

THE EVOLUTION OF GERMAN ABSTRACT NOUN SUFFIXES

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The article deals with the issue of German word-formation component development in terms of synergetic methodology. Wide possibilities within learning mechanisms of word-formation self-regulation as an open unbalanced non-linear system is provided by synergetics – a self-organization theory aimed at discovering general development principles. The main attention in the article is paid to analyzing the word-formation aspect of abstract nouns in the Old High German language. Genetic and semantic links of word-formation suffixes of German abstract nouns derived from notional lexemes are described. Fusion of the synergetic and anthropocentric paradigms within linguistic researches is regarded as a proper new tool for considering both the language system in general and its subsystems in particular.

Key words: *evolution, synergetic methodology, word-formation.*

The synergetics notion of self-organization and the following principle of circularity in living-matter organization perform a great role in understanding essence and functions of the language as a natural (mental and biological) sign system. One does not wonder that the problem of language systemacy, having drawn little interest of theorists at the end of the 20th century, attracts today linguists again [1–8, etc.], which conditions the relevance of our research. From A.E. Kibrik's perspective, "the current linguistics is getting close to the limit when the autonomic descriptive approach becomes out-of-date, <...> linguistics begins to operate with quite involved complex language objects each of which consists of the infinite component set" [6, p. 103–104].

The research **purpose** is analyzing Old High German word-formation suffixes of abstract nouns that appeared on the basis of independent lexical units but currently are used on the synchronous level as grammaticalized abstract-content markers.

For reaching the above-mentioned purpose we are going to complete the following **tasks**:

- to define the relevance of synergetics main notions for researching the word-formation system;
- to describe genetic links of word-formation suffixes of German abstract nouns;
- to reconstruct the original semantics of word-formation suffixes of German abstract nouns;
- to provide a propositional scheme of derivative formation.

The research **object** of the given article is Old High German word-formation suffixes of abstract nouns.

The research **subject** is covering the origin of word-formation suffixes of German abstract nouns.

The recent linguistic schools define the following aspects researched in terms of N. V. Piateev's synergetic problematics [9, p. 64–67]:

- the today's theoretical linguistics cannot answer relevant applied-linguistics questions about synergetic-mechanism design providing language self-organization and adaptation to environment dynamics, which makes 21st-century linguists focus primarily on problems of language and speech synergy and use the current system linguistics as a common foundation of productive linguistic trends;
- the world is regarded as an involved super-system with a great amount of interdependent links, while the language is treated as an objective component of the

surrounding world that exists according to the common universe laws including its material and non-material display;

– the language as a social phenomenon and intermediate human creation is simultaneously a self-generating and self-adjusting mechanism that operates within combinative laws and schemes;

– the language holds syntagmatic monosemanticity of constituent units and paradigmatic polysemanticity of their components, is simultaneously characterized by structural arrangement of units and by probabilistic indefiniteness of their choice, which makes today's linguists regard the language as a complex adaptive system that constantly balances on the edge of dynamic chaos understood in terms of synergetics;

– when linguists research different national languages, they must accept the interaction of systemic and anti-systemic, structural and anti-structural trends in all language spheres and on all language levels because such a confrontation is defined by the nature of human natural languages and serves as a source for their further development;

– the language at any certain moment is neither completely static nor completely homogeneous, which makes linguists regard language changes as a common, constant and rather regular process;

– the language proves to be both synchronically stable and diachronically changeable: at each given moment the language is regarded as a complex structure where elements of different historic language-development co-existing stages are crossed, overlaid (that concerns parent language and neologism language as well which will be applied, for example, in an age);

– spontaneity of language-dynamics processes is revealed in their non-liability to human observation and control, which, however, does not mean that spontaneous language-dynamics processes are similar to nature laws: any spontaneous language-dynamics process (for example, a phonetic law) is reproduced through human language activity, speech acts, which makes researchers regard spontaneous language processes as a result of conscious actions undertaken without foreseeing their consequences for the language system;

– conscious language-system improving consists in foreseeing human-activity consequences for the language system in general; among conscious actions one discerns: 1) word formation for changing vocabulary, 2) arranging texts and controlling their generation and receipt, 3) arranging the language system itself by means of norming (for example, formal clerical norms and rules, copyright laws, censorship).

