

## PRODUCTIVITY OF THE SUFFIX –ER IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN

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**Öz:** Bu makale sözcük oluşumu açısından İngilizce’de ve Almanca’da özdeş anlamları ifade etmeye yarayan aynı türetme soneki –er sonekinin üretimsel kullanımına ışık tutmayı amaçlar. Bununla birlikte, sesbilgisel-biçimbilimsel ve anlambilimsel – sözdizimsel bir bakış açısından İngilizce ve Almanca’daki eyleyen adı için sözcük oluşturucu yapıları araştırır. Bulunan ortak bir eğilim ise her iki dilin –er soneki ile nomina agentis oluşturmak için sabit bir sözcük oluşturucu yapıya sahip olduğudur. Bu sözcük oluşturucu yapı birincil nomina agentis oluşturmak için kurulur. -Er sonekli İngilizce yapılar ve karşılık gelen Almanca yapılar nomina agentis oluşumunda oldukça üretkendir. [+ortak], [+sayılabilen], [+somut], [ $\alpha$  insana ilişkin], vb biçimsel özellikler temelinde, İngilizce ve Almanca sözcük oluşturucu yapılar üç anlamsal grupta sınıflandırılırlar: mesleki, sürekli, tesadüfi. Bu makalede, evrensel sınıflandırma için Baeskow (2002: 52) tarafından tanımlanan sınıflandırmayı kullanmaktayız. Sınıflandırma sistemine ait bilgi şöyledir: ortografik gösterim, fonolojik gösterim, fonolojik ayırt edici özellikler, biçimsel özellikler, alt sınıflandırma çerçevesi, anlamsal özellikler ve türetme sınıfları.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Sözcük Oluşturma, Sözcüğe Sonek Koyma, Üretkenlik, Nomina Agentis.

### Introduction

This paper consists of two suffix studies, presenting the English and German word formation processes, at the same time it represents contrastive analysis between the two investigated languages. Because the area of derivation as part of the word formation, is much more complex, we should limit the contrastive analyze to a number of semantic groups of derivatives. Such a group of nouns that denote persons who perform an activity are interesting because they are significantly limited to word formation suffixes, whose elements are characterized by different syntactic categories.

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The main objective of this paper is that the synchronic factors and contrasts agentive nouns are considered, which describe the basic word formation process based on the characteristics that analyzes the lexical derivatives, while new words and terms, thus enabling an explicit description of the common basis.

### 1. The Development of the Suffix –er

The traditional term, *nominaagentis*, is a very comprehensive one and includes types of words of rather varied semiological functions. (Kärre 1915) The suffix *-er* goes back to the Latin-*arius*, which served in the source language to the formation of denominal *nominaagentis* and was borrowed both in the Gothic and West Germanic. (Willmanns 1930)

It was initially only used to derive nouns from *nomina agentis*, modeled after the Latin word formation patterns *liber-librarius*, *moneta-monetarius*. In the Gothic, lat. *-arius* took the form *-areis*, deriving for example, from the noun *boka agentis bokareis*. In Old High German it was the derivative *buochari* and in Old English formed the opposite *bocere*. The Latin suffix-*arius* has repeatedly been recognized in Old English in *-ere*.

Besides the denominal derivatives, however, existed both in Old High German as well as those already in Old English nouns agentis having as base verbs. The following examples illustrate this.

- O.E. writan → writere  
           leornian → leornere  
 O.H.G. nēmen → nēmari  
           scafen → scephari

### 2. Lexicon-entry of the Suffix –er in English and German

The lexicon contains, according to the Motsch, (2004: 3) following system information:

1. phonological form
2. flexional-morphological properties
3. syntactic category of words
4. syntactic argument structure
5. semantic representation

However, similar classification gives also Baeskow (2002: 52) classifying system information as follows:

1. orthographic representation
2. phonological representation
3. phonological distinctive features
4. formal features
5. sub categorization frame
6. semantic features
7. derivational class

In this paper, for the global classification we will use the classification defined by Baeskow.

