

# ***From partial to full conversion in English deadjectival nominals: What and where***

**María Granados**  
mgranados00@correo.ugr.es

**Salvador Valera**  
svalera@ugr.es

University of Granada



***Biennial of Czech Linguistics***

**Prague, September 17-20, 2024**

Project Ref. PID2020-119851GB-I00



1. Objectives
  2. Background
  3. Methods
  4. Results
  5. Conclusion
- References



# 1. Objectives

Overview of deadjectival nominals that can be considered full conversion on account of their nominal inflection:



Occurrence and distribution of formations that arise:

- i) from morphological complex adjectives (e.g. formations in *-ed* or *-ful*),
- ii) with and without nominal inflection (e.g. *the coloureds* vs. *the deceased*),
- iii) with any relevant Determiners and/or Modifiers.

Comparison of results across:

- i) formations that allow nominal inflection,
- ii) BrE vs. AmE,
- iii) period,
- iv) register.

## 2. Background

NPs headed by (formal) adjectives interpreted dissimilarly in the literature

Focus on interpretation as conversion, esp. partial conversion (Sweet 1891–98, vol. I: 39):

‘[...] a word really partakes of the formal peculiarities of two different parts of speech’

(for a review of the construction, its interpretations, and related terms, e.g. *syntactic* or *non-prototypical* conversion, cf. Cetnarowska to appear and Soares Rodrigues to appear)

Ample evidence of flexible interpretations of the above conditions in English in the literature

Focus on adjectival forms, with nominal inflection:

- |                         |     |                        |
|-------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| (1) <i>the coloured</i> | vs. | <i>the deceased</i>    |
| <i>the coloureds</i>    | vs. | <i>the deceased</i>    |
| (2) <i>the hopeful</i>  | vs. | <i>the powerful</i>    |
| <i>the hopefuls</i>     | vs. | <i>the powerful(s)</i> |

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Data collection

Complex adjectives by suffixation (Quirk et al. 1985: 1552-1554), Bauer & Huddleston (2002: 1707-1712), Bauer et al. (2013: 289-290):

Quirk et al. (1985)	Bauer & Huddleston (2002)	Bauer et al. (2013)
<i>-all-iall-ical</i>	<i>-all-ari-iall-ual</i>	<i>-all-ari-iall-ual</i>
<i>-ary</i>	<i>-ary</i>	<i>-ary</i>
<i>-ed</i>	<i>-ed</i>	<i>-ed</i>
	<i>-en</i>	<i>-en</i>
<i>-esque</i>		<i>-esque</i>
<i>-ful</i>	<i>-ful</i>	<i>-ful</i>
		<i>-(i)an</i>
<i>-icl-atic</i>	<i>-icl-aticl-ifficl-icall-istic</i>	<i>-icl-ical</i>
	<i>-ine</i>	<i>-ine</i>
<i>-ish</i>		<i>-ish</i>
<i>-less</i>	<i>-less</i>	
<i>-like</i>	<i>-like</i>	<i>-like</i>
<i>-ly</i>	<i>-ly</i>	<i>-ly</i>
		<i>-oid</i>
<i>-ousl-ious</i>	<i>-ousl-eousl-iousl-atious</i>	<i>-ous</i>
<i>-some</i>	<i>-some</i>	<i>-some</i>
<i>-worthy</i>		
<i>-y</i>	<i>-y/-ey</i>	<i>-y</i>

Table 1. Adjective-forming suffixes according to Quirk et al. (1985), Bauer & Huddleston (2002), and Bauer et al. (2013)

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Data collection

Data retrieval from BNC and COCA, assisted with OED for meaning/sense description<sup>1</sup>:

+ inflection

- inflection

A. [*the* + (**adj**) + *adj suffix* + *s*]

(3a) *the* (J\*) \*als

*the* [amateur] *theatricals*

B. [**determiner** + *adj suffix* + *-s*]

(4a) D\* \*als

*such* *theatricals*

C. [**determiner** + **adj** + *adj suffix* + *-s*]

(5a) D\* J\* \*als

*these* *amateur* *theatricals*

D. [*the* + *adj suffix*]

(3b) *the* \*ful V\*

*the* *powerful* [carry on]

E. [**determiner** + *adj suffix*]

(4b) D\* \*ed V\*

*those* *unmarked* [are]

F. [**determiner** + **adj** + *adj suffix*]

(5b) D\* J\* \*less V\*

*some* *longtime* *homeless* [have]

<sup>1</sup> All examples taken from the sample obtained

### 3. Methods

#### 3.1. Data collection

Data retrieval from BNC and COCA, assisted with OED for meaning/sense description<sup>1</sup>:

