

## SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH WORDS

### WITH THE SUFFIX *-ISH*

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**Abstract.** Vocabulary is the most changeable part of any language in a particular language system. Words are closely related to all aspects of society that are in constant development. Changes in the vocabulary of a language also depend on various factors and one of them is word formation.

The word-building of each language is characterized by certain features. It is important to note that when working on the problems of word formation in the English language, it is necessary to study the word-forming elements, in particular, the analysis of individual suffixes and their semantic characteristics.

The purpose of the present paper is to characterize one of the word-building elements, namely the multi-functional and homonymous suffix *-ish* of German origin, its formal-functional and semantic characterization as well as to determine its productivity.

The methods of descriptive, morphological, etymological and semantic analysis have been applied in the research process.

**Keywords:** *Word formation, morphological, etymological, semantic analysis.*

Language can be perceived in different ways, it is defined as a phonetic, lexical and grammatical means. It is a system of formation of thought and expression of ideas related to human cognitive activity. Language structures can be described and understood from both a communication tool and a linguistic perspective.

E. Sapir defined language as “a purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols” (Sapir, 1993 p. 7).

According to J. Lyons, “a word can be defined as the connection of a certain meaning with a certain sound complex which has a certain grammatical use” (Lyons, 1995, p.46).

A word is a very complex and diverse phenomenon, which has a defined range of meanings, form and use.

Therefore, a word is considered a continuous unit of structure consisting of one or more morphemes and also combinations of words fixed in phraseology (Jackson, 2005:50).

The question of studying the word structure in modern English has always been and is a subject of interest for linguists.

The origin of lexical units is determined by word formation according to the models that have historically formed in the English language. The main problem of word-building is derivation.

The word formation of each language is characterized by certain peculiarities. It is significant to note that when working on the problems of word formation of the English language, it is necessary to study the meaning of the derived lexical units, in particular, individual suffixes, their semantic features.

The purpose of this paper is a complex study of one of the word-forming elements, namely the multifunctional and homonymous suffix *-ish* of Germanic origin, its formal-functional and semantic characterization and determination of its productivity. The method of descriptive, morphological, etymological and semantic analysis is used in the research process.

As is known, Germanic languages belong to the western group of the Indo-European language family. The oldest references to Germanic cultures are associated with the names of Greeks and Romans, who refer to Germans as “barbarians” (foreigners) in ancient sources. There are various opinions on the origin of the term Germanic, according to one opinion, its origin is related to the meanings of the following words: Lat. *germa-nus* “genuine”, “true”, Irish. *gairm* ‘to shout’, or Old-Irish *gairm* ‘neighbour’.

The Germanic people were a diverse group of migratory tribes with common linguistic and cultural roots who dominated much of Europe during the Iron Age. The notion that Germanic tribes formed a coherent group of people stems from the Romans. They called all people living east of the Rhine and north of the Danube “Germans”. In the 1st century AD year 3 groups of tribal dialects were distinguished within the area of Western Germany: Ingveon (North Sea), Eastveon (Rhine-Weser) and Herminon (Elbic) (სტამბოლიძე. 2013: 190).

In the 5th-6th centuries, the migration and settlement of a part of the Ingeonic tribes (Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians) from the territory of present-day Denmark and North Germany to the British lands led to the further development of the Old English language, which is the base language of modern English.

As it is known, the English language belongs to the group of Germanic languages, which is closest to the Frisian language. It also shows more or less proximity to the Dutch language and dialects of the German language. A certain closeness can also be observed between the German literary languages.

Globalization of the world information space contributed not only to the significant expansion of the sphere of influence of the English language, but also to its transformation into a generally recognized language of international relations - lingua franca. In the modern world, the importance of the global role of the English language and its spread is pointed out in the famous English linguist D. Crystal's book 'English as a Global Language' (Crystal 2003, p. 12).

It is worth noting that at the present stage linguists have made a significant contribution to the development of the theory of English word formation.

It is known that language undergoes constant change and development, which involves certain linguistic processes, including the process of creating new lexical units. The main function of these processes is word-formation, which is considered one of the most important language mechanisms and provides the lexical composition of the dictionary. It is also used to express the continuous process of the emergence of new words in a language.

