

Review of Sánchez Fajardo, José A. 2022. *Pejorative Suffixes and Combining Forms in English*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. ISBN: 978-9-027-25822-9. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.222>

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José Antonio Sánchez Fajardo's monograph presents the to-date most detailed and extensive study solely dedicated to how pejoration is reflected in present-day English word-formational paradigms. Sánchez Fajardo zooms in on 15 suffixes and combining forms by analysing about 950 lexemes which were systematically extracted from corpora and from dictionary entries. His study provides an intricate overview of the cognitive processes involved in the formation of morphologically complex English lexemes with depreciative meaning. According to Finkbeiner *et al.* (2016: 1), pejoration is linked to attitude in that it expresses "the speaker's evaluation of something as bad." Other definitions of pejoration focus on the process that describes a type of diachronic semantic change affecting lexemes so that their connotation changes from positive or neutral to a more negative one (cf. Finkbeiner *et al.* 2016: 1). Sánchez Fajardo's account of pejorative morphology is informed by both definitions: his analysis is mostly synchronic and thus focuses on how specific morphemes reflect negative attitudes of contemporary speakers. At the same time, his investigation pays attention to diachronic developments that have affected morphemes and lexemes that are in contemporary use.

The first chapter, entitled "Pejoration and Beyond," introduces definitions and terminology in the area of pejoration as well as the most important concepts that are used throughout the book. The second chapter, "How Pejoratives are Made," illustrates which word-formational processes are involved in the emergence of novel pejoratives. Here, Sánchez Fajardo also develops the four-fold semantic distinction of pejorative categories: 1) diminution, 2) excess, 3) resemblance, and 4) metonymisation. The chapter sets the scene

for the case studies of the following chapters. Chapters three to six make up the heart of the study and each of them revolves around one of the four categories.

Chapter three is dedicated to diminution and pejoration. Sánchez Fajardo finds that “an attitudinal value (such as a pejorative one) can originate from a physical one (such as a diminutive one)” (p. 62). He explains that, in the case of diminution, smallness is either associated with a state of helplessness, which is linked to endearment, or it is associated with insignificance, which is linked to depreciative meaning. Both speaker and hearer need to understand which of the two readings is intended for a term to unfold its pejorative sense. According to Sánchez Fajardo, this connection at the interface of semantics and pragmatics explains the close link between diminutive morphology and pejoration. To illustrate this, the chapter zooms in on the *-ie* (*druggie* ‘drug addict’) and the *-o* suffixes (*thicko* ‘somebody with low intellect’). He finds that pejorative *-ie* derivatives can be denominal (*queenie* ‘homosexual man’, p. 73), deverbal (*weepie* ‘tearjerker’, p. 79), deadjectival (*greenie* ‘an environmentalist’, p. 82), and deadverbial (*outie* ‘someone coming out as homosexual’, p. 71). He observes that deverbal *-ie* derivatives are less polysemous than deadjectival and denominal ones. His analysis leads him to conclude that most bases of *-ie* derivatives and those of most *-o* derivatives have a neutral connotation (p. 98). He observes that the *-ie* suffix is frequently used to form derivatives from pejoratives relating to colour and origin, whereas the *-o* suffix is more likely to be used to form pejoratives relating to someone’s mental state, e.g., *maddo* (p. 100).

Chapter four deals with the analysis of word-formational elements with the sense of ‘excess’ that are used to form pejorative words. Sánchez Fajardo observes that “having too much of something can be [...] framed as toxic” (p. 102) and thus excess is linked to pejoration. Chapter four discusses instantiations of several suffixes, such as *-ard* (*drunkard* ‘somebody who drinks too much’) and combining forms such as *-holic* (*chocoholic* ‘someone addicted to chocolate’), *-rhea* (*emojarrhea* ‘overuse of emojis instead of words’), *-later* (*bardolater* ‘an ardent admirer of Shakespeare’), *-itis* (*conjunctivitis* ‘someone overusing conjunctions’), *-maniac* (*movie-maniac* ‘somebody who is crazy about movies’) and *-porn* (*foodporn* - ‘excessive display of scrumptious food’). He points out that, although the word-formational elements analysed in the chapter have different etymological origins, they have in common that they denote that something to do with their base, such as a quality or trait, is “excessive or extremely augmented” (p. 104). His analysis of word-formational elements denoting excess shows that compared to combining forms and splinters, suffixes

are more restricted, due to a low degree in semantic and pragmatic restrictions and their ability to combine with novel bases (p. 140).