Suffix	No. of occurrences	Percentage
-al	27	25%
-(i)an	5	5%
-ary	13	12%
-ed	9	8%
-esque	3	3%
-ful	7	6%
-icl-aticl-ificl-ical	17	15%
-ine	6	5%
-less	1	1%
-oid	10	9%
-some	1	1%
-y	11	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2. No. of occurrences of 12 adjectival suffixes for the queries used in BNC and COCA

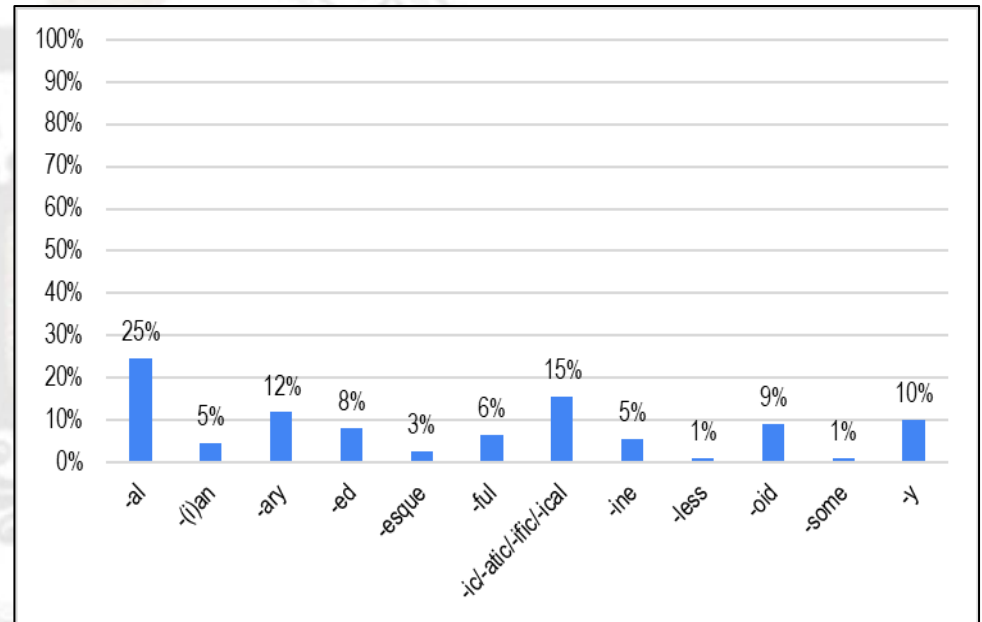


Figure 1. No. of occurrences of 12 adjectival suffixes for the queries used in BNC and COCA (percentages)

<sup>1</sup> All examples taken from the sample obtained

### 3. Methods

#### 3.2. Data processing

i) Frequency processing:

Retrieval of raw and filtered frequency of all entries by manual and context-sensitive inspection, incl. discard of unwanted cases, e.g.:

- a) typos (e.g. *\*speifics*),
- b) figures (e.g. *200cals*),
- c) names (e.g. *The Dramatics*),
- d) genitive markers (e.g. *the musical[']s composer*)

Frequency normalization according to the size of each corpus:

BNC: 100,000,000 words

COCA: 1,001,610,938 words

Frequency per million words =  $(\text{frequency} / \text{text no. words}) \times 1,000,000$   
(Mainz 2021)

ii) Identification of:

- a) prevailing sample type
- b) prevailing determiners and premodifiers

iii) OED attestation of inflected form for the plural of each entry



## 4. Results

110 entries

84 listed as plural nouns in the OED

18 not listed as plural nouns in the OED (only as adjectives)

7 not attested in the OED

1 attested in the OED in a different sense than in the corpus



3.c. In *singular* and (usually) *plural*. Spoken or shouted insults; verbal abuse or aggression; invective uttered aloud. Frequently in **to give (a person) the verbal (or verbals)** and variants. Similarly **to give it (the) verbal (or verbals)** and variants: to speak or shout abusively or aggressively. 1970-

**1970** I pushed him back and thought it was now time for a touch of the **verbals**.  
*Daily Mail* 30 October 10/6 ...

**1973** We faced them, and gave them a load of **verbal** across the street.  
*Time Out* 2 March 13/2 ...

**1977** Insulting and humiliating rivals—'giving them the **verbal**'.  
*Times Educational Supplement* 21 October 43/2 ...

**1982** Each 'ball' consisted of a distinctly lethargic head-high bouncer., followed by a rousing collection of **verbals** (money will be paid to lip-reading viewers for translation).  
*Observer* 10 October 40/7 ...

