

## What you can do with derivation

Laurie Bauer, Victoria University of Wellington

This paper reports on a survey undertaken of the derivational morphology in 42 genetically and areally disparate languages, based on the areas and genetic groupings set up by Dryer (1992). Although we expect to find (and do find) a wide range of derivational categories that are exploited in only one language in the sample, the focus of interest is on those categories which recur in a number of languages. The aim of the research is to discover

1. whether there are particular semantic categories which are regularly marked derivationally, what these might be, and which are the most frequent ones;
2. whether there are implications which hold between any such categories, such that the derivational marking of category X implies that category Y is also marked derivationally in the same language;
3. whether there are pairs of semantic categories which are regularly marked homophonously across languages.

Because of the nature of the experimental method (which relies on published descriptions of the 42 languages selected), and because of the relatively small sample size, the results are not necessarily definitive. Nevertheless, some interesting points do emerge.

In regard to (1), there are more nominal categories which recur regularly across languages than there are of verbal or adjectival categories. The regularly recurring categories are of some interest in themselves. For example, categories involved in the manipulation of valency are more common than categories which derive verbs from other word classes.

In regard to (2) there do not appear to be any implicational scales affecting the presence of derivational categories.

Point (3) is considered in regard to pairs such as agent and instrument, instrument and locative, locative and abstract nominal, reciprocal and reflexive. In addition, the extension of diminutive marking to categories other than noun is considered.

### Reference

Dryer, Matthew S. 1992. The Greenbergian word-order correlations. *Language* 68: 81-138.