A great potential for researching mechanisms of word-formation self-regulation as an open unbalanced non-linear system is provided by synergetics - a self-organization theory aimed at “discovering common self-organization and development laws and at applying respective designed models widely” [10, p. 99–113]. Synergetics studies common self-organization and development principles of different complex systems explaining the appropriateness of existence of transient states, non-linear and unconventional decisions in terms of solving certain tasks.

It is this reason that makes us apply methods and principles of the anthropocentric and synergetic paradigms as the most optimal for describing the language word-formation system.

By researching the word-formation aspect of Old High German abstract nouns one could define a set of stable derivational elements performing a similar function – marking lexical units of the same semantic community, of the same single derivational space, namely of the abstract-noun lexical-semantic group. This set comprises representants of the word-formation abstractness category which is regarded as “a unity of word-formation meaning by different expressing means” [11, p. 25], or “a class of lexemes characterized by a single derivational function” [12, p. 227]. Along with prefix formants that performed a certain role in marking abstract nouns, word-formation suffixes belonging to this category can be treated as main and dominant means of producing lexemes within the analyzed lexical-semantic group.

Both abstract words and abstractness suffixes are widely known to have been secondary and later formations in the vocabulary of Old Germanic languages. Having appeared in the sphere of separate types of noun declension, abstract vocabulary was originally produced by stem-forming suffixes each of which had its own class of lexical units and was (as it is believed) a class indicator. The later appearance of more abstract nouns within these declension types proves the supposition of stem-forming-suffix semantics having served as a major factor by paradigmatic producing of the analyzed lexical layer. Consequently, primary abstract nouns marked in terms of word formation by stem-forming suffixes are a very old abstract-vocabulary layer and carry an explicit indication on a peculiar format of representing world knowledge. Further formation of separate abstract-noun word-formation elements (within different declension types), phonetically more distinct and stabler ones, promoted fixing the formats laid by stem-forming suffixes. Following development of abstract-noun suffixes from secondary word components had, probably, to fix the laid tradition still more formally and more distinctly.

The main problem is detecting genetic links and providing subsequent reconstruction of original semantics of the defined suffix elements for further analysis of propositional structures of the abstract-noun word-formation category.

According to the researching of V. M. Zhirmunskii, Old High German stage is characterized by increased development of a whole number of new word-formative categories that express the needs of developing abstract thinking. This process is accomplished in German translated prose under the influence of more developed Latin language. On the one hand, to express abstract notions, some old suffixes are used (-ung, -nis, -ida), on the other hand, absolutely new suffixes are created from initially separate words with general meaning: -heit, -scaft, -tuom (“kind”, “image”, “property”, “state”). These new formations initially expressed higher degree of logical abstraction, while earlier categories of abstract words had more objective character. This is what the difference between *adh. hōhī* “Höhe” - specific “height” of a certain mountain, and *hōchheit* (“height” in the figurative sense – “elevation”), between *sezzī* “position” (compare *ambahtsezzi* “Amtsbesetzung”) and *sezzunga* (*das Setzen*) etc. [13, p. 268–273].

The suffix -ing, -ing occurs in all Germanic languages in patronymic meaning (generic names): compare *Amalungi* (of Goths), *Carolingi* (of Franks). Its patronymic meaning is connected to its usage in local names ending with -ingen, -ungen (Dat. plural *ahd. -ingum, -ungum*), that desposes the initial generic settlement of Germanic peoples: compare *Reutlingen, Solingen, Kissingen, Salzingen, Morungen* and others. That's where the development of personal meaning of the ending -ing in the words *kunig* “König”, *ediling* “noble” (“by origin”), *arming* “бедняк”, *mahting* “mighty person” etc. It is preserved in the Modern German language in the extended form of the suffix -ling, distracted from the words that already contained the suffix -l, as *ahd. ediling* (from *edili* “Edel”): compare *got. gadiliggs* “relative”, *ahd. jungiling* “Jüngling” etc.; in the New German compare *Flüchtling, Fremdling, Liebling, Lehrling*; often with pejorative shade, that may have evolved from diminutive meaning of the formation with -l: compare *Frömmling, Klügling, Schwächling, Weichling, Römling* etc.