The productive means of word formation in modern English are considered to be: 1. Affixation 2. Composition; 3. conversion, 4. abbreviation. Each of them has certain characteristics.

As we mentioned above, affixation is considered one of the productive means of word formation. As is known, affixation is a means of word formation, during which word-forming affixes are added to the base of the word, namely prefixes and suffixes. Affixation as a means of producing new words has been active throughout the history of the English language and also in modern English, which is an indication that new words are constantly being formed through word-forming affixes.

Affixation as a means of word formation has not only survived throughout the history of the English language, but the use and functions of both [prefixes and suffixes] have remained largely unchanged (გამყრელოძე და სხვ. 2009 გვ. 98).

The affixes that form words in modern English are heterogeneous in origin. Among them in English you can find affixes of Germanic origin, as well as affixes borrowed from various languages, mainly from Romance languages (Latin and French), and also from Greek.

Words derived from Germanic affixes are generally widely used and belong to both speech and spoken styles. Many of them have entered the basic vocabulary of modern English.

In modern English language, at a certain stage of language development, derived words are distinguished, in which affixes can be productive, less productive and non-productive. In addition to the indicated types of affixes, dead (extinct) affixes are also found in the language.

As for the productivity of English suffixes, a large number of affixes, both root and borrowed, can be found in modern English. Some affixes are still considered productive, but others have lost their meaning and remained non-productive. The famous Georgian linguist Arnold Chikobava calls such affixes active and inactive affixes. “Active” is the affix used (it is used to denote dependency, to form a basis...); An affix that was used for a specific purpose but is no longer used. In other words, an active affix is a living affix. Empty affix is dead. Active affix is also called productive, inactive - non-productive (ჩიქობავა, 2008 გვ.180).

Productivity is a general term in linguistics that represents the use of derivational morphemes in the process of forming new words (АХМАНОВА, 2007).

Productive are morphemes that are actively involved in modern word formation and participate in the formation of new words.

The number of productive suffixes in the modern English language is not very large, and nevertheless, the production of new words by means of suffixes occupies a significant place in the process of filling the modern English vocabulary and operate continuously. Productive suffixes include er, **-ish, -ful, -less, -ness, -ate, -ly, -ian, -ing, -ed, -al, -ward (-wards)**.

Homonymy is a relationship of form and meaning in a language in which the same forms of words have different meanings. The famous Georgian linguist Arnold Chikobava notes: Homonyms are words that do not differ in sound, but are different in meaning and origin (The name of Greek homos, means “similar” and “omona” means name (ჩიქობავა, 2008: 125).

Linguistic studies have established that there are many cases of homonymous words in the language. It is a coincidence in the form of two or more separate words that originated from different sources and in the course of the historical development of the language were combined into the same sound form.

Homonymy in English can refer not only to words and word forms, but also to other language units such as suffixes.

English also has homonymous suffixes that denote different parts of speech and whose parts of speech can be identified by context. English homonymous suffixes include the following suffixes: **-er,- ish, - ate, -ly -ant, -ian, -ing, -ed, -al, -en, -ent, -ive** (Coats, 1999:231).

As mentioned above, the purpose of our study is to consider one of the English suffixes -**ish** as linguistic as well as extralinguistic level. As one of the homonymous suffixes, it is used to form adjectives and verbs.

The productive suffix **-ish** of Germanic origin, which appeared in Old English -**isc**, often means a lack of quality or expresses a weaker degree of a quality.

The suffix **-ish** can refer to several variants of meanings at the same time: the stems of nouns, ending in the suffix **-ish** produces adjectives that express personality traits, denote the likeness of someone or something, sometimes with a hint of irony:

**Girlish** – girly, virginal; pampered, tender; For example, girlish - girl, which means girlish behaviour or characteristics are typical of a girl; (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Boyish** – youthful, juvenile; used to describe behaviour characteristics that are like those of a boy: (Cambridge Dictionary).

**Womanish** – womanly; associated with or characteristic of women rather than men- (Merriam-Webster Dictionary; *we first hear of the existence of this man- the small dark man with a **womanish** voice -from the man Hardman.*

**Childish** means typical of a child: “*Stop this childish nonsense at once!*” *He shouted furiously-* (Cambridge Dictionary); *I have of my first **childish** associations with his white gravestone in the churchyard* (David Copperfield, Charles Dickens, p. 9.).