**1994** I overheard Chappell giving it the typical Aussie **verbals** and rubbishing England.  
I. Botham, *My Autobiography* iv. 71 ...

**2013** But the tension was palpable whenever I was the target of Evelyn's **verbals**.  
*Ireland's Own* 12 April 40 ...

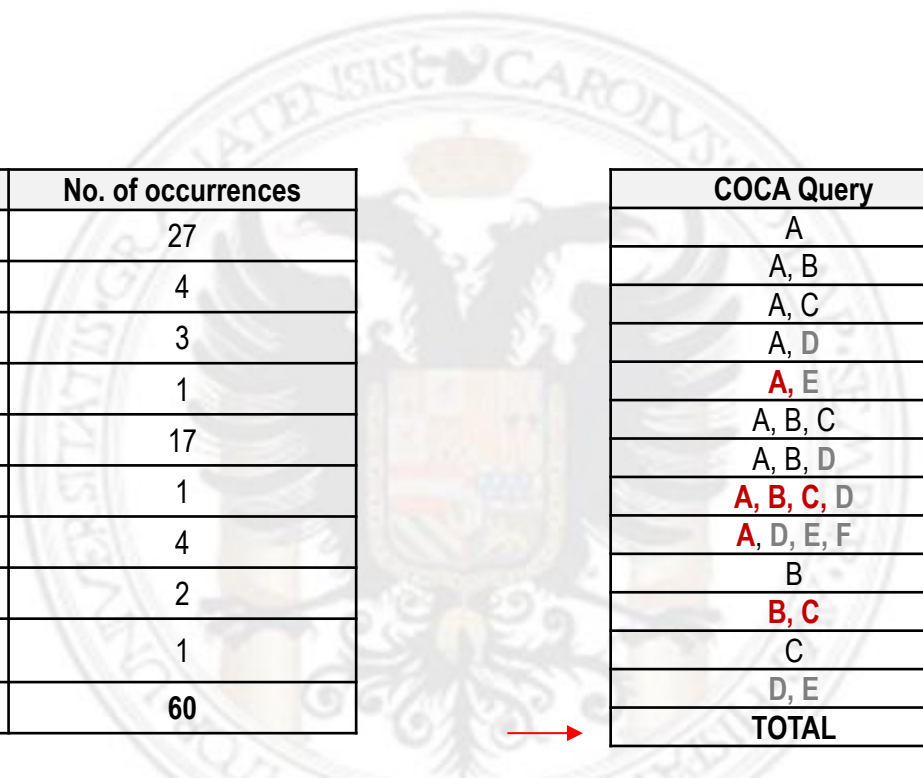
“ Cite Historical thesaurus ▼

colloquial and slang

Figure 2.  
OED entry of *verbal*

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Patterns



BNC Query	No. of occurrences
A	27
A, B	4
A, C	3
A, D	1
A, B, C	17
A, C, D	1
B	4
C	2
D	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

COCA Query	No. of occurrences
A	38
A, B	14
A, C	6
A, D	2
<b>A, E</b>	1
A, B, C	34
A, B, D	4
<b>A, B, C, D</b>	5
<b>A, D, E, F</b>	1
B	1
<b>B, C</b>	1
C	1
D, E	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 3a. Distribution of entries by query in the BNC

Table 3b. Distribution of entries by query in COCA

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Patterns

BNC Query	No. of occurrences
A	27
A, B	4
A, C	3
A, D	1
A, B, C	17
A, C, D	1
B	4
C	2
D	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>



COCA Query	No. of occurrences
A	38
A, B	14
A, C	6
A, D	2
<b>A, E</b>	1
A, B, C	34
A, B, D	4
<b>A, B, C, D</b>	5
<b>A, D, E, F</b>	1
B	1
<b>B, C</b>	1
C	1
D, E	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 3a. Distribution of entries by query in the BNC

Table 3b. Distribution of entries by query in COCA



## 4. Results

### 4.1. Patterns



BNC Query	No. of occurrences
A	27
A, B	4
A, C	3
A, D	1
A, B, C	17
A, C, D	1
B	4
C	2
D	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>

Table 3a. Distribution of entries by query in the BNC



COCA Query	No. of occurrences
A	38
A, B	14
A, C	6
A, D	2
<b>A, E</b>	1
A, B, C	34
A, B, D	4
<b>A, B, C, D</b>	5
<b>A, D, E, F</b>	1
B	1
<b>B, C</b>	1
C	1
D, E	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>