### a. Orthographic and Phonological Representation

Opposite to the orthographic representation, which only shows grapheme sequences, phonological representation provides information as vocal composition and phonemic sequences of lexemes and morphemes. Phonemes are the smallest units of language that introduced differences in the meaning of words, which are realized in articulation using phone. Each vowel and consonant consists of distinctive voice features, and is represented in the form of phonological matrix. Phonological processes, which sometimes initiate suffixes will not be presented as rules, but in the form of theoretical features such as [+umlaut] and [+accent displacement]. Important for the interpretation of data suffixes in connection with membership are the affix-classes.

### b. Formal Features

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the core objective of more recent theories is the elimination of the traditional syntactic category (N, A, V, P) in favor of a set of features. This aspiration is associated with a positive effect for a description of suffixes, as morphemes possess formal phonologic-morphological and syntactic-semantic features, which also imply affiliation to a certain syntactic category. A suffix such as e.g., -er, despite his evident nominally landmark in the German language, can be labeled with N.

### c. Sub categorization Frame as Word Formation Component

This occurs, for example, in derivation such as Tischler, Rohkötler or Dörfler. The basic elements of suffix -ler have the nominal features such as [+common], [+concrete], [+count] etc. Verbal and adjectival basic elements are defined according to their characteristics. In case a suffix to select the basic elements of a different category, then sub-categorization frame will be two-part.

## 3. Intrinsic Formal Features

The intrinsic formal features are morpho-syntactically relevant features that describe the inherent properties of lexical units. Thus, the noun Haus has the following intrinsic features [+noun], [-human], [3rd person]. While the verb treffen is not specified with [verb] and [accusative]. except the first two, we have [adjective] and [preposition]. The term [ $\alpha$  human] means [+human] or [+human]. These features, which can be supplemented with other, describe typical properties of lexical units, which have traditionally been labeled as a noun or verb, hence arise that categorial information N or [noun] or V or [verb] as redundant.

About agentive nouns, we are going to analyze, of course there are other intrinsic features that will be also determined.

### a. Intrinsic Features of the Noun

The lexicon record of a lexeme from the traditional category N, should primarily give information, whether it is common noun or proper noun, eg. Buch, or such as eg., Zürich, proper noun. This information is encoded in the landmark [ $\alpha$  common], whose value should be specified individually for each noun. The lexeme Buch gets landmark [+common], while Zürich [-common].

Here is a binary feature whose value can be either positive or negative, it is relevant to the choice of determinants. Proper nouns in German are different from the general, in that it does not choose either determiners or quantifiers.

With the intrinsic features of lexemes are the semantic features, which are relevant in the field of word formation. If we compared the nouns *Lehrer* and *Buch*, observed that both nouns (vs. noun *Liebe*) refer to specific entities in the foreign-language reality. This property is denoted by the semantic feature [+concrete]. However, there is a difference in that, in referent to *Lehrer* is a human being, whereas in noun *Buch* material object.

This landmark [ $\alpha$  human], the value of which varies in the case of *Lehrer* [+human], while in *Buch* a negative value [-human]. Nouns in German have three grammatical gender, hence arises the choice of personal pronoun, in the case of antecedent brings feature [+human] or [-human]. The following examples show that English and German personal pronouns are in congruent relationship with grammatical gender to their antecedents.

The lexical entries of German nouns must additionally contain data about the grammatical gender, with idiosyncratic information. The grammatical gender, i.e., male, female and neutral being represented with the following combinations:

male	[+masc, -fem]
female	[-masc, +fem]
neutral	[-masc, -fem]

Also should mention that argument structures of lexical units are considered to be intrinsic features. Common nouns are marked with the possibility of having referentiality, that show reference argument <R>, which is of great importance for the syntax. Hence the proper nouns, *nomina propria*, (e.g., *Peter*, *Zürich*) versus common nouns lack referential argument <R>, because they are, in principle, themselves-referential, and need no additional referential determinants.