Chapter 5 centres around the pathway of resemblance to pejoration by analysing *-ish* (*nice-ish* ‘sort of nice’), *-oid* (*greenoid* ‘someone pretending to care about the environment’) and *-aster* (*poetaster* ‘someone trying to be a poet but butchering the language’). Sánchez Fajardo distinguishes two kinds of resemblance connected to depreciative meaning: there is approximation (consider *apish* ‘like an ape’, where the negative traits of the *ape* are taken as points of comparison to express depreciation), as opposed to *nice-ish*, in which the addition of *-ish* introduces a scale to what is denoted by the base, indicating that a person does not fulfil all criteria to deserve to be described as *nice* (p. 142). Sánchez Fajardo finds that *-oid* was first used in highly technical contexts and is now used for “the expression of negative meanings” (p. 158). He highlights that contemporary deadjectival and denominal *-oid* derivatives are always depreciative, consider adjectival *walrusoid* ‘resembling a walrus’ and nominal *greenoid* ‘someone pretending to care about the environment’ (p. 157). His analysis highlights that lexemes expressing depreciative approximation are highly polysemous as they can refer to physical resemblance (*walrusoid*), resemblance in manner (*womanish*), resemblance that comes short of an established norm and is thus inadequate (*nice-ish*) and inadequacy instead of genuineness (*poetaster*).

Chapter 6 examines the role of metonymisation in pejoration by providing an account of word-formational elements that denote a part of the whole relationship to the referent or that indicate an association with a referent (p. 164). To this end, Sánchez Fajardo focuses on pejoratives ending in the combining forms *-head* (*egghead* ‘someone too much into science’), *-pants* (*smartypants* ‘a know-it-all’) and *-ass* (*smartass* ‘a know-it-all’). According to the author, pejoratives ending in *-head* and *-pants* have in common that most of them relate to “attitudinal features or mental states” (p. 174). Sánchez Fajardo argues that the semantics of pejoratives ending in *-ass* bear traces of the polysemy of the free lexeme *ass*, which either denotes an animal (‘*asinus*’) or it refers to one’s bottom (p. 178). Moreover, he observes that the intensifier function of *ass* is still reflected in some *-ass* pejoratives, which gives rise to a set of interesting observations providing novel perspectives on the interface of morphology and syntax (pp. 180ff.). The final chapter “Concluding Remarks” provides a brief summary of the most important findings in the study. According to Sánchez Fajardo, the origins of offensiveness of most pejoratives is linked to an attribute of the denoted entity or it is based on a metaphorical extension of the nexus. Thus, in the case

of *fatso* ‘someone who is overweight’, the attitude that being overweight is a negative attribute renders the derivative pejorative. In the case of *bookie* ‘a compulsive reader’, the fact that a person who likes reading spends a lot of time with books is picked out and is metonymically extended in the derivative. By discussing the emergence of the *-holic* paradigm (p. 186), Sánchez Fajardo observes that suffixes, splinters and combining forms that are attested in connotationally neutral as well as pejorative lexemes are more likely to be used to form more words. In his conclusion, he highlights that the way properties of concepts are represented in our minds is reflected in the paradigms of evaluative morphemes. The appendix contains a collection of tables providing alphabetical lists of lexemes ending in those word-formational elements that form the basis of the present study. Furthermore, these lists contain information regarding the sense of the respective lexemes. Overall, the structure of the book is clear, and the individual chapters are well balanced.

Sánchez Fajardo’s analysis applies the frameworks of Construction Grammar and morphopragmatics to a lexicographic approach that is informed by corpus data. The title of the book reveals that Sánchez Fajardo’s analysis is concerned with pejoration in the field of morphology. In distinguishing suffixes and combining forms, the title also draws the attention to terminological and categorical challenges that the author comes to grips with by drawing on the framework of Construction Morphology (Booij 2007, 2010, 2015, 2019). Accordingly, Sánchez Fajardo assumes that “suffixes and combining forms are meaningful units whose semantics is built upon word usage and paradigmaticity” (p. 3). In line with this approach, in his analysis, all complex words that have the same word-formational element in common belong to a schema. The main aim of the book is to provide an analysis of word-formational elements which add pejorative meaning or contribute pejorative meaning to the bases they attach to, as is the case for *ie*, consider *drug* > *druggie* (cf. pp. 44, 67f.). *Drug* is a neutral term denoting ‘medication, potentially psychedelic substance’, whereas *druggie* is a depreciative term used to refer to ‘a drug addict’. While *-ie* is a suffix, the categorical status of many of the word-formational elements under scrutiny is not as clear-cut in Sánchez Fajardo’s study. Therefore, Sánchez Fajardo distinguishes suffixes from some other word-formational elements by using the umbrella term ‘final combining forms’ (cf. Warren 1990: 4, 43), which include:

1. Neoclassical combining forms with Greek or Latin roots (e.g., *-maniac*).
2. Native combining forms, which can be used as free lexemes (e.g., *-head*).
3. Splinters (e.g., *-holic*).

