

## THE SUFFIXES -OR AND -EE IN FORMING LEGAL TERMS

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### Abstract

Derivational suffixes represent a highly productive category of word-forming morphemes. The suffixes *-or* and *-ee* appear as prolific elements in coining legal terms in English, and their use illustrates and highlights certain ways of expressing the terminology of the specialized domain of law. The axis of our paper is a lexical-semantic and functional analysis of the legal terms formed with the suffixes *-or* (and its variant *-er*) and *-ee* in the framework of the main law branches, based on lexicographic and terminological definitions, as well as on specialist sources. The legal uses of the analysed terms are described starting from the observation that there is a semantic correspondence between the terms derived with the suffix *-or* and those derived with the suffix *-ee*, but there are also exceptions and particular cases.

**Key words:** *derivation, suffix -or, suffix -ee, legal terms, lexical-semantic analysis*

### Résumé

Les suffixes lexicaux représentent une catégorie productive de morphèmes à l'aide desquels on forme de nouveaux mots dans une langue. Les suffixes *-or* et *-ee* apparaissent comme des éléments prolifiques dans la formation des termes juridiques en anglais, leur utilisation en continuant à illustrer et à préciser certaines modalités d'expression dans la terminologie du domaine spécialisé du droit. L'axe de notre travail reste l'analyse lexico-sémantique et fonctionnelle des termes juridiques formés avec les suffixes *-or* (et la variante *-er*) et *-ee* dans le contexte de principales branches du droit, en base des définitions lexicographiques et terminologiques, mais aussi d'autres sources de spécialité. Les valeurs juridiques des termes analysés sont mises en évidence à partir de l'observation qu'il existe une correspondance sémantique entre les termes dérivés avec le suffixe *-or* et ceux dérivés avec le suffixe *-ee*, mais l'on constate également des exceptions et des cas particuliers.

**Mots-clés :** *dérivation, suffixe -or, suffixe -ee, termes juridiques, analyse lexico-sémantique*

### 1. Preliminary issues

The legal vocabulary of the English language includes an increasing number of terms derived with prefixes and suffixes. Although suffixes are not as independent as prefixes, they also imprint vitality to the discourse, as a mark of language evolution and dynamism.

Suffixes are attached to the root or stem of a word, changing its meaning and, as a rule, its morphological status. Among the numerous suffixes of various origins in English, which fostered the enrichment of its legal vocabulary, one can mention the noun-forming suffixes *-ee* and *-or*. Based on historical facts, the origin of these

suffixes can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which witnessed the occurrence of such Anglo-French word pairs as *donor/donee*, *lessor/lessee* in an English context. After the Norman Conquest (1066), French became the language of law, together with Latin, but in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, English was the official language of jurisprudence. Yet French influence was still significant, which explains why nouns ending in *-ee* were originally substantivized French second participles, therefore passive nouns, whereas those ending in *-or* were agent nouns. Although *-ee* nouns were initially coined as counterparts of *-or* nouns, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, one can notice direct derivation from infinitives<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. Legal terms formed with the suffixes *-ee* and *-or*: meanings and uses

The suffix *-ee* characterizes persons. It is a noun-forming suffix denoting one who is the object of some action, or undergoes or receives something (often as opposed to or in correlation with the person acting): *assignee*, *donee*, etc<sup>2</sup>.

In another opinion<sup>3</sup>, this suffix forms nouns having two meanings: 1. someone who is affected by an action, and 2. someone who performs an action.

In the former case, *-ee* combines with transitive action verbs, the derivatives referring to the person that the action is being done to: *appointee*, *detainee*, *evacuee*, *franchisee*, *mortgagee*, *payee*, *transferee*, *trustee*, etc.

In the latter case, *-ee* is attached to verbs and forms nouns denoting someone who has carried out a particular action: *absentee*, *cohabitee*, *divorcee*, *escapee*, etc.

There are also words which do not have a passive character (e.g. *conferee* ‘one who takes part in conference’) or words of heterogeneous origin (unrelated to the suffix *-ee*), such as *Pharisee* or *Chaldee*, which represent Latin words in *-aeus*<sup>4</sup>, but in this study, our concern is limited to the pair *-ee* and *-or* within a legal framework.