Table 3b. Distribution of entries by query in COCA

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Patterns

BNC Query	No. of occurrences	COCA Query	No. of occurrences
A	27	A	38
A, B	4	A, B	14
A, C	3	A, C	6
A, D	1	A, D	2
A, B, C	17	A, E	1
A, C, D	1	A, B, C	34
B	4	A, B, D	4
C	2	A, B, C, D	5
D	1	A, D, E, F	1
TOTAL	60	B	1
		B, C	1
		C	1
		D, E	1
		TOTAL	109

- (6) Particularly In the banqueting establishments of a few large London hotels, there are some **casuals** who work effectively full-time for the organization concerned (BNC) [A, B]
- (7) You don't see many **coloureds** in this part of Wimbledon (BNC) [B]
- (8) There was a prejudice against me among the **hatefuls**, and I'd have to make shift for myself (COCA) [A]
- (9) Why don't you and your clearly underage son have a few old **fashioneds** and go watch Revenge of the Sith on pay-per-view, like a couple of nerds (COCA) [C]

# 4. Results

## 4.2. Frequency

Query	BNC			COCA		
	Entry	Frequency		Entry	Frequency	
		Tokens	Normalized		Tokens	Normalized
A	Intellectuals	74	0.74	Specifics	2229	2.23
	Radicals	72	0.72	Primaries	2173	2.17
	Primaries	32	0.32	Radicals	582	0.58
	Specifics	27	0.27	Intellectuals	359	0.36
	Fanatics	20	0.20	Financials	169	0.17
	Casuals	16	0.16	Fanatics	153	0.15
	Informals	10	0.10	Editorials	135	0.13
	Hopefuls	9	0.09	Visionaries	113	0.11
	Piggies	9	0.09	Regionals	82	0.08
Marginals	8	0.08	Mortals	78	0.08	
B	Contemporaries	45	0.45	Specifics	800	0.80
	Intellectuals	29	0.29	Intellectuals	231	0.23
	Radicals	20	0.2	Primaries	220	0.22
	Mortals	13	0.13	Radicals	157	0.16
	Specifics	9	0.09	Mortals	119	0.12
	Casuals	9	0.09	Fanatics	85	0.08
	Fanatics	8	0.08	Contemporaries	82	0.08
	Visionaries	6	0.06	Editorials	77	0.08
	Felines	5	0.05	Alcoholics	68	0.07
Alcoholics	4	0.04	Visionaries	55	0.05	
C	Intellectuals	27	0.27	Intellectuals	224	0.22
	Radicals	13	0.13	Radicals	85	0.08
	Contemporaries	9	0.09	Primaries	56	0.06
	Mortals	9	0.09	Fanatics	46	0.05
	Hopefuls	8	0.08	Specifics	34	0.03
	Felines	2	0.02	Mortals	28	0.03
	Marginals	2	0.02	Visionaries	25	0.02
	Functionaries	2	0.02	Hopefuls	22	0.02
	Specifics	1	0.01	Editorials	17	0.02
Fanatics	1	0.01	Contemporaries	14	0.01	

Table 4.  
Token frequencies for the  
top ten units in the sample  
(BNC and COCA)

## 4. Results

### 4.2. Frequency

Query	BNC		COCA	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
A	18	45%	38	46%
B	6	15%	16	20%
C	15	38%	21	26%
D	1	3%	6	7%
E	0	0%	1	1%
F	0	0%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>

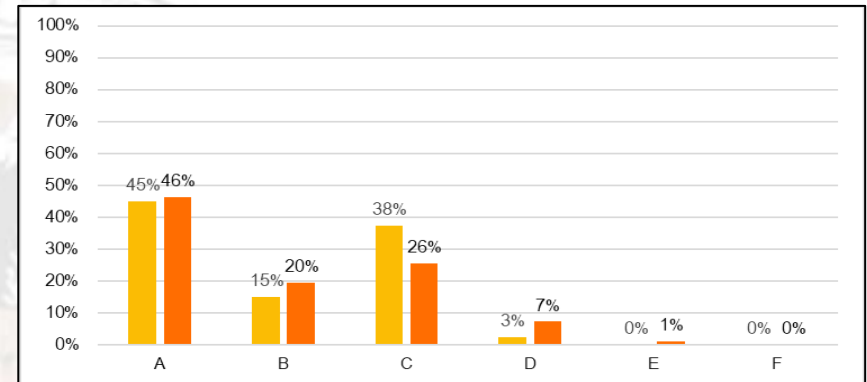


Table 5. Hapaxes in BNC and COCA

Figure 3. Hapaxes in BNC and COCA (percentages)