The suffix -ing in the abstract meaning is not found in the Gothic language. In Old High German it has the form -unga (feminine). In poetry, for example by *Otfried* (IX century) it is found only a few times in verbal nouns with more substantive meaning: for example, *manunga* (“reminder”), *samanunga* (“meeting”) and a few others. The development of proper abstract nouns with the ending -ung is deployed with extreme intensity in Old German clerical prose in VIII-X centuries in translation from Latin: compare *sceidunga* “division” (lat. *divisio*), *wirkunga* “action” (lat. *operatio*), *zeigunga* “definition” (lat. *determinatio*), *korunga* “test” (lat. *probatio*); from verbs with the suffixes: *wehsilunga* “change” (lat. *mutatio*), from *wehsilōn* “wechseln”, *heilagunga* “sanctification” (lat. *sanctificatio*) from *heilagōn* and many others. In the further development of the German language this category becomes the general form of the formation of abstract nouns and reigns in the scientific and technical vocabulary of the XIX and XX centuries on a par with

substantivized infinitives. Such formations from verbs with prefixes and suffixes are commonly used: compare *Erbauung*, *Betretung*, *Versuchung*, *Absetzung*, *Aufklärung*, *Zusammenstellung*, *Beglaubigung*, *Beschädigung*, *Berichtigung*, *Verherrlichung*, *Verheimlichung*, *Regierung*, *Einquartierung*, *Sozialisierung* etc.; similar situation occurs with syntactic adhesions: *Grundsteinlegung*, *Instandsetzung*, *Beschlagnehmung* etc.

Some words in this group have lost their verbal character and turned into ordinary nouns: compare *Stimmung* "mood", *Sitzung* "session", *Dämmerung* "twilight" etc.

The suffix *-nis* is found in the Gothic language in the form of *-assus*, which is expanded into *-nassus* after verbs and nouns ending with *-n*: compare got. *Ibnassus* "Gleichheit" (from *ibns* "eben", *gaibnjan* "ebnen"), *fraujinassus* "Herrschaft" (from *fraujinōn* "herrschen") etc. In Old High German the suffix has another form: *-nissa*, *-nissī* (feminine), *-nissi*, *-nessi* (neuter). The duality of the genus is preserved till our days: compare *Geheimnis* (neuter) - *Besorgnis* (feminine), etc. The development of this form also occurs in Old High German translated prose, for example, *virstandnissi* "Verständnis" (lat. *intellectus*), *kihalthnissa* "Enthaltsamkeit" (lat. *pudicitia*), *forlāznessi* "absolution" (lat. *remissio*) etc. Besides the formations from verbs and especially from strong participles, to which this category probably owes its *-n*, there initially are the abstract formations from adjectives and nouns: compare *heilagnissa* "Heiligkeit" (lat. *sanctitas*) from *heilag*, *gotnissi* "Gottheit" from *Gott* and others. In the New German the lexical composition of this group is significantly changed, but there are also the formations from the same grammatical categories (if possible - with umlaut): *Erkenntnis*, *Geständnis*, *Begräbnis* (from verbs); *Finsternis*, *Fäulnis* (from adjectives), *Bildnis* (from nouns).

The suffix ahd. *-ida* (got. *-iþa*) was used mainly for the formation of abstract nouns from adjectives. Very often in Gothic: *daubiþa* "Taubheit", *diupiþa* "Tiefe", *weihiþa* "Heiligkeit" (from the adjective *weihs* "heilig") etc.; in Old High German translated prose - both from the adjectives and verbs: compare *reinida* "Reinheit", *heilida* "Heilung", *mihhilda* "Größe" and others. This suffix was mostly distributed in the scientific prose. In Middle High German is supplanted by formations with *-heit* and others. In New German only a few isolated words survived, that have lost their original abstract meaning: compare *Gemeinde* (ahd. *Gimeinida*), *Gebärde* (ahd. *gibārīda*), *Beschwerde* (ahd. *biswārīda*), *Freude* (ahd. *frewīda*) and a few others.

New suffixes formed from separate words, are initially attached to preceding noun or adjective according to the type of compound words. In the Gothic language the suffixes of such origin has not yet occurred. Their emergence in Old High German shows the failure of the old language means for the needs of the complicating abstract thought.

