A STUDY OF MORPHO-SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS OF NEGATIVE PREFIXES IN ADJECTIVES

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Abstract

To form additional word in English, the concept of affixation is applied. The concern is the addition of negative prefixes to adjectives for the formation of additional a word with a distinct meaning. This seems to be confusing to many because some adjectives carry multiple negators and their meanings are different in all senses. It is against this backdrop that this paper is to analyse the semantic implications of some negative prefixes in adjectives. Common negative prefixes and adjectives are used for the study. Data were collected using proforma and respondents were English language students in Nigeria Certificate in Education. Thematic-based method of analysis was employed to identify and select the attachment of negative prefixes to adjectives as contained in the proforma. The result shows that different shades of meaning that ordinarily cannot cross the mind of learners have been identified. The result also reveals that there are adjectives which carry multiple negative prefixes, some of which are not ordinarily used. Interestingly, two kinds of adjectives are identified which negative prefixes can be attached to: core and derived; therefore, learners should pay attention to the concept of negative prefixes in adjectives in order to communicate.

Introduction

English is said to be a linguistic salad (Murray, 2019), this is why Byers-Heinlein (2013) refers to the vocabulary of English as amalgam.

Meaning that English language expands its vocabulary by borrowing from different languages, one of such processes is called affixation (Lieber, 2005) which is concerned with creating new words form existing ones. This means the language allows attachment of a letter or group of letters termed affix to host words on either sides to form other words. For instance, the word 'attract' is a host word and when it is concatenated with affixes, a set of new words can be produced. For example, consider the concatenation involved in the word 'attract'.

attract<u>s</u>, attract<u>ing</u>, attract<u>ion</u>, attract<u>ive</u>, attract<u>ively</u>, attract<u>iveness</u>, <u>un</u>attract<u>ed</u>, <u>un</u>attract<u>ive</u>

From the word 'attract', eight new words are formed using the principle of attachment called affixation. Affixation is a process of adding affix to host word (Brinton, 2012), or root word (Tabassam, Baby, & Naseem, 2021). According to Kay and Adnyani (2021), affix is a bound morpheme whereas a host word is a free morpheme. An affix may change the lexical category and/or meaning (Sims & Parker, 2015). It is important to note that change in lexical category often occurs at the end of lexeme, called suffix, for example, the host word 'attract' (verb) can take suffixes to form the following first before accommodating prefixes: 'attracts' (verb), 'attracting' (verb/gerund), 'attractive' (adjective), 'attractively' (adverb), and 'attractiveness/attraction' (noun) (Haspelmath, 1995); and, in some cases, prefix occurs only when there is a presence of suffix (Ramscar, 2013). In the first instance, the word 'attractive' is formed before the formation of 'unattractive'. This is the reason the formation 'unattract', is considered as accidental word (Julien, 2002). The system of affixation works in three different environments, at the beginning of host word (prefix) and end (suffix), or inserted at middle (infix). Before the host word, only one affix is allowed, but to the end more than one affix is allowed. For example, '<u>un</u>attract<u>iveness</u>'. The system that allows this is called morphology (affixation) (Brinton, 2012).

Therefore, morphology is one of the branches of linguistics (Tokar, 2020), which deals with the study and description of formation

of words in language; and, it is broadly divided into inflectional and derivational (Haspelmath & Sims, 2013; Plag, 2018). Inflectional morphology studies the paradigmatic patterns of word to function in any grammatical contexts, whereas, derivational morphology deals with the creation of new words that alter the grammatical category and/or the meaning of the host word (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2022; Stump, 2001) this is called affixation (Brinton, 2012).   In derivational morphology, bound morpheme is attached to host word to create or expand the structure of the host word that will change the grammatical category (Aronoff & Fudeman, 2022). Khasanah, Adis, Rukayah, Vesakha, and Permana (2019) give this example (unhappy vs unhappiness) to illustrate this point. So, the focus of this paper is on the derivational morphology, which subsumes affixation. Affixation, therefore, is a process involving formation of new words from root words; and has types, which includes prefixation, infixation, suffixation, and circumfixation (Van Goethem, 2020). Van Goethem gives explicit description of these types.