- (10) From their travels in the Far East, they brought back many potent **aromatics** which included sandalwood, cassia, camphor, nutmeg, myrrh and cloves (BNC) [C]
- (11) The weird genre is one of the richest in science, including such gems as Von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods and Branko Bokun's Man the Fallen Ape. **The technical** are the lifeblood of palaeoanthropology, but seldom make a thrilling read (BNC) [D]
- (12) I sympathize with your aversion of the **pretend-cultureds**, of the narrow-minded PhDs who want to live the professor's life rather than think (COCA) [A]
- (13) There's obviously a few real market professionals, a few day traders, a few **politicals** with various extreme philosophies (COCA) [B]

## 4. Results

### 4.3. Morphological type

Pattern A				
Suffix	BNC		COCA	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
-al	20	39%	27	35%
-an	2	4%	5	6%
-ary	9	18%	13	17%
-ed	0	0%	8	10%
-esque	0	0%	3	4%
-ful	3	6%	5	6%
-ic	10	20%	16	21%
-ine	2	4%	6	8%
-less	0	0%	1	1%
-oid	2	4%	10	13%
-some	0	0%	1	1%
-y	3	6%	10	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

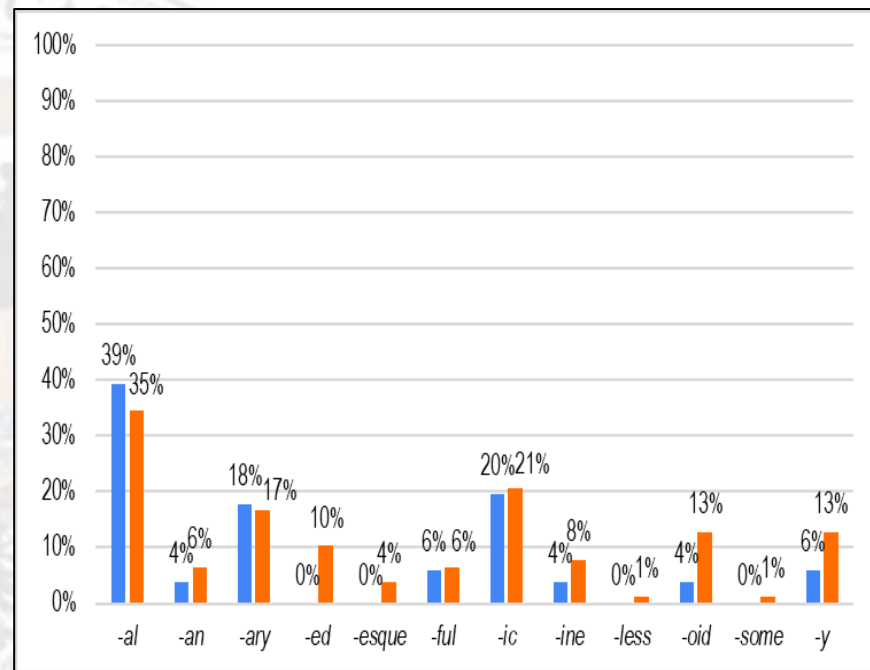


Table 6. Absolute values of suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern A (BNC and COCA)

Figure 4. Suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern A (BNC and COCA) (percentages)



## 4. Results

### 4.3. Morphological type

Pattern B				
Suffix	BNC		COCA	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
-al	10	40%	19	33%
-an	0	0%	4	7%
-ary	5	20%	11	19%
-ed	1	4%	2	3%
-esque	0	0%	0	0%
-ful	1	4%	1	2%
-ic	6	24%	10	17%
-ine	2	8%	2	3%
-less	0	0%	0	0%
-oid	0	0%	2	3%
-some	0	0%	0	0%
-y	0	0%	7	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>