Furthermore, as regards the origin of lexical units, they classify a criterion, which is especially relevant for word formation. Also from the morphological point of view, necessitating the question, whether it is domestic or borrowed suffix, also gives a great benefit in derivation processes. Intrinsic feature which is added to the previous features [German]. Last information contained in lexicon record of a noun is the person.

This is relevant, when a noun should be replaced by a pronoun. The following examples show that the German noun *Buch* carries the markings [3rd person].

Ich habe heute **ein Buch/zwei Bücher** gekauft.

Ich habe **es / sie** heute gekauft.

Finally, in this place, you should note that the data concerning the number, entering the personal pronouns, is a idiosyncratic information. So, the German

noun Eltern, inherently plural is marked with what appears signifier [+ plural] and shows intrinsic formal features.

### b. Intrinsic Features of the Verb

The group of intrinsic formal features of verbs includes features that provide information for valence or grammatical cases. For example, the verb *helfen* inherently leads to maturity with landmark [dative]. Information of this type is not sufficient to describe the German verbs, as well as dispositions in German as referential grammatical case. For this reason it is necessary to identify additional features that clearly define the traditional category V. The lexical unit of the category V is different from nouns, by not referring to the subjects / objects, but to eventualities. The term "eventuality" includes the following categories:

Ereignisse- events

Vorgänge-processes

Zustände- states

More details about the above categories will not be giving into this paper. Verbs in the German language are described with characteristic [ $\alpha$  dynamic], which again may have a positive or negative value. Depending on how many entities (persons or objects) participate in the contingency marked in the verb distinguishes: one valence verbs (e.g., schlafen), two valence verbs (e.g., treffen), three valence verbs (e.g., geben).

In light of the arguments we distinguish two types: external arguments that in the syntax is realized as a subject, and external arguments, which stand in the complement of the verb (e.g., direct object, indirect object, adverbial additions).

According to Baeskow (2002:27), verbs in German (e.g., schlafen, treffen, schenken) have the following argument structures:

schlafen            <E <x<sup>ext</sup>>>  
 treffen             <E <x<sup>ext</sup>, y<sup>int</sup>>>  
 schenken           <E <x<sup>ext</sup>, y<sup>int 1</sup>, z<sup>int 2</sup>>>

The latter example Motsch (Deutsche Wortbildung in Grundzügen, 2004:29) illustrates as following:

SCHENKEN ( $x^1 = NP_{nom}$ ,  $x^2 = NP_{dat}$ ,  $x^3 = NP_{akk}$ )

Consequently, each argument is assigned a semantic role. Simoska (2002:185) outlines basic and external predicates as follows:

AGENT of (x, y), x is the agent y '(= x is the executor of y)

TOPIC of (x, y), x is the subject of y '(= x subject of y)

Information regarding the location of a German lexeme in the traditional category V are put all together in a set of landmarks, as shown below. Formal characteristics [ $\alpha$  dynamic, argument structure, grammatical cases]

### c. Optional Features

Another group of features, as indicated by the title, optional, which stand opposed to intrinsic formal features. This is about grammatical cases and congruent features that appear contextually in a given lexeme. The following examples contain only optional features:

Bücher [nominative, +plural]

lernte [3rd person, + past]

Although in the paper is not our aim to analyze the flexible regularities, we will only briefly give the flexible form in the lexicon entry.

#### Lexical Record of Suffix –ER in English

<b>Orthographic Representation:</b>	-er
<b>Phonological representation:</b>	/ə/
<b>Phonological feature:</b>	-
<b>Formal features:</b>	[+ common]
	[+ count]
	[+ concrete]
	[α human]
	[<R>]
	[+ Germanic]
	[3rd person]

#### Sub categorization frame:

[α dynamic, α causative, <x<sup>ext</sup>>, (X-ize, X-ify), α Germanic]

[α common, α count, α concrete, (base of X-(o)graph-y), α Germanic]

[+ numeral]

#### Mapping feature:

[map base [+ common] into Y<sup>INT</sup> of a P-Eventuality <E<X<sup>ext</sup>, Y<sup>int</sup>>>]

**Semantic feature:** [+ human] → [α habitual]

#### -er-Class:

[driv-, sing-, win-, cook-, tast-, believ-, own-, pott-, glov-, trumpet-, sitt-, break-, biograph-, geograph-, tenn-, ...]

