

DEFINING THE MEANING OF ADJECTIVES ENDING IN -IC/-ICAL (CASE STUDY)

Adjective-forming suffixes -al and -ical occur frequently as word-building elements of English lexis and are by far considered productive. However, their manifestations with similar stem evoke confusion of language learners despite the efforts of a sufficient number of lexicographers and lexicologists to explain differentiating shapes of their meaning. Therefore, the task of our empirical case study is to clarify the degrees of similarity and/or the difference of their meaning in various contexts of the English language use.

As is known, corpora linguistics nowadays is a single reliable basis for an evidential study in the vast array of language use. Adjectives, that are similar in structure and meaning, ending with suffixes -ical and -ic, namely three couples ‘classic – classical’, ‘historic – historical’ and ‘electric – electrical’, have been chosen for the verification of our hypothesis. The latter has been formulated in the following way: these adjective couples display specifically different meaning and possess certain semantic regularity. OANC (the Open American National Corpus) [1] has been used for the case study due to the following reasons: (a) it is a relatively massive electronic collection of spoken language use in 1990 onward and constituting over 22 million words, (b) it is compiled from the texts of all genres of spoken data, and (c) it is unrestricted for any use.

All the above couples of adjectives were extensively verified in the OANC as far as their meaning was concerned but due to the lack of space we demonstrate most typical of them on the examples of scrap view extracts from the corpus data

Word	Context	Meaning
classic	We serve a classic Tuscan meal that includes a Florentine terrine made with duck and chicken livers...	A high quality item that is generally considered to be one of the best in its field or meets some traditional standards.
	Leo Rosten offers two classic definitions.	A characteristic, typical representative of something.
	The classic “Little Red Riding Hood,” for instance, was told to me as a child in the Nice version.	Used in relation to the most significant literary works of the past.
	Lewis Carroll provides a classic example: in Through the Looking-Glass, the White Knight relates how he fell into his own helmet and “it took hours and hours to get me out.	A characteristic, typical representative of something.
Classical	Let’s consider just how work might actually be extracted in the classical Maxwell demon situation with an ideal gas in two boxes separated by a partition with the window and flap valve.	Belonging to a specific historical period in the past.

	In chapter I will discuss a quantum analogue to such a theory, in which complex quantum systems that couple tend to “decohere” irreversibly to classical behavior and thereby progressively build up complex classical structures.	Belonging to a specific historical period in the past.
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Word	Context	Meaning
historic	The Appendices volume contains seven national lists of places such as airports, Indian reservations, and historic places.	related to the past
	And there we have another whole river to cross, since some of the best-known literary works have retained their historic titles, complete with outmoded spellings and punctuations.	related to the past
	Via Venti Settembre `20th of September Street' illustrates the Italian propensity for naming streets after historic dates.	related to the past
historical	Because of an increasingly widespread lack of familiarity with the basic, structural elements of our culture—Greek and Roman mythology, the Bible, literature, and ordinary historical fact	related to the past

Word	Context	Meaning
electric	He had met Leary at Millbrook once in 67, he had done light shows at the Fillmore with Janis, Country Joe, The Incredible String Band (one of his fey favorites), Sly and the Family Stone at the Electric Circus.	Used metaphorically
	He is at work modifying and lowering electric dryers for wipe-with-your-hands countries.	Particular device
	It changes its name and its game, but doesn't mean shit to that magnificent tree...	Particular device

1) Classic has the following meanings:

- a high quality item that is generally considered to be one of the best in its field or meets some traditional standards;
- a characteristic, typical representative of something;
- used in relation to the most significant artistic works of the past.

Classical has the following meanings:

- belonging to a specific historical period in the past;
- a European orchestral music of the 18th-19th centuries.

These adjectives can be conditionally divided into groups: *classic* has the meaning of something traditional, generally accepted, corresponding to certain standards of

quality, style, etc.; *classical* has the meaning of designating the culture of the past and art forms belonging to a long-standing formal tradition.

- 2) Historic has the following meanings:
- something which is historically important;
 - something which is significant.

Historical has the following meaning:

- related to the past.

These two adjectives can be divided into such groups: *historic* means that some event, date or place is very important, significant; *historical* means something that is related to the study of things from the past, history.

3) Electric has the following meanings:

- when referring to a particular device that is based on turning electricity into another form of energy;

- it can be used metaphorically as a synonym for “exciting”.

Electrical has the following meanings:

- when speaking about unspecified devices or something only related to electricity.

These two words can also be divided into groups: *electric* is powered by electricity, not mechanical, generating electricity; *electrical* means associated with electricity.

Thus, in conclusion, we can state that the above couples of adjectives ending in -ic and -ical are not only different in their meaning but the analysis on the basis of the corpus proves that each of the two suffixes also possesses its specific similar meaning as a word-building element attributed to the adjectives.

REFERENCES

1. Yoon, H., & Hirvela, A. ESL Student Attitudes toward Corpus Use in L2 Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13(4), 257–283. Retrieved 21 March 2012.