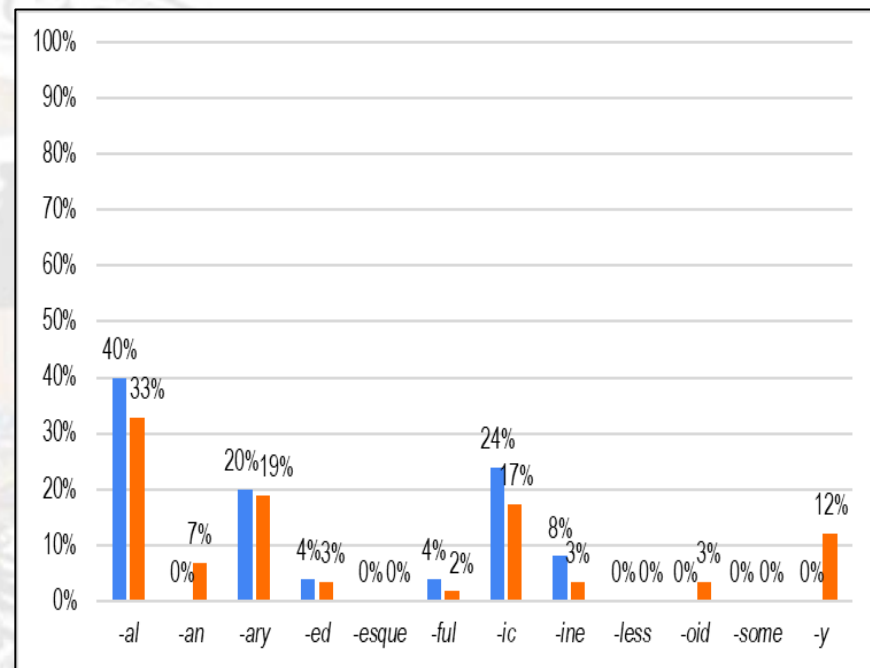


Table 7. Absolute values of suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern B (BNC and COCA)

Figure 5. Suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern B (BNC and COCA) (percentages)

## 4. Results

### 4.3. Morphological type

Pattern C				
Suffix	BNC		COCA	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
-al	7	32%	14	29%
-an	0	0%	3	6%
-ary	4	18%	7	14%
-ed	1	5%	2	4%
-esque	0	0%	1	2%
-ful	1	5%	1	2%
-ic	6	27%	10	20%
-ine	1	5%	3	6%
-less	0	0%	0	0%
-oid	0	0%	3	6%
-some	0	0%	1	2%
-y	2	9%	4	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

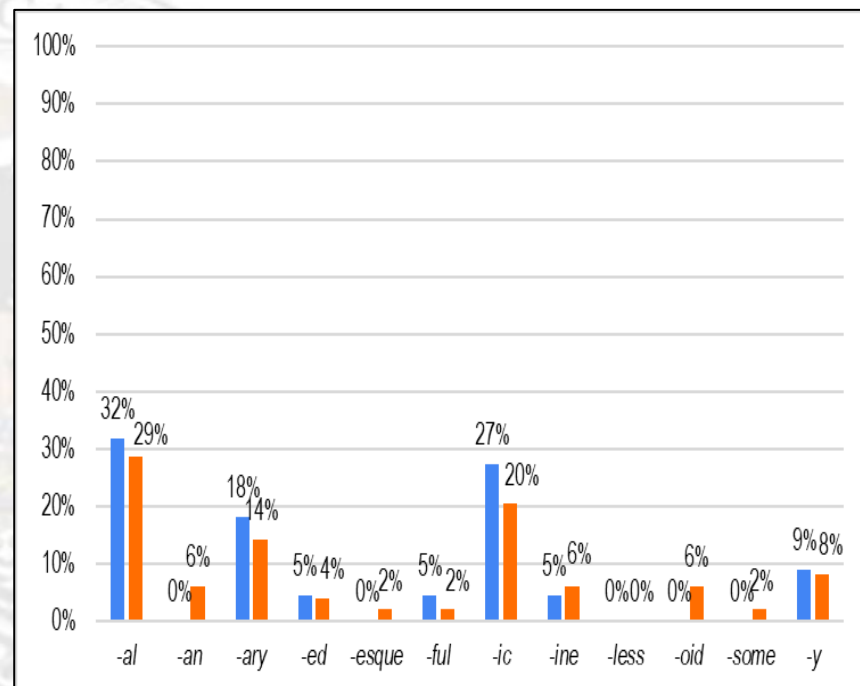


Table 8. Absolute values of suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern C (BNC and COCA)

Figure 6. Suffixes that allow pluralization in pattern C (BNC and COCA) (percentages)

## 4. Results

### 4.4. Chronological distribution

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	15	1990-99	1	1990-04	1
1995-99	11	2000-09	1	1990-09	2
2000-04	14	2010-19	2	1990-14	1
2005-09	10	TOTAL	4	1990-19	1
2010-14	34			2000-14	2
2015-19	6			2000-19	1
TOTAL	90			2005-14	1
				2005-19	1
TOTAL		TOTAL		TOTAL	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>				

Table 9a.  
Distribution of entries in pattern A

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	8	1990-99	3	1990-04	1
1995-99	4	2000-09	2	1990-14	1
2000-04	6	TOTAL	5	1995-14	1
2005-09	8			1995-19	1
2010-14	18			2000-19	1
2015-19	3			2005-14	1
TOTAL	47			TOTAL	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>				