To Van Goethem, prefixation is a process of attaching a linguistic element before the host word, for example *in*correct, *non-*profit, *dis*loyal, *un*realistic etc. The italicized parts of the words are the linguistic elements called prefixes; they occur at the beginning of the host word. Infixation is a process in which a linguistic element occurs within a host word, for example 'cupsful' (plural), from 'cupful' (singular). Suffixation is a process where by a new word can be formed from host word by adding to the end a linguistic element called suffix, for example 'respect' to 'respect*able*'; 'act' to 'act*ive*'; 'bright' to 'bright*ness* etc. Circumfixation is a process involving the co-occurrence of both the prefix and the suffix on host word to form new word, for example from the word 'correct', '*in*correct*ly* is formed; from 'product', '*un*product*ive*' is formed etc. Van Goethem maintains that the morphology of English language recognizes as explained above. However, there is a hot debate among scholars on infixation and circumfixation as processes of word formation in English (Allerton,

1970; Ndimele, 2003; Ruszkiewicz, 2002; Situmorang & Arifin, 2012; Ukam & Innah, 2020).

To Ndimele affixes are classified based on their occurrences relative to the location of the root of a word. According to him the English language only recognizes prefix and suffix. Both Ndimele (2003) and Situmorang, & Arifin, (2012) argued that infix and circumfix do not occur in English words. On the contrary, Ukam and Innah (2020) explain the occurrences of infix and circumfix in English lexicon. They give the example 'passers-by', the plural of 'passer-by'; 'mothers-in-law' is the plural of 'mother-in-law' where the plural marker '-s' is inserted at the middle in both cases to illustrate the use of infixation in English. This means that recognition of infix in English is imperative as long as such words 'passer-by' and 'mother-in-law' take plural form. This is because the formation of the above examples is considered as hyphenated compound nouns. Besides the above examples, the following examples of infixation are given. Spoonsful', the plural of 'spoonful'; and 'cupsful', the plural of 'cupful' (Saputri, 2022). Traditionally, the way of pluralizing noun is by attaching a plural marker at the end. For example, book to books; boy to boys. These examples cement the fact that infixation is a concept well accepted in English language. Although, few words accommodate infix as compared to the words not accommodating it.

Like infixation, circumfixation is equally traceably used in English. To Ruszkiewicz (2002), there is the occurrence of circumfix as illustrated in the examples: envenomize (nominal base: venom); encarnalize (adjectival base: carnal); invigorate (nominal base: vigor); and intoxicate (adjectival base: toxic). These examples clearly support the use of circumfixation in English. Explaining similar instance, Allerton (1970); Onwuta and Ojinuka (2018) portray the use of circumfix in English. Their position further concretizes Ruszkiewicz's position in respect of the use of circumfix. Therefore, English language accommodates all the types of affix: prefix, infix, suffix, and circumfix. These have laid a foundation for the understanding of the concept of

affixation in general. However, the focus of this paper is to examine the use of negative prefixes attachable to adjectives. For this reason, the concept of negative prefixes in particular is explicitly discussed.

Ndimele (2003) provides the sub-divisions of prefix in English. This division includes negative, reversative, locative, age, size, degree, temporal, scope, and sequential prefixes. All the content words (noun, verb, adverb, and adjective with the exception of pronoun) can be negated, but most language users negate adjectives the most (Kjellmer, 2005). Users of language are more comfortable with shortened words (Bakaradze, 2016), for example, 'unattractive' instead of 'not attractive' or 'misused' instead of 'not properly used'. In English, negation of adjective affects the aspects of semantic (De Clercq & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2018) that results in morpho-syntactic interface. It also makes the host word to which it is prefixed a complex word. Prefix is meant to adjust or modify the meaning of a host word. There are different kinds of prefix as illustrated by Ndimele (2003) in the following tables 1-5:

Table 1: Reversative Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Host	Example
de-	'to reverse an action'	Verb Noun	Defrock, defrost, delocalize deforestation
dis-	'to reverse an action'	Verb	disconnect
un-	'to deprive of'	Verb	Unmask, unhorse
un-	'to reverse an action'	Verb	Untie, undress, unlock

Table 2: Locative Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Host	Example
inter-	'between'	Adjective Verb	intercontinental interfuse
sub-	'beneath'	Noun	Submarine, subsoil
super-	'over'	Noun	Superstructure
trans-	'across or from one location to another'	Adjective Verb	transcontinental transplant