The word *heit* (got. *haidus* (masculine), ahd. mhd. *heit* (feminine)) means "person", "position", "kind" in an independent use. In Old High German, it can be attached to nouns and adjectives. For example, ahd. *scalcheit* "slavery" from *scalc* "Slave" (lit.: "the position of slave"), *magatheit* "virginity", *tōrheit* "stupidity", *frīheit* (lit.: "free state"), *wīsheit*, *hōchheit* and others. It is characteristic that in contrary to the old, more specific suffix *-ī*, the suffix *-heit* that competes with it, is very often attached to adjectives that have abstract meaning, especially derivatives: compare ahd. *gelīchheit* "Gleichheit", *einicheit* "Einigkeit", *stetecheit* "Stetigkeit", *sālīcheit* "Seligkeit" and others. In the Middle High German the new ending *-keit* is formed from the combination *-ic* + *heit* (mhd. *-ekeit*): compare mhd. *blødekeit* "Blödigkeit", *līhtekeit* "Leichtigkeit" etc. Later on, it is transferred to the words that did not have the suffix *-ig*: compare mhd. *itelkeit* "Eitelkeit", *lūterkeit* "Lauterkeit" etc. The distribution of *-keit* and *-heit* in the modern language fluctuates. After the suffix *-n* goes *-heit*: *Offenheit*, *Nüchternheit*; after *-er* - usually *-keit*: *Bitterkeit*, *Magerkeit*, as well as after the suffixes *-bar*, *-sam*, *-lich* and some others: *Fruchtbarkeit*, *Duldsamkeit*, *Herrlichkeit*. A double formation *-ig* + *keit* is formed with the suffix *-ig*: *Traurigkeit*, *Beständigkeit* etc. This ending is distributed independently later on: compare *Bangigkeit*, *Dreistigkeit* - besides *bange*, *dreist*; with certain variations that allow further differentiation of meanings: *Neuigkeit* (*Neuheit*), *Reinigkeit* (*Reinheit*), *Feuchtigkeit* (*Feuchtheit*), *Kleinigkeit* (*Kleinheit*) and others.

The word *schaf* (*schaf*), an abstract feminine noun formed from ahd. *Scepfen* “*schaffen*”, meant “the state” (“*Beschaffenheit*”). Compounds with *-schaft* are less numerous than with *-heit*, and often refer to the state, occupation and character of human relations (usually from nouns, rarely from adjectives): for example, *vriuntschaf(t)* “*Freundschaft*”, *formuntschaf(t)* “*Vormundschaft*”, *nachburschaft* “*Nachbarschaft*”, *liebschaft* “*Liebschaft*”; the designation of the state and occupation acquire collective sense: *priesterschaft* (originally “*Priesteramt*”), *riterschaft* (initially “*Ritterwürde*”); also *Bürgerschaft*, *Bruderschaft*; in dialects - *Freundschaft* with the meaning of “*Verwandschaft*” (“*relatives*”). Acquiring abstract value, *-schaft* can compete with *-heit*: compare *Eigenschaft* “*property*”, *Knechtschaft* “*slavery*” and others.

The word ahd. mhd. *tuom* (masculine/neuter), (got. *dōms* (masculine/neuter), eng. *doom* “*judgement*”) is used in the sense of “*custom*”, “*law*”, “*power*”. In compound words, it meant “*state*”, “*social position*”: cp. *munichtuom* “*Mönchtum*” (letters. “*state of monk*”), *magettuom* “*Jungfräulichkeit*” (also *-heit, -schaft*). In this sense it competes with *-schaft* and may also have a collective meaning: compare *Rittertum* - *Ritterschaft*, *Bürgertum* - *Bürgerschaft*. From the meaning of “*state*” and “*custom*”, abstract nouns as *Irrtum*, *Christentum*, *Luthertum* are developed that indicate the way of thinking, religion, and so on.

In some cases, the meaning of all three suffixes are crossed, and the difference between them requires special lexical interpretation: compare *Eigenheit* - “*originality*”, *Eigenschaft* - “*attribute*”, *Eigentum* - “*Property*”; *Meisterschaft* - “*skill*”, *Meistertum* - “*position of the master*”; *Christentum* - “*Christianity*”, *Christenheit* - “*Christian nations*” (collective).

Due to perservation of the developed system of word-formation in the German language, the formation of new suffixes from independent words continued in the modern language. Compare *-mann*: *Edelmann*, *Amtmann*, *Bauersmann*, *Biedermann*; *-vogel*: *Spaßvogel*, *Nachtvogel*, *Spottvogel*, *Rachvogel*; *-werk*: *Schuhwerk*, *Backwerk*, *Triebwerk*, *Räderwerk*; *-zeug*: *Viehzeug*, *Schreibzeug*, *Fischzeug*, *Werkzeug* and T. d. These words, losing their independent objective value, are getting closer to the type of derivational suffixes: the first two of them are the names of the persons, the last two are close in meaning to the collective nouns.

