *Linguisticae Investigationes*, 37(2), 256-274.
- Paul, Hermann. 1920. *Deutsche Grammatik. Wortbildungslehre*. Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Paul, Hermann. 1937 [1880]. *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*. 5th ed. Halle: Niemeyer.
- Schmidt, Günther Dietrich. 1987. „Das Affixoid. Zur Notwendigkeit und Brauchbarkeit eines beliebten Zwischenbegriffs der Wortbildung“ In *Deutsche Lehnwortbildung*. Tübingen: Guntar Narr Verlag.
- Stevens, C. M. 2005. "Revisiting the affixoid debate: On the grammaticalization of the word." In *Grammatikalisierung im Deutschen*. T. Leuschner/T. Mortelmans/S. De Groot (eds), 71-83. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Van Goethem, K. and Hüning, M., 2015. From noun to evaluative adjective: conversion or debonding? Dutch top and its equivalents in German. *Journal of Germanic linguistics*, 27(4), pp.366-409.
- Wilmanns, Wilhelm. 1899. *Deutsche Grammatik. Gotisch, Alt-, Mittel-, und Neuhochdeutsch. Zweite Abteilung: Wortbildung. Zweite Auflage*. Strassburg: Verlag von Karl J. Trübner.