Table 3: Age, Size and Degree Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Host	Example
arch-	'highest status or 'worst'	Noun	Archangel, arch-enemy
hyper-	'excessive'	Adjective	Hypertensive, hyperactive
mini-	'diminutive'	Noun	Minibus, minicomputer
neo-	'new' or modern version	Noun	neo-phobia, neo-colonialism
out-	'to surpass'	Verb	Outgrow, outshine
over-	'to exceed'	Verb	Overbook, over-change
proto-	'first in origin' or 'primitive'	Noun	proto-martyr, proto-language
semi-	'half of' or 'partly'	Noun Adjective	semi-metal semi-literate
supra-	'above' or 'beyond'	Adjective	Supranational, supra-mundane
sur-	'additional'	Verb Noun	sur-change sur-coat
ultra-	'extreme' or 'beyond'	Adjective	ultra-conservative
under-	'diminutive'	Verb Adjective Noun	Underestimate, underdeveloped underdog
vice-	'deputy'	Noun	vice-chairman

Table 4: Temporal, Scope and Sequential Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Host	Example
ex-	'former'	Noun	ex-wife, ex-soldier
fore-	'before'	Noun Verb	foreplay foresee
pan-	'about'	Adjective'	pan-African
post-	'after'	Noun Adjective Verb	post-mortem posthumous post-date
pre-	'before'	Verb Adjective	pre-date premature

		Noun	preview
re-	'again','back'/ 'change order'	Verb Noun	Restructure, regain representation

Table 5: Negative Prefixes

Prefix	Meaning	Host	Example
a-	'lacking in'	Adjective	asexual
de-	'the opposite of'	Noun Verb	dement demystify
dis-	'the opposite of'	Adjective Verb Noun	disloyal disrespect dishonor
il- im- in- ir-	'the opposite of'	Adjective Adjective Adjective Adjective	illegal impossible insensitive irregular
mis-	'the opposite of'	Noun Verb	misconduct misdirect
non-	'not'	Noun Adjective	non-starter non-binary
un-	'the opposite of'	Adjective	unwise

Of all these, the negative prefix is the concern of this paper. The commonest identified by (Džuganová, 2019) are the ones employed in the analysis.

The Concept of Negative Prefix in English Morphology

Negative prefix is used to negate the semantic effect the host word, for example, unpredictable. Here, the negative prefix is un- and so it negates the usual meaning of possibility of something will or might happen in the future, which the 'predictable' carries. All the scholars view the term in the same way. But, you know they all arrive from different directions. Džuganová (2019)) who defines negative prefix a letter or group of letters attached to the beginning of host word to form

new word from host word. Scholars' views with regards to what and what, and the number of the negative prefixes are different. For example, Mattiello (2009) presented nine and are: a-, de-, dis-, in-, il-, im-, ir-, non-, and un- as negative prefixes. Mäittälä-Kauppila (2013) presented twelve in addition to Mattiello's number, and are anti-, dys-, mal-, and mis- but without a-. Subandowo (2017) presented eight in addition to those presented, and are: ant-/anti-, counter-/countra-, and ab- without dys-, de-, dis-, and mal-. Štekauer and Lieber (2006)) asserts that un-, in-, dis-, de-, il-, non-, im-, and a-. Dzuganova (2006); Ndimele (2003) present seven: a-, de-, mis-, non-, in-, dis-, and un-. Other scholars like Chapman and Skousen (2005) agree with the position of Dzuganova and Crystal. This goes to show that fundamentally, the negative prefixes are seven – a-, de-, non-, in-, and un-. These negative prefixes and those not regarded as negative prefixes can be attached to all content words (nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives with the exception of pronoun). However, the seven are the frequently used negative prefixes, especially with adjectives.

Appropriate Use of Negative Prefix

Corcoran, Palmer, Arman, Knight, and Spasi**ć** (2021) suggests some rules to remember when attaching negative prefixes to their host words; and, they are:

in – becomes im- before a base beginning with **m** or **p**, for example, immature, impossible

in- becomes **ir**- before a word beginning with **r**, for example, irregular

in – becomes il-_before a word beginning with **l**, for example, illegal, illogical.

dis- is used with words beginning with **t**, for example, distrust.

dis- is used with word beginning with **c**, for example, discomfort.

Before **c**, **non**- can be used, for example, nonchalant, non-committal, non-count.