Summarizing the above-mentioned material allows making a conclusion that all considered suffix components originating from separate words and performing the function of suffixes show the trend to broaden its content till the most generalized semantics of state, image, appearance and shape, property, manner and behavior.

The feature of suffixes belonging to this group is the following fact: when one created abstract nouns, all of these suffixes were added solely to nominal stems (noun and adjective ones). This circumstance let us suppose that the considered suffix group was originally oriented to realizing the propositional scheme “*subject (animate, inanimate)*”. A common thing for all types of actualizing the given proposition is this characteristic being formatted within the word-formation structure of the derivative word as an independent object in isolation from the real carrier, the holder of this characteristic. Concerning such nouns, it is fair to remark about the fact that “*non-language essences marked by substantive forms with ultimately abstract meanings turn out to be represented in absolutized manner, which indicates the highest degree of their generalized comprehension that is as much as possible abstracted from concrete situationality, from correlation of the situation fixed by the derived word with the subject and object*” [14, p. 222]. In other words, “*when abstract nouns (verbal and adjectival derivatives) provide nominalization of propositional structures, they mark achievements of higher-level conceptualization of corresponding non-language essences*” [ibid.].

The analyzed Old High German suffix elements of abstract nouns are the youngest among abstractness suffixes in terms of their origin. Their inherent single function of an absolutizing abstract-content marker allows supposing that development of semantic content of word-formation formants of the abstract-noun lexical-semantic group was led to broadening till the most generalized meaning “*a certain property, a certain characteristic*”.

Undoubtedly, the source of the given trend should be searched for in older periods of the language history when word-formation marking was more closely connected with such linguistic factors as a noun declension type and its grammatical gender, a deriving-stem belonging to a certain part of speech, etc. Moreover, the presence of some formants for absolutized abstract nouns indicates the possible existence of other formats of abstract-noun reproducing that is represented by the rest of the suffixes of the abstractness word-formation category.

Thus, the fusion of the synergetic and anthropocentric paradigms in linguistic researches will provide a new insight into the language system and its subsystems. Advanced researches within the synergetic methodology can comprise researches of such complex systems as word families, especially in terms of their diachronic analyzing as etymologic families and genetic paradigms which are a good example of super-complex multi-component dynamic self-developing systems interacting actively with environment – with the surrounding world reflected in the language.

ДО ЕВОЛЮЦІЇ АБСТРАКТНИХ СУФІКСІВ ІМЕННИКІВ В НІМЕЦЬКІЙ МОВІ

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Стаття присвячена питанню еволюції словотворчих елементів німецької мови крізь призму синергетичної методології. Величезні можливості у вивченні механізмів саморегуляції словотвору як відкритої нерівноважної нелінійної системи дає синергетика – теорія самоорганізації, спрямована на відкриття універсальних законів еволюції. Основну увагу в статті сфокусовано на аналізі словотвірного аспекту абстрактних іменників в давньоверхньонімецькій мові. Описуються генетичні та семантичні зв'язки словотворчих суфіксів абстрактних іменників німецької мови, утворених з самостійних лексем. Констатується, що злиття синергетичної і антропоцентричної парадигм в лінгвістичних дослідженнях допоможе по-новому подивитись як на мовну систему в цілому, так і на її підсистеми, зокрема.

Ключові слова: еволюція, синергетична методологія, словотвір.

К ЭВОЛЮЦИИ АБСТРАКТНЫХ СУФФИКСОВ ИМЕН СУЩЕСТВИТЕЛЬНЫХ В НЕМЕЦКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

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Статья посвящена вопросу эволюции словообразовательных элементов немецкого языка сквозь призму синергетической методологии. Огромные возможности в изучении механизмов саморегуляции словообразования как открытой неравновесной нелинейной системы дает синергетика – теория самоорганизации, направленная на открытие универсальных законов эволюции. Основное внимание в статье сфокусировано на анализе словообразовательного аспекта абстрактных имен существительных в древневерхненемецком языке. Описываются генетические и семантические связи словообразовательных суффиксов абстрактных имен существительных немецкого языка, образованных из самостоятельных лексем. Констатируется, что слияние синергетической и антропоцентрической парадигм в лингвистических исследованиях поможет по-новому взглянуть как на языковую систему в целом, так и на ее подсистемы, в частности.

Ключевые слова: эволюция, синергетическая методология, словообразование.

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