Sánchez Fajardo observes that suffixes and combining forms are equally affected by semantic change leading to sense restrictions that “affect the denotational plane and functional meaning” (p. 43) bringing about pejorative meaning. Throughout the book, Sánchez Fajardo accounts for the formal and functional properties of the word-formational elements under scrutiny by developing representations of their morphological schemas. This illustrates that, despite the difficulties regarding a clear-cut categorisation of many word-formational elements that are part of his study, the properties of these elements can be captured by applying the Construction Morphology framework.

In addition, Sánchez Fajardo’s study is informed by componential analysis. Thus, as part of his semantic analysis, to account for differences and similarities of derivatives belonging to the same schema, he juxtaposes them in tables. To illustrate parallels and differences, he then breaks their senses down into meaning components. Thereby, he is able to capture the nuances of meaning of individual derivatives that belong to the same schema. Moreover, in this way, he establishes parallels between schemas that are related through their semantics, as is the case for *-rrhea* and *-include* (p. 120 f.), which are both commonly used in the medical field to refer to diseases. According to Sánchez Fajardo, in the case of the pejorative splinter *-rrhea*, only the component of [+excess] is present, whereas [+disease], [+discharge] and [+flow] are no longer present, consider *bangorrhoea* ‘overuse of exclamation marks’ (p. 120). Sánchez Fajardo finds that this is slightly different for *-itis* derivatives, which can be connected to disease (consider *whatsappitis* ‘whatsapp obsession’). In addition, *-itis* can evoke a sense of anxiety, e.g., *schoolitis* ‘fear of school’ or nostalgia, e.g., *Novemberitis* ‘a yearning for November’ (p. 121).

Sánchez Fajardo’s analysis furthermore draws on morphopragmatics (Dressler and Merlini Barberesi 2001), which is reflected in the way he selects his object of study. He is aware that many pejoratives only unfold their depreciative sense in certain contexts and that “any word is potentially pejorative” (p. 44), which is illustrated in his methodological approach. To determine whether a suffix or combining form is pejorative, Sánchez Fajardo relied on corpus searches. To decide whether a word or word-formational element can have depreciative meaning, he considers the co-text and context of use of each item in question. He includes any lexeme and the word-formational element at its end in his list of pejoratives when it was used with depreciative meaning in three times out of 1,000 hits (in the case of highly frequent suffixes out of 5,000 hits, p. 5). In addition, Sánchez Fajardo consults dictionary entries. He only makes tentative assumptions regarding the productivity,

frequency and distribution of the pejorative suffixes and word-formational elements that are part of his study, as he does not undertake a quantitative corpus analysis. For sure, a corpus-driven quantitative analysis of the frequency, distribution and productivity of all potentially pejorative word formational elements discussed in the book in different varieties of English would exceed the scope of the present undertaking. Hence, quantification of the possible influence of genre or sociolinguistic factors, as well as varietal preferences on the pejoratives discussed in this book, offer promising opportunities for future research.

Since English is a pluri-centric language, any study of English pejoratives faces the challenge to account for highly context-specific and culture-specific phenomena. A further complication Sánchez Fajardo points out several times in the book is that many potentially pejorative words can unfold different senses depending on their situational co-text and context of use. Moreover, many pejoratives are colloquial and the system is constantly undergoing change, consider *reappropriation* (pp. 9–10) and *amelioration* (pp. 52–53). Sánchez Fajardo manages to tackle these challenges by combining the Construction Grammar framework with a componential analysis and a morphopragmatic approach. In restricting his study to pejorative suffixation and to pejorative combining forms, and by focussing on four semantic processes connected to pejoration, Sánchez Fajardo is able to provide a systematic account of a wide array of different morphologically complex pejoratives. He neatly captures the formal and functional properties of the schemas analysed in the book, without having to dwell on the elaboration of possible categorical differences between suffixes and combining forms. In the future, his four-fold classification could be applied to other English pejoratives and to pejoratives in other languages. The book indeed offers a rich reservoir of findings and observations in relation to pejoratives and word-formational schemas.

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