On the Ordering Paradox in Word Formation

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On the Ordering Paradox in Word Formation

Satoshi Ohta

Siegel's (1974) Ordering Hypothesis makes a prediction that Class I affixation ought to appear consistently inside Class II affixation, but the reverse should never be true. However, in fact, there exist such words as \textit{ungrammaticality} and \textit{unconditionality}, where Class I affixation takes place outside the Class II affixed form, which seems to be paradoxical. In this thesis, I tried to solve such Ordering Paradoxes.

It is well known that a complex word and its head (the rightmost morpheme in English) have the same feature complex by the mechanism of "Percolation". I generalized this notion and proposed that the class number of a head should also be percolated. With this assumption, we can give a new viewpoint to such exceptional words as \textit{ungrammaticality}. In previous analyses, attention has been paid only to the co-occurrence of \textit{un}- and \textit{-ity}. But notice that in \textit{ungrammaticality} another suffix, i.e., \textit{ical} is involved. In the stage of \textit{grammatical}, \textit{-ical} is the head, and its class feature "1" percolates up. Next, though a Class II prefix \textit{un} is attached to \textit{grammatical}, \textit{un} cannot be the head, thus \textit{ungrammatical} as a whole is Class I. Therefore a Class I suffix \textit{-ity} can attach to \textit{ungrammatical} without violating the well-formedness condition. This is illustrated below:

\begin{center}
(1)
\begin{tikzpicture}
    \node (A) {A \_ [I]};
    \node (B) [below left of=A] {A \_ [I]};
    \node (C) [below right of=A] {[[un\_II][[grammar\_N]ical\_A\_I]]\_ity\_N\_I}}];
    \draw[->] (A) -- (B);
    \draw[->] (A) -- (C);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

(where $\Rightarrow$ represents the path of the percolation of head features; features which are irrelevant to the present discussion are omitted.)
In short, I have proposed that, in affixation, if the
class number of the base element is equal to or smaller than
that of the affix to be attached, the affixation is possible.