Ana Ibáńez Moreno, Elisa González Torres (University of La Rioja):
Determining the criteria that are useful to identify the derivational and/or compositional capabilities of lexical items in Old English.

The issue of word formation in Old English has attracted the attention of many authors, but it is still unresolved in many aspects, due to its complexity. This is due, no doubt, to the enormous productive potential of the language under study, which grants it with a rich and varied amount of lexically derived items, out of which just some of them are totally transparent. Kastovsky himself (1992) states that there is yet a lot to investigate. In fact, the basic premises that would serve to describe and explain the derivational morphology in Old English are still unclear. That is, there is not, at the moment, a consensus as regards the primary methodological distinction between derivation and composition. In order to establish this distinction in a clear way, we need to define a number of criteria that permit us to identify which lexical items should be considered *affixes* and which should be categorized as *non affixes*. In this sense, De la Cruz (1975), Hiltunen (1983) and Kastovsky (1992: 362-364) mention some of them, but they do not provide a fully clear and systematic classification.

For this, this paper deals with the establishment of the principles that should be applied in order to identify certain word segments as affixal. Such principles have been designed by taking into account both external and internal criteria; external, in the sense that some of them are universal, and internal, in the sense that others are only applicable to the language under study, that is, Old English. Some of these criteria are adopted from Martín Arista (forthcoming). Taking these principles as a starting point, we obtain a classification of words in Old English that is based on the distinction between derivation and composition.

Such criteria are formulated in the form of principles: 1) *Principle of Morphological Dependency*, related, as Martín Arista (forthcoming) points out, to the distinction between lexical and grammatical features of words, and to the meaning of each of these features; 2) *Principle of Morphological Hierarchy*, elaborated from the fact that in Old English there do not exist predicates that are composed out of two bound predicates; 3) *Principle of Syllabic Structure*, defined in accord with the frequency with which free or bound predicates are monosyllabic or polysyllabic; 4) *Principle of Secondary Accent*, established departing from the accentuation rules in Old English.

In this piece of work, however, we just apply these criteria to post-field affixes, that is, to suffixes, in spite of the fact that the criteria are applicable to the pre-field of the word too. The reason for this is the necessity to limit our field of research, in order to grant our study with exhaustiveness. For us, suffixes are those segments of complex words, dependent on a lexical base, that do not grant it with any semantic content. Thus, taking the lists of suffixes that are available in the literature (Jember 1975, Quirk and Wrenn 1955) we carry out a revision of them by applying the criteria mentioned above.

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