Table 9b.  
Distribution of entries in pattern B

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	5	1990-99	1	1990-14	2
1995-99	7	2000-09	1	1995-09	2
2000-04	1	TOTAL	2	1995-14	3
2005-09	4			TOTAL	7
2010-14	17				
2015-19	5				
TOTAL	39			TOTAL	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>				

Table 9c.  
Distribution of entries in pattern C

## 4. Results

### 4.4. Chronological distribution

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	15	1990-99	1	1990-04	1
1995-99	11	2000-09	1	1990-09	2
2000-04	14	2010-19	2	1990-14	1
2005-09	10			1990-19	1
2010-14	34			2000-14	2
2015-19	6			2000-19	1
				2005-14	1
				2005-19	1
TOTAL	90	TOTAL	4	TOTAL	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>				

Table 9a.  
Distribution of entries in pattern A

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	8	1990-99	3	1990-04	1
1995-99	4	2000-09	2	1990-14	1
2000-04	6			1995-14	1
2005-09	8			1995-19	1
2010-14	18			2000-19	1
2015-19	3	TOTAL	5	2005-14	1
TOTAL	47			TOTAL	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>				

Table 9b.  
Distribution of entries in pattern B

COCA Time periods					
4 yrs.	No. of entries	9 yrs.	No. of entries	> 10 yrs.	No. of entries
1990-94	5	1990-99	1	1990-14	2
1995-99	7	2000-09	1	1995-09	2
2000-04	1			1995-14	3
2005-09	4				
2010-14	17				
2015-19	5				
TOTAL	39	TOTAL	2	TOTAL	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>				

Table 9c.  
Distribution of entries in pattern C

## 4. Results

### 4.5. Sample type

Sample	BNC					
	A		B		C	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
Academic	13	25%	8	32%	7	30%
Spoken	2	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Fiction	7	13%	1	4%	2	9%
Magazine	7	13%	1	4%	2	9%
Miscellaneous	7	13%	8	32%	5	22%
Newspaper	6	12%	1	4%	2	9%
Non-academic	10	19%	5	20%	5	22%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10a. Sample distribution in the BNC  
(absolute values and percentages)

- (10) Admittedly, there is a general difference in body-build and size between men and women, and this is analogous to sexual dimorphism in the **simians** (BNC) [A, academic]
- (11) Only a few large **industrials** can cogenerate, self-generate, or work out special deals that allow them to leave the system or to obtain lower prices from their local utility (COCA) [C, academic]

## 4. Results

### 4.5. Sample type

Sample	COCA					
	A		B		C	
	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage	Tokens	Percentage
// → Academic	14	13%	11	19%	6	13%
Blog	16	15%	7	12%	10	21%
Fiction	12	11%	5	9%	4	8%
Magazine	16	15%	4	7%	5	10%
Miscellaneous	18	17%	14	24%	9	19%
Movie	6	6%	1	2%	2	4%
Newspaper	5	5%	3	5%	2	4%
// → Spoken	8	8%	7	12%	1	2%
TV	2	2%	3	5%	2	4%
Web	8	8%	3	5%	7	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10b. Sample distribution in COCA  
(absolute values and percentages)

- (10) Admittedly, there is a general difference in body-build and size between men and women, and this is analogous to sexual dimorphism in the **simians** (BNC) [A, academic]
- (11) Only a few large **industrials** can cogenerate, self-generate, or work out special deals that allow them to leave the system or to obtain lower prices from their local utility (COCA) [C, academic]