#### Lexical Record of Suffix –ER in German

<b>Orthographic representation:</b>	-er
<b>Phonological representation:</b>	/ər/
<b>Phonological feature:</b>	[+ Umlaut]
<b>Formal features:</b>	[+ common]
	[+ count]
	[α plural]
	[+ concrete]

[ $\alpha$  human]  
 [+ masc]  
 [-fem]  
 [<R>]  
 [+ Germanic]  
 [3rd person]

**Sub-categorization frame:**

[ $\alpha$  dynamic,  $\alpha$  causative, <X<sup>ext</sup>>, (stem of *X-ier-en*),  $\alpha$  Germanic]

[ $\alpha$  common,  $\alpha$  count,  $\alpha$  concrete, (*X-ik*),  $\alpha$  Germanic]

[+ Numeral]

**Mapping feature:**

[Map base [+ common] into Y<sup>INT</sup> of a P-Eventuality <E<X<sup>ext</sup>, Y<sup>int</sup>>>]

**Semantic feature:**

[+ human] → [ $\alpha$  habitual]

**-er-Class:**

[Fahr-, Weck-, Hör-, Kenn-, Besitz-, Ausbild-, Einbrech-, Strandläuf-, Töpf-, Schlagzeug-, Mathematik-, Physik-, Programmier-, Kopier-, Sechs-, Hundert-,..]

**d. Word Formation**

Word formation is divided into two essential word formation types, namely composition and derivation. A compound noun is formed by combining two or more free morphemes. While derivation, also called an derivation (Ableitung), a process in which form words using affixation, by adding affix to the root of the given lexeme. Based on it, two important terms that appear in the literature, are differently defined. We will give a generalized definition, which is known in the linguistics.

**Noun                      Root**

E.        driver                      driv- (bound root morpheme)

G.        Fahrer                        Fahr- (bound root morpheme)

Suffixes, from both groups differ on the basis of phonological and morphological properties. Suffixes of the first group, which initiate emphasis moving or inherently carry the main emphasis (e.g., Ho'tel-Hotel'lier). By default, morphological difference occurs between the suffixes of both classes, the first group with free and bound morphemes, while those of the second combine only words.

**Conclusion**

Obviously, in the English and German, the nominal agentive category is formed with suffix *-er*. After the phonologic-morphological and semantic-syntactic analysis of the suffix *-er* in English and German we can summarize that this word formation pattern is highly productive in the formation of nomina agentis. Based on the semantic-syntactic analysis the two suffixes have positive value of the three semantic groups: professional, habitual and occasional.

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**Abstract:** The paper aims to shed some light on the productive use of the suffix -er in English and German, which, from the word-formation point of view, is the same derivation suffix to express the identical meanings. However the article investigates word-formative patterns for nomina agentis in English and German from a phonological-morphological and semantic-syntactical point of view. One common tendency found is that both languages have a stable word-formative pattern for building nomina agentis with suffix -er. This word-formative pattern is constructed to form



primary nomina agentis. The English patterns with the suffix -er and the corresponding German patterns are highly productive in the formation of nomina agentis. On the basis of the formal features [+common], [+count], [+concrete], [ $\alpha$  human], etc., the English and German word-formative patterns are classified in three semantic groups: professional, habitual and occasional. In this paper, for the global classification we use the classification defined by Baeskow (2002: 52), classifying system information as follows: orthographic representation, phonological representation, phonological distinctive features, formal features, sub categorization frame, semantic features and derivation classes.

**Key Words:** Word Formation, Suffixation, Productivity, Nomina Agentis.