**Foolish** – lacking good sense or judgment; having or showing a lack of good sense, judgment, or discretion. *He looked **foolish** in that hat.* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

**Selfish** – concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself: seeking or concentrating on one’s own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others; (Merriam-Webster Dictionary); *He was a very **selfish** Giant* (The Selfish Giant, Oscar Wilde, p.1).

**Feverish** means unhealthy, agitated, nervous, weak-willed; suffering from fever (= high body temperature): unnaturally excited or active: *They worked from dark to dawn at a feverish pace* (Cambridge Dictionary);

The suffix **-ish** can also be added to numbers (dates, times, ages) that mean “about, approximately” (compare the following examples): *He’s fifty. He’s **fiftyish**. The class started at nine. The class started at **ninish**.*

The suffix **-ish** can weaken the meanings of adjectives, including colours. For example: **reddish** means slightly red in colour. *He had reddish brown hair* (Collins English Dictionary).

**Greenish** – slightly green in colour: For example: The bridesmaids had **greenish** dresses.

**Bluish** – somewhat blue: having a tinge of blue; e. g. *In the darkness the whole land was lighting up with bluish flames.*

**Whitish** means almost white in colour: The species is easy to identify by its **whitish** bark. (Cambridge Dictionary); *Whitish-blue flowers often bloom from early spring in our yard.*

**Blackish** refers to something that is somewhat black or has a dark color or shade. *Everyone says she is blackish because she likes country music* (Urban Dictionary).

**Brownish** means something that is **brownish** is slightly brown in colour. *There was a strange darkness in the sky which was heavy with brownish cloud* (Collins Dictionary).

There are also adjectives with the suffix **-ish**. For example: **dry-dryish, damp-dampish**. The given suffix creates verbs as well: accomplish, blemish, cherish, distinguish, finish, polish, publish, punish, sluggish, etc. For example: *Mamzelle Aurélie feels in her life having never had children to love and cherish*. (Regret, Kate Chopin, p. 4); *at present we punish people for accidents of birth and circumstance in much the same manner*. (John Steinbeck, *The Red Pony* p. 105); *Idleness is a great sin, and I certainly don't like any of my friends to be idle or sluggish* (The Devoted Friend – Oscar Wilde, p. 8).

The suffix **-ish** was mainly used in Old English and is still used for adjective, that is demonyms (**demonyms** (Old Greek. δῆμος -«People, tribe ὄνομα - «name, title») the onomastic term - **Katoikonoms** (Greek, κατά according to, respectively and οἶκος οἶκος –‘habitation’, ὄνομα – ‘name’) [Roberts, 2017, p. 205]) for the names of the inhabitants of a certain area, which are usually derived from the name of that area., that is, adjectives ending in **-ish** can be used as collective demonyms to produce some ethno-horonyms from geographical names: for example: **the English, the Irish, the Spanish**, etc.

The suffix **-ish-** for adjectives denoting the place of residence, territory, country, region and ethnicity is synonymous with the suffix **-ian** of Roman origin - Algonquian, **Amazonian, Athenian, Bostonian Brazilian, Catalonia, Georgian, Imeretian, Kakhétian**, and also different languages: **English, Irish, Kurdish, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Welsh, Yiddish, etc.**

Jody explained, “The dogs eat them, sir. It wouldn't be much like hunting **Indians**, I guess” (John Steinbeck **The Red Pony** p. 55).

Thus, the aim of our paper was the lexical-semantic description of English words ending in **-ish** suffix, as well as determination of its homonymous function, analysis of additional linguistic features. This suffix of Germanic origin has evolved over time and is now commonly used in colloquial English to form new adjectives that represent versatility and add nuance to the meaning of words.

The problem of affixes is one of the most important and relevant in the modern English word-formation system. Productive suffixes of common Germanic origin played and still play a major role in English affixal word formation.

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ინგლისური სიტყვების სემანტიკური მახასიათებლები

სუფიქსით *-ish*

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