## 4. Results

### 4.5. Sample type

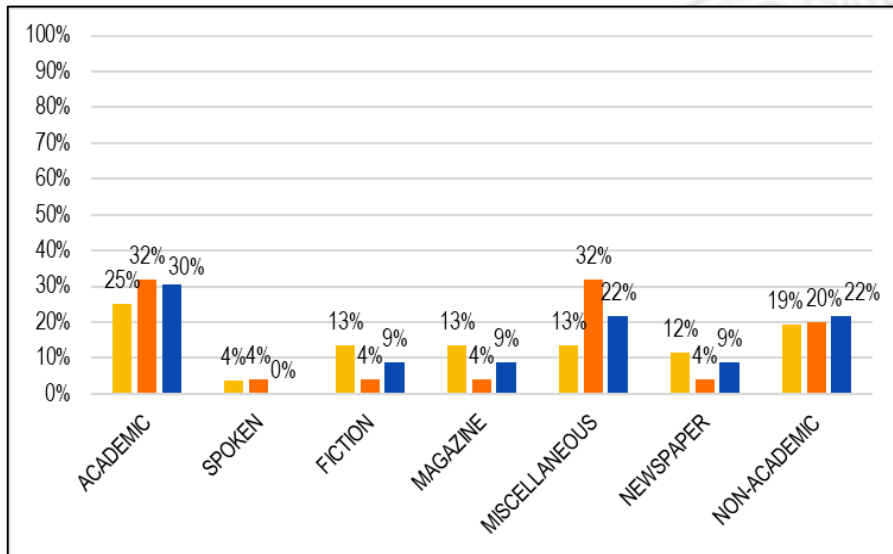


Figure 7a.  
Sample distribution in the BNC  
(percentages)

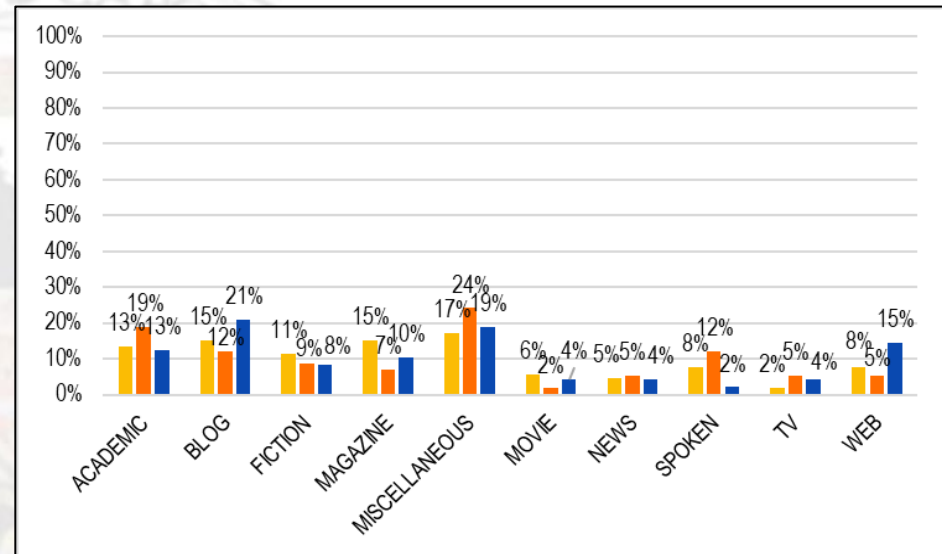


Figure 7b.  
Sample distribution in the COCA  
(percentages)

## 5. Conclusion

What and where?

i) Formations that allow nominal inflection:

-*al*, -*ary*, -*ic* derivatives, both in BrE and AmE  
(Further cases to be explored)

ii) BrE vs. AmE

Comparatively more entries in BrE than in AmE, but higher frequency in AmE.

iii) Period

Comparatively more cases in 2010-2014 than in other periods (COCA)

iv) Register

Comparatively more cases in Academic English  
(Further cases to be explored)

“[...] there appears to be nothing systematic about the kinds of differences that get lexicalized or what gets lexicalized with a specific affix“ (Bauer et al. 2013: 317).



## References

- Bauer, L. & R. Huddleston. 2002. Lexical word-formation. In R. Huddleston & G. K. Pullum (eds.), *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1621-1721.
- Bauer, L., R. Lieber & I. Plag. 2013. *Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cetnarowska, B. To appear. Conversion and coercion. In L. Bauer & S. Valera (eds.), *Conversion: Theory, Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davies, M. 2004–. *British National Corpus* (BNC). Available online at <https://www.englishcorpora.org/bnc/>. (Accessed 12/09/24)
- Davies, M. 2008–. *The Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA). Available online at <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>. (Accessed 12/09/24)
- Mainz, J. G. 2021. Normalizing frequencies | ENGLISH LINGUISTICS. Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. Available online at <https://www.english-linguistics.uni-mainz.de/corpus-linguistics/american-and-british-english-corpora/more-information-about-coca-and-coha/>. (Accessed 12/09/24)
- Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech & J. Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.
- Soares Rodrigues, A. To appear. Conversion and other word-formation processes. In L. Bauer & S. Valera (eds.), *Conversion: Theory, Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sweet, H. 1891–98. *A New English Grammar. Logical and Historical*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

***From partial to full conversion  
in English deadjectival nominals:  
What and where***

**María Granados**  
mgranados00@correo.ugr.es

**Salvador Valera**  
svalera@ugr.es

University of Granada



***Biennial of Czech Linguistics***

Prague, September 17-20, 2024

Project Ref. PID2020-119851GB-I00