Quite often, *-or* is a spelling variant of *-er*. Deverbal derivatives ending in *-er* are generally agent nouns referring to an animate or inanimate noun which denotes the performer of an action, either occasional or habitual. The connection between the two suffixes was facilitated by phonetic identity and similarity of function, but in law the spelling *-or* is more common<sup>5</sup>.

The suffix *-or* is a noun-forming suffix denoting the doer of an action or someone who has some particular function or office: *creditor*, *governor*, *juror*, etc. It mainly occurs in nouns originally Latin or formed from Latin stems. In some cases, it is used as an alternative or substitute for the homonymous native English suffix *-er*, especially in legal language (legal terms often correlative with forms in *-ee*) or with some other differentiation of use: *assignor*, *grantor*, *lessor*, *vendor*, etc<sup>6</sup>.

Such nouns chiefly refer to people performing the action denoted by the original verb, usually because it is their job: *adjudicator*, *administrator*, *auditor*, *counsellor*, *inspector*, *investigator*, *possessor*, *prosecutor*, etc<sup>7</sup>.

The suffix *-or* also makes reference to things (e.g. *detector*), but this use is not productive, as opposed to *-er*.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Marchand, 1969, p. 267-268.

<sup>2</sup> Webster's *Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*, 1994, p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> Collins *Cobuild English Guides 2 Word Formation*, 1994, p.42.

<sup>4</sup> H. Marchand, 1969, p. 268.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 281.

<sup>6</sup> Webster's *Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*, 1994, p. 1011.

<sup>7</sup> Collins *Cobuild English Guides 2 Word Formation*, 1994, p.128-129.

Having in view that the main purpose of this paper is to make a lexical-semantic and functional analysis of the legal terms formed with the suffixes *-or* (and its variant *-er*) and *-ee* in the framework of the main law branches, based on lexicographic definitions (mostly found in *Black's Law Dictionary*), as well as on specialist sources, we will begin this analysis from a classification of the legal terms formed with the above-mentioned suffixes into three categories:

- a) Pairs of terms formed with the suffixes *-or* and *-ee* added to the same verbal stem (pairs established on the basis of a semantic correspondence of the agent-recipient type),
- b) Terms formed with the suffix *-or* (and its variant *-er*), without an *-ee* counterpart,
- c) Terms formed with the suffix *-ee*, without an *-or/-er* counterpart.

### 2.1. *-Or* legal terms correlative with forms in *-ee*

The first category contains the highest number of legal terms formed with the two suffixes added to the same verbal stem, e.g. *consignor* and *consignee*. As a rule, the *-or/-er* derivative denotes the person performing an action expressed by the verb, and the *-ee* derivative designates the person who is affected by that action.

- Starting from the basic and most significant distinction civil law vs. criminal law<sup>8</sup>, one can notice that most of the terms pertain to the branch of civil law (as a form of private law), with its various categories in the English legal system (contracts, trust, succession, etc.). Note that some terms are used in several law branches.

*appointor*, one who appoints or executes a power of appointment. *Appointee* has a more general meaning ('one who is appointed') and a more specific meaning ('one who receives the benefit of a power of appointment or enabling power to select one or more recipients of a donor's estate')<sup>9</sup>. These terms are mainly used in contracts.

*alienor*, one who transfers or conveys property to another, whereas an *alienee* refers to the person to whom property is transferred.

*allotter*, a legal term denoting one who assigns as a share or portion. An *allottee* is one to whom an allotment is made, a recipient of an allotment.

*assignor*, one who transfers property, rights or interest to another, whereas an *assignee* refers to one to whom property, rights or interest are transferred by another, one appointed to act for another. The use of these terms is not confined to a particular branch of law, therefore it is the intent of the persons making the assignment and its specific context that define rights and responsibilities rather than the formality of the use of the two terms. The word *assigner* is not a legal term, it has a general meaning.

*consignor*, one who dispatches goods to another on consignment. A *consignee* is one to whom goods are consigned. These terms are specific to transport law, a branch subject to constant change (including terminological changes) due to economic operations, diversification of transactions, need for pragmatism<sup>10</sup>.

*contractor*, a party to a contract. The more specific meaning refers to a person who contracts to do work or provide supplies for another. The form *contractee* denotes

<sup>8</sup> On civil law systems terminology, see for instance Diana Dănisor, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> *Black's Law Dictionary*, 1999, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup> Cristina Stanciu, 2013, p.222.

