

Avoiding plagiarism (Exercise A)

Original text

Plag, Ingo. 2003. *Word-Formation in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 73.

“Thus we have good evidence that in the case of *-less* and *-wise*, we have two homographic morphemes in each case, one being a suffix, the other a free morpheme. This analysis is corroborated by the syntactic categories of the items. While the free morpheme *less* is an adverb, the suffix *-less* creates adjectives, and while the free morpheme *wise* is an adjective, the suffix *-wise* creates adverbs. Thus, in both cases, the suffix and the free morpheme do not only differ in meaning, but also in their syntactic category.”

Which of the following renderings of the original text do you consider acceptable, which are unacceptable? Give reasons.

- a) The morphemes *(-less* and *(-wise* should be treated as homographic morphemes. This analysis is supported by the syntactic categories of the items. Whereas the free morpheme *less*, for example, is an adverb, *-less* as an affix creates adjectives (cf. Plag 2003: 73).
- b) Some examples of homographic morphemes are discussed in Plag (2003: 73). He considers both *(-less* and *(-wise* as such instances as the free forms and the corresponding suffixes differ both semantically and syntactically (cf. Plag 2003: 73).
- c) There is sufficient proof that *-less* can be analysed in some contexts as a free morpheme and in others as a suffix. This is supported by a syntactic analysis. Whereas the free form *less* is an adverb, the suffix *-less* derives adjectives. The free morpheme and the suffix therefore have a different meaning and belong to different word classes.
- d) This problem can be illustrated with the forms *-less* and *-wise* as in *speechless* and *speech-wise*. At first glance, it might be unclear whether these lexemes should be treated as compounds or as cases of suffixation. Plag (2003: 73), however, argues that these are cases of suffixation as both *-less* and *-wise* in these examples have a different meaning from when they occur on their own. He also points out that their word class membership differs: “The free morpheme *less* is an adverb, while the suffix *-less* creates adjectives, and the free morpheme *wise* is an adjective, while the suffix *-wise* creates adverbs.” (Plag 2003: 73).