Before **c**, **b** or **s**, **un**- is used, for example, uncommon, unbelievable, and unsafe.

Before **f, non**-, may be used, for example, nonfat, non-finite, nonflammable.

Before **p, non**- may be used, for example, non-partisan, non-pulsed and non-profit.

These principles are suggested to assist the learners to know the prefixes and how to attach them to their right or appropriate host words. If the prefixes are not appropriately attached, the meaning cannot be clear. It should be noted that these principles are not iron-clad, but are guides. Furthermore, attention should be paid to words that begin with prefix elements but whose meanings are not negated, for example, inflammable, internal etc. Such prefix-like element *in-* in the words is called combining form. Combining form is inseparable because it is part of the word; it is not meant to act as prefix.

Functions of Negative Prefix

Even though there are controversies regarding the specific linguistic elements that are considered as negative prefixes, the common ones to all are 'a-, 'de-', 'un- ', 'in- (allorphs: ir-, im-, il-), mis- and non-. However, the Hamawand (2023) model provides 10 linguistic elements with their functions and examples.

a. de-: prefix meaning 'to negate', for example 'demobilize'

b. dis-: prefix expressing 'deprivation' or 'reversal of action, for example: disconnected, disengaged

c. in-: the allomorphs of the prefix 'in-'are: - il- im- ir-. They clearly negate meaning, for example: incorrect, irregular, illegal, and impossible

d. un-: the commonest negative prefix; with verbs denoting 'an action contrary to', for example: uncommon, unpopular. Also, it is used with adjectives (unusual); verbs (unfold); participles (undressed); nouns (unrest); 'not' '(unbeaten); 'opposite of' (untrue); 'to reverse' (unwind).

e. mal-: prefix meaning 'badly' 'wrongly' for example: mal-treat, malpractice

f.   anti-: with four meanings: 'opposite of' (antithesis) 'opposing' (antiaircraft)

g.   non-: used with nouns meaning 'not' (noncommittal); 'opposite of; reverse of' (non-fraction).

h.   dys-: used with both nouns and verbs meaning 'abnormal' 'impaired' (dyslexia) 'difficult' (dysphasia) and 'bad' (dystonic).

i.   mis-: meaning 'bad' (mismanage) 'wrong; wrongly' (misconduct) and 'opposite'; 'lack of' (mistrust).

j.   counter-: prefix meaning 'against' (counterattack).

Although there are controversies regarding the recognition of some prefixes amongst the list above, few scholars like Lehrer (1995) and Mithun (2003) consider them as negative prefixes. These examples are: 'anti- ', 'dys- ', 'mal-', 'dis- ', 'mis-' and 'counter-'. The seven common negative prefixes put forth by Dzuganova (2006) and Ndimele (2003) are adopted in this paper.

The Concept of Adjective

Traditionally, adjective is one of the eight parts of speech. Adjective is variously defined by scholars (Hajek, 2004; Sunara, 2023). They define it to satisfy certain peculiarities. However, if all the definitions given to it are critically studied, there may be no modicum of doubt that there is an equilibrium point, which seems to revolve around expressing quantity, quality, and number of the words to which it is a collocate (Sunara, 2023). Adjective has types and kinds as recognized in the English grammar (Murthy, 2007). Furthermore, adjective is subjected to different grammatical functions (Szabó, 2001). Broadly speaking, there are two main functions; namely, attributive and predicative. When it is used before a noun, it performs the attributive function, for example, good boy. The word 'good' is attributive because it tells the feature of attribution of the boy. There may be different word classes which can be found performing similar attributive function when used before noun, for example, 'educated boy', 'school boy' etc. In these examples, 'educated' is a verb while 'school' is a noun but all

are, by function, adjectival. For predicative, it is used after a copular verb, such as 'be' and its corresponding paradigmatic forms, seem, appear, become and so on. For example, He seems good. The word good' is placed after the verb 'seems', and the slot is predicative. Besides the adjectival functions, it is interesting to note that there are two main types of adjective, namely core and derived. The core adjective is the actual root word that has no morphological element acted upon (Sunara, 2023). But, the core adjectives have fewer as compared to derived adjectives in use (Szabó, 2001). These examples include 'good', bad', 'nice', 'delicious', 'black', and so forth. This category of adjectives are identified by the position they occupy, minding the fact that they can occasionally be deadjectival nouns. Whereas, derived adjective is the one that is coined through morphological operation (Sunara, 2023). That is, certain adjectives can be formed by attaching morphological element(s) to words belonging to other lexical categories. Adjectives can be created from, say noun, for example, fool – foolish, boy – boyish, envy – envious, book – bookish, hope – hopeful, child – childish and so on. They can be formed from verbs, for example, talk – talkative, cost – costly, read – readable, eat – eatable; some adjectives can also be formed from other adjectives, for example, historic – historical, brown – brownish, economic – economical, and so on. There are also deverbal adjectives, such as used, done, corrected, etc. The derived adjectives are identified by the syllabic endings (Berg, 2000). The following are few examples of adjectival morphemes: -ly, -ish, -ive, -ful, -ous, -al etc. These are some of the indicators despite the fact that there is no ironclad rule attached to this operation. There may be nouns in those forms, for example, the words 'cupful' and 'spoonful' are all nouns despite ending in '-ful'. Another clear case in point is the word 'adjective' itself. Such ending '-ive', '-ful' are called combining forms which are similar to affixes in form but are themselves parts of the words, and their examples are illustrated (spoonful, cupful, exercise, adjective) (Raub, 1894).

So, the formation of derived adjectives is occasioned by morphological operation, their opposites can be concatenated through affixal negation (Dahl, 2010). Now, all these examples of derived adjectives can have their respective opposites. It is categorical that most of the derived adjectives take 'un-' for the negative form. In fact, most derived adjective can take a-, de-, in-, (il-, ir-, im-), non-, mis-, and dis- respectively. However, Sherman (1973) asserts that one can attach the prefix 'un-' to any adjective that is difficult for one to identify the appropriate negative prefix to it. The listed negational affixes are the commonest ones used with derived adjectives because they are the commonest and most frequently used. When negative linguistic elements of negative prefixes are attached to derived adjective, they negate. Attaching negative prefixes to adjective creates a semantic effect which is considered to be negation only. It is against this backdrop that this paper tries to examine the appropriateness of their use on adjectives and their semantic effects.

Methodology

For this research, the data were collected through administering tests to the respondents. In the test instrument, a list of thirteen derived adjectives and a list of the selected negative prefixes (a-, dis-, in-, mis-, non-, and un-) were provided for the respondents to select from and form negative prefixed adjectives correctly accordingly. The researcher used a descriptive statistical tool for the analysis of the field data focusing on the usage of the negative prefixes by the respondents, and sentences are analysed to bring out the semantic effects of the formed adjective.

Findings

Based on the findings of this study, it has been revealed that effects of the use of negative prefixes in adjectives in context create different sematic implications. The following results give distinct semantic effects of all the thirteen adjectives with multiple negative

prefixes selected as used in this study. Each is discussed with illustrations. Note that appropriate usages and inappropriate usages are identified and presented. Statistical results are summarized in form of content analysis where only the usages are explained. The 13 selected adjectives are: reversible, valid, legal, political, informed, religious, progressive, interested, organized, logical, used, professional and human. These are adjectives that carry multiple negative prefixes. The study used the seven common negative prefixes presented by Dzuganova (2006) and Ndimele (2003). These are: a-, de-, mis-, non-, in- (il-, im-, ir-), dis-, and un-.

The word 'reversible' as adjective that carries multiple negative prefixes. Sentences 1 and 2 illustrate 'reversible' as adjective that can carry multiple negative prefixes:

1. The accident caused him <u>ir</u>reversible brain damage.
2. The accident caused him <u>non</u>reversible brain damage.

In the sentence 1, the use of the negative prefix 'ir-' (one of the allomorphs of in-) is appropriate. The word 'irreversible' suggests that the brain will not be reversed to its original state because of concussion but not *non-* because *non-* negates. The word 'nonreversible', means 'permanent' damage, or not reparable at all and that is why it is not a correct negative prefix in the context. If something is 'nonreversible' you cannot get it fixed. For example, if a medical doctor says: I am not trying to scare people, but kidney disease is a nonreversible condition; you can be cured when renal function fails, except an implant. However, brain damage caused by concussion can be reversed it even if not as it was. This explains the unsuitability, or inappropriateness of the use of *non-* in the context. Thus, the adjective 'reversible' carries both *ir-* and *non-*. It is considered as an adjective with multiple negative prefixes.

The word 'valid' as an adjective carries multiple negative prefixes. In this context, the appropriate negative prefix is *in-* and not *non-*.

'The tickets are <u>in</u>valid; you haven't stamped them.'
'The tickets are <u>non</u>-valid; you haven't stamped them.'

In this context, the appropriate word is 'invalid' which means 'not valid' and can be made valid because, for example, when a document is stamped, it becomes valid. Furthermore, 'invalid' can be used with something that is expired but can be renewed, for example, an invalid license could be previously valid and could be made valid again. This explains that an invalid license could be one whose validity has expired. Not only that, 'valid' also carries *non-* as its negative prefix. Therefore, the word 'valid' carries *in-* and *non-* respectively. It is stated that when the negative prefix *non-* is used with 'valid' to form 'non-valid', it refers to something which can never be valid again through renewal. 'Legal' as adjective carries multiple negative prefixes: il- and non-.

'The importation of marijuana is illegal.' (Toshxonov, 2019)

'The importation of marijuana is non-legal'

The adjective 'legal' in this context carries *il-* because it is the appropriate negative prefix to be attached (Toshxonov, 2019). The word 'illegal', the synonym of which is 'unlawful', means contrary or forbidden by law, or not permitted by rules. The word 'illegal' means not legal. This means the importation is not legal. As adjectives, the difference between illegal and non-legal is that 'illegal' is contrary to or forbidden by law, especially criminal law while 'non-legal' means anything not law-related; not related to the practice of law. Hence, 'non-legal' is clearly distinct from illegal. Therefore, the use of appropriate negative prefix in this context is *il-* (to form illegal). Other examples in context:

'Many illegal migrants were arrested last night.'

This sentence means many not legal migrants were arrested last night. The word 'political' carries *a-*, *un-*, *non-*, and *anti-* as prefixes. Each of these prefixes has different semantic functions. The negative prefixes: *a-*, *non-* and *un-* negate while 'non' in some instances does not because in 'non-political' (unacceptable in politics) does not negate. The prefix 'anti-' merely means 'against' or 'opposite'.

'Campaigns on Election Day are non-political.'

In this context, 'non-political' means not complying with the rules of politics. Therefore, the construction 'non-political' is correct and appropriate. Apolitical or unpolitical (these two perceived to be synonymous) and anti-political seem to be inappropriate in this context because campaigns are purely related to politics but doing them on Election Day is not permissible. In addition, anti-political means opposing or reacting against traditional political policies and principles, as such, it is not appropriate in this context. Using any of these inappropriate negative prefixes may have different semantic effects. For example:

>'Campaigns on Election Day are <u>a</u>political.'
>'Campaigns on Election Day are <u>anti</u>-political.'

The semantic function of the first sentence is that campaigns are contradictory to politics while the second sentence here may mean campaigns on Election Day could mean opposing the rules of politics. In actual sense, campaigns on Election Day are neither unpolitical nor anti-political but non-political as used in this context. The adjective 'political' takes *un-*, *a-*, *anti-* and *non-*. Even though there is synonymic relationship among some negative prefixes as claimed by Dzuganova (2008), sense difference is unavoidable. Based on this, the appropriate negative prefix to be attached to the target word 'political' in this context is *non-* because under normal circumstance, campaigns are banned during the day and doing so is considered unacceptable.

The sentences "A <u>mis</u>informed kid: 'My dad says the world is flat'" and "An *un*informed person might ask: 'so the world is flat?'" The word 'misinformed' here means not informed well, while 'uninformed' attributes to ignorance. The target word is a derived adjective 'informed', which carries two negative prefixes *mis-* and *un-* depending on the context in which the word occurs as in the examples. To describe an ignorant individual, 'uninformed' is used, and to describe a misled individual, 'misinformed' is used. The negative prefix <u>mis-</u> has been defined as bad, wrong, or wrongly. Therefore, the negative prefix *mis-* is the appropriate one in the first sentence. While, negative prefix *un-* is

appropriate in the second sentence. Thus, it is inappropriate to use *un-* in the first sentence and *mis-* in the second sentence, because each of the negative prefixes plays a connotative role. For example, when you mean an ignorant person, the sentence below is inappropriate:

"A misinformed kid: 'My dad says the world is flat'."

The adjective 'religious' carries multiple negative prefixes: *un-*, *non-*, *ir-*, and *anti-*. To use each of these prefixes depends on the context. In this context:

'Some believe that same sex marriage is *un*religious.'

'Un-' is the appropriate negative prefix in the context. Here, same sex marriage is condemned by religion. Another item with a different semantic function is the use of negative prefix *anti-*. The sentence with this negative prefix is:

'Defacing religious books are *anti-*religious.'

'Anti-religious', in this context, attributes to an act hostile/against religion and not forbidden by religion (unreligious) as illustrated above. Another semantic function derived from the use of negative prefix with 'religious' is seen in the sentence below:

'He is nonreligious because he does not believe in any religion.'

'Nonreligious', in this context, is used to refer to somebody with no religious affiliation. Therefore, the words 'unreligious' (strongly condemned by religion), 'nonreligious' (unconnected to religion), 'irreligious' (done not according to religion), and 'antireligious' (hostile/against religion) are semantically not the same as seen in the examples above. It is from this view that the appropriate negative prefixes to be attached to 'religious' in these contexts: 'un-' is used to describe the practice, (same sex marriage) is strongly condemned by both Islam and Christianity; 'anti-' is used to describe hostile/against religion; and, 'non-' is used to describe not connected to religion. To this effect, these have explained different semantic effects of non-religious, irreligious, and anti-religious.

The target word 'progressive' can carry multiple negative prefixes: *anti-*, *un-*, and *non-*. All the three negative prefixes could be attached to the target word 'progressive' to produce 'anti-progressive' (against progress), 'unprogressive' (unsuccessful), and 'non-progressive' (not thriving). The words 'unprogressive' and 'non-progressive' seem to be somewhat similar semantically.

> 'My brother runs unprogressive business.'
> 'My brother runs a non-progressive business because his business is not growing.'

The first sentence means the business is not 'flourishing', whereas the second sentence means the business is not 'booming' because the business fails. Furthermore, another difference is that the word 'unprogressive' can be used with personal nominal and 'non-progressive' is used with activity, for example:

> 'My brother is unprogressive.'
> 'Non-progressive business'

Here, in the first example, the personal nominal is 'my brother (my brother does not progress). In the second example, business is attributed to activity (a business that is not flourishing). It is affirmed that 'unprogressive' goes with personal nominal and '*non*-progressive' goes with activity.

The target word 'interested' carries negative prefix is *dis-*, for example:

> 'I don't agree that a lawyer should provide *dis*interested advice.'

Under normal circumstance, a lawyer always takes a side in a case. In this context, *dis-* is inappropriate.

Note that the target word 'interested' is deverbal adjective. Deverbal adjective is the verb that does the function of an adjective rather than a verb, and carries two negative prefixes *dis-* and *un-*. The usage of each is context-dependent. Cautious application of these prefixes is important in conveying the intended meaning. The two

words 'disinterested' (impartial) and 'uninterested' (not concerned with) are semantically dissimilar. For example:

> 'A referee should be disinterested in officiating game.'

> 'A student may be uninterested if his teacher is not pedagogical.'

Normally, a referee should be neutral in officiating game. This means that a disinterested party has to be a neutral party, often used as a mediator. Furthermore, the word 'disinterested' means that the described person is not interested, is not involved, and probably is never involved in a situation and therefore does not stand to benefit from it. 'Uninterested' may mean having no interest. The word 'uninterested', means that the person is unresponsive, bored or even unconcerned with the situation at hand. Therefore, considering these explanations, the appropriate negative prefixes as exemplified above are *dis-* not *un-* respectively.

The negative prefixes *un-* and *dis-* can be attached to the host word 'organized', based on the context. The word 'unorganized' means not having been systematized efficiently and, 'disorganized' means lacking order. Compare these two sentences:

> 'Ali's room seemed unorganized (but he could find anything he needed in a moment)';

> 'Ali's room was disorganized (and he could never find whatever he needed).'

The word 'unorganized' is mild and may be neutral whereas the word 'disorganized' is strong and disapproving. That goes to show that 'disorganized' refers to something, which is out of order to the extent that it is messy or disorderly. In this context, 'unorganized' refers to something that is disorderly, but not necessarily something that is a mess. The host word 'organize' is an example of adjective with multiple negative prefixes. Besides these two negative prefixes, it can also accommodate 'non-' to form 'non-organized'. 'Non-' to attach to 'organized' is as well context-dependent. Thus, it refers to something in which nothing organized exists, for example:

> 'The crime is non-organized.'

Non-organized crime in this perspective is a crime in which there is no organization at all as expected.

Another adjective that can carry multiple prefixes is 'logical'. The use of negative prefixes such as *il-, a-,* and *non-* with host word 'logical' creates different semantic effects as presented below:

'Their conclusions are illogical.'
'Their conclusions are alogical.'
'Their conclusions are *non-*logical.'

'Illogical' and 'alogical' in this usage are synonymous, because both mean not 'logical'. The word 'alogical' is uncommon. The word 'alogical' refers to being outside the bounds of that to which logic can apply – simply not based on logic. This means the word stands to express what is outside the scope of logic as opposed to non-logical. 'Non-logical' as used here means not within the framework of logic. So, in a context where one is supposed to use 'illogical' or 'alogical', the use of 'non-logical' is inappropriate and may affect the intended meaning. When 'non-' is used in this context, the meaning is changed.

The negative prefix *il-* is an allomorph of *in-,* often, it is attached to the word beginning with letter 'l'. However, the target word 'logical' may carry more than one negative prefix. Nevertheless, the commonest negative prefix attached to logic is *il-* (illogical), which means without sound reasoning according to rules of logic.

The negative prefixes: *un-* and *mis-* can be attached to 'used'. The semantic functions of 'unused' and 'misused' are seemingly confusing to the many language users. In the sentences below, each presents different shades of meaning:

'The car is *un*used; it is new.'
'The car is misused; it has broken.'

In the first sentence, the intended meaning is that the car has never been put to use. The second sentence explains how the car is not used properly. It is posited that *un-* attaches to adjectives formed from participial as in 'unseen', 'unarmed', 'untouched', etc. Therefore, 'used' is a participial and can carry *un-,* which means 'not'. The word 'unused'

refers to 'not being or never having been used' and 'not familiar with'. Whereas, 'mis-' means incorrect or poor so when attached to the example above, it means incorrectly or poorly used. Therefore, 'unused' in the first sentence it means the car has never been use whereas in the second sentence it means it is incorrectly or poorly used.

The word 'professional' carries multiple negative prefixes. The semantic effects of unprofessional and non-professional are context-based. Examining these from different domains of the usage, the following sentences would guide language users:

> 'He displayed an *un*professional skill by pulling down an opponent in the 18, an area close to the goal post.'
> 'He displayed a *non*-professional skill by pulling down an opponent in the 18, an area close to the goal post.'

In this context, the 'appropriate' negative prefix to be attached to 'professional' is *un-*The situation can best be described with the use of 'un-' here. The word 'unprofessional' is defined by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English as 'behaving in a way that is not acceptable in a profession', which is the concern here, whereas 'non-professionals' is something that is not associated with a set standard. In any case, both the negative prefixes negate the word 'professional', but the context only allows or accommodates 'un-' as the target word stands for players not the behaviour of the players.

The word 'human' can carry multiple negative prefixes. The negative prefixes 'in-' and 'non-' are traditionally attachable to the host word 'human'. For this reason, (Dzuganova, 2008) explains that 'nonhuman' refers to entity, which is devoid of human nature and characteristics, for example, robots, and animals. When in- is attached, the meaning is completely changed. According to Barad (2012) in his work, 'On Touching – the inhuman that therefore I am', describes inhuman as without any feelings of pity. The clear distinction between 'inhuman' and 'nonhuman' are that, 'inhuman' ascribes to an act of cruelty, barbarism, or sadism whereas 'nonhuman' attributes to characteristics, which are non-inherent of human.

Conclusion

Context determines the specific negative prefixes to use in order to convey intended meaning –context here means sentence meaning. It is important to note that there are two kinds of adjectives to which negative prefixes can be attached – they are core adjectives and derived adjectives. Core adjectives are adjectives which no affix is attached to whereas derived adjectives are the opposite. Some adjectives carry multiple negative prefixes, and the appropriateness of which is based on what the language user intends to communicate. Some negative prefixes do not collocate with all adjectives and may amount to impossible words which do not have space in the lexicon of English. Therefore, negative prefixes are used to negate meaning, as such learning when to attach them to adjectives is very important. Mastering the concept of negative prefixes is paramount.

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