- the owner of a project (also known as principal or client) or anyone else who gets into a deal with a builder or merchant and gets particular commodities or/and services as per the conditions of the deal (like any purchase order)<sup>11</sup>.
- covenantor* (also spelt *covenanter*) is a person who makes a promise by covenant, whereas *covenantee* is the person to whom a promise by a covenant is made.
- debtor*, generally meaning 'one who owes an obligation to another, especially an obligation to owe money'. It has similar meanings in bankruptcy and secured transactions therefore it is also used in business and banking law. The correlative for *debtee* is an archaic term. The current term used with this meaning is *creditor*.
- donor*, one who gives something without receiving consideration for the transfer. *Donee*, one to whom a gift is made. The *donee* can enforce a deed of gift against the donor<sup>12</sup>.
- drawer*, one who directs a person or entity (usually a bank), to pay a sum of money stated in an instrument. A *drawee* (also termed *payor*), is the person or entity that a draft is directed to and that is requested to pay the amount stated on it (usually a bank).
- farmoutor* (also termed *farmor*, *farminor*) is a oil-and-gas lessee who assigns the lease to another, who agrees to drill a well. *Farmoutee* (also termed *farmee*, *farminee*) is an oil-and-gas sublessee to whom the lease is assigned for purposes of drilling a well<sup>13</sup>.
- franchiser* (also spelt *franchisor*) is one who grants a franchise (a licence), and a *franchisee* is one who is granted a franchise.
- indemnitor*, one who indemnifies another, while an *indemnitee* is one who receives indemnity from another. Considering that an indemnity is an agreement<sup>14</sup> these terms come within the category of contract law.
- indorser* (also spelt *endorser*), a person who transfers a negotiable instrument by indorsement. An *indorsee* (also spelt *endorsee*) is a person to whom a negotiable instrument is transferred by indorsement.
- lessor*, one who conveys real or personal property by lease and a *lessee* is one who has a possessory interest in real or personal property under a lease. So the terms are commonly used in contract law and property law.
- misrepresenter/misrepresentor*, a person who misrepresents a fact to another (in the course of negotiating a contract), who gives an incorrect representation of something. A *misrepresentee* is a person to whom a fact has been misrepresented.
- mortgagor*, one that mortgages property, the borrower, whereas a *mortgagee* is the lender, the mortgage-creditor. In civil law, the mortgagor pledges real property to the mortgagee as security for a debt.
- obligor*, one who has undertaken an obligation. An *obligee* is one to whom an obligation is owed.
- offeror*, one who presents something for acceptance and *offeree*, one who is presented something for acceptance.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://thelawdictionary.org/contractee/>

<sup>12</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Law*, 1997, p. 131.

<sup>13</sup> *Black's Law Dictionary*, 1999, p. 622.

<sup>14</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Law*, 1997, p.229.

*patentor* (in intellectual property law), one who grants a patent, whereas a *patentee* refers to one who has been granted a patent.

*payor/payer*, one who pays (especially a negotiable instrument). A *payee* denotes the person who receives the payment (the recipient of the payment).

*pledgor*, one who gives a pledge to another. A *pledgee* concerns one with whom a pledge is deposited. They are also called *pawnor* and *pawnee*.

*renter*, one that receives payment in exchange for the use of one's property by another. 2. one that pays rent for the use of another's property; a tenant<sup>15</sup>. According to this definition, the term *renter* refers to both the person who is the recipient of the action (who receives payment) and the person who performs the action (of paying rent). There is also a rare word, *rentee*, denoting a tenant<sup>16</sup>.

*representor*, one who makes a representation, whereas *representee* is one to whom a representation is made.

*repudiator*, one who repudiates. As a legal term, it mainly refers to a party that repudiates a contract. A *repudiatee* is a party to a contract that has been repudiated by the other party.

*subrogor*, a civil law term meaning 'one who allows another to be substituted for oneself as creditor, with a transfer of rights and duties'. A *subrogee* is one who is substituted for another in having a right, duty or claim.

*transferor*, one who conveys (transfers) an interest in property, whereas a *transferee* is one to whom a property interest is conveyed.

*trustor*, one who creates a trust. With this meaning, it is a synonym of *settlor*. A *trustee* is a term denoting a person who holds title to property in trust for the benefit of another and owes a fiduciary duty to that beneficiary. In English law, there is a particular law branch called trust law. Trusts, originating in Roman law, have become one of the most important innovations in property law.

*vendor*, a seller, usually of real property and *vendee*, a purchaser, a buyer, usually of real property.

*warrantor*, a person who gives a warranty. Its counterpart word is *warrantee*, a person to whom a warranty is given.

• The branch of criminal law (and criminal procedure) provides much fewer examples:

*assaulter*, a person who assaults another, and *assaultee*, a person who is assaulted.

*bailer* (also spelt *bailor*), one who provides bail as a surety for a criminal defendant's release; a person who delivers personal property to another as a bailment. A *bailee* denotes a person who receives personal property from another as a bailment.

*defender*, having a general meaning 'one who defends', and specific legal meanings: a defendant in a lawsuit, a person using self-defence, or defence counsel. *Defendee* (one who is defended) is rare<sup>17</sup>.

*inciter*, a person who incites another to commit a crime; an aider or abettor, whereas an *incitee* refers to a person who has been incited, especially to commit a crime.

*interrogator*, one who poses questions to another. An *interrogatee* is a person who is

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/renter>.

<sup>16</sup> *Black's Law Dictionary*, 1999, p. 1300.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Defendee>.

interrogated.

The term *examiner* is recorded with three meanings<sup>18</sup>: 1. one authorized to conduct an examination, especially a person appointed by the court to administer an oath and take testimony. 2. a patent officer responsible for determining the patentability of an invention submitted to the patent office. 3. medical examiner. An *examinee* is someone examined. With the first meaning it comes under procedural law.

In point of the distinction public law vs. private law, there are terms used in constitutional law as a branch of public law (including the new branch called election law that has forged its independence), e.g. *elector*, which has several meanings, including the historical one concerning the title of certain German princes. The regular legal meaning is ‘a voter’, one who is qualified to vote. An *electee* is a person chosen or elected or a person to whom the law gives a choice about status.

It is interesting that sometimes, despite the fact that such nouns are formed on the same verbal stem, they refer to persons or notions belonging to different legal fields or circumstances and there is no semantic correspondence of the agent-recipient type, e.g. *adjudicator* and *adjudicatee*. Therefore, an *adjudicator* is a person who pronounces or decrees by a judicial sentence, who settles a dispute judicially in a court of law. On the other hand, the term *adjudicatee* is specific to civil law systems, i.e. a purchaser at a judicial sale. Another example is the pair *acceptor* and *acceptee*. In banking law, an *acceptor* is a person or entity that accepts a negotiable instrument and agrees to be primarily responsible for its payment or performance, but an *acceptee* is a person who is accepted, as for military service, not necessarily in relation to negotiable instruments, so the latter goes beyond the scope of law or economics. Likewise, the term *draftee* is not actually the counterpart of *drafter* (also termed *draftsman* and referring to a person who draws or frames a legal document, such as a will, contract, or legislative bill), it belongs to the military field, denoting a person who is drafted for military service. A *guarantor* is a person who makes a guaranty or gives security for a debt, whereas a *guarantee* is not its counterpart, it refers to a promise, especially a collateral agreement, to answer for the debt, default, or miscarriage of another. A *distributor* is a wholesaler, jobber, or other manufacturer or supplier that sells chiefly to retailers and commercial users. On the other hand, a *distributee* is a beneficiary entitled to payment, or an heir (therefore also used in successions).

Another case involves meaning differentiation between the variants *-er* and *-or*. For instance, a *devisor* is one who disposes of property in a will (in succession law, in particular testate succession), whereas a *deviser* is one who invents or contrives. A *devisee* is a recipient of property (mainly real property) by will, so it is the counterpart of *devisor*.

The meanings of *-er* and *-or* derivatives may be similar, but the *-or* form is specific to the legal field. Thus, a *grantor* conveys property to another, makes a grant in legal form, and a *granter* gives something, not necessarily in legal form. The counterpart, *grantee*, is one to whom property is conveyed.

A particular situation concerns legal terms with several meanings, the correlative form existing only for one of the meