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On the Ordering Paradox in Word Formation

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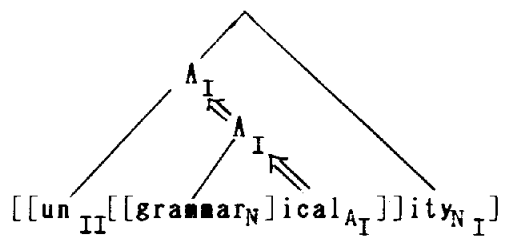
Siegel's (1974) Ordering Hypothesis makes a prediction that Class I affixation ought to appear consistently inside Class II affixation, but the reverse should never be true. However, in fact, there exist such words as $[un_{II}grammatical]ity_{I}$, $[un_{II}conditional]ity_{I}$ where Class I affixation 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 ungrammaticality. In previous analyses, attention has been paid only to the co-occurrence of un- and -ity. But notice that in ungrammaticality another suffix, i.e., -ical is involved. In the stage of grammatical, -ical is the head, and its class feature "I" percolates up. Next, though a Class II prefix un- is attached to grammatical, un cannot be the head, thus ungrammatical as a whole is Class I. Therefore a Class I suffix -ity can attach to ungrammatical without violating the well-formedness condition. This is illustrated below:

(1)



(where ⇨ 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.