

Feedback on the first assignment

1. Just because an affix turns a verb into a noun does **not** mean that it changes its lexical meaning. Many people would argue that e.g. the lexical meaning of *beauty* and *beautiful* is the same, and so is the lexical meaning of *destroy* and *destruction*.
2. One note on the English *-ly* (and this is some higher level stuff!): when you argue that *-ly* is derivational because it combines with an adjective to produce an adverb (i.e., it changes the part of speech of the word), this is somewhat problematic, because it relies on the assumption that adjectives and adverbs are separate word classes (and they are usually treated so, but many people would be willing to disagree with that), and maybe it would be a good idea to try to question this assumption.
3. Some of you discussed suffixes like *-ess* (*host* → *hostess*) and claimed that this suffix does not express a grammatical category. However, gender is usually considered as a grammatical category, even in English, since it affects concord (*I greeted the hostess and her husband/wife*) and the choice of coreferential pronouns.
4. As for the opacity criterion (noun: *opacity*, adjective: *opaque*): if you take *actor* and form *actress*, *host* and form *hostess* and *priest* and form *priestess*, all the derived words express more or less the same meaning (i.e., the suffix seems to change the gender). That is, based on these examples, we could conclude that words with *-ess* seem to be semantically transparent, i.e. not opaque, and thus more like inflection rather than derivation, in a way. This is what the criterion means.

More general writing tips

Content

- when you claim something, give examples; e.g., it is not very informative to say that an affix can occur inside derivation if you do not give an example of that;
- discarding a criterion as not helpful or relevant, because it shows that your presumably derivational affix behaves like an inflectional one, and then drawing the conclusion that your affix is a derivational one is – hopefully quite obviously – very problematic from the point of view of argumentation;
- read carefully what you are supposed to do: when I ask you to consider an affix from the point of view of the seven criteria that Plag discusses and you basically mention none/one of the criteria, this will rather negatively impact your grade

Formatting etc.

- try to avoid typos (in the first place by switching the language to English when using MS Word etc. – this avoids e.g. the Czech control in MS Word to change *it is* to *i tis* automatically etc.);

- use italics for citing words, phrases, morphemes etc.: e.g., we say: the verb *write*, the prefix *re-*, etc.;
- the plural *criteria* ~ the singular *criterion*; *criterium* (*crit*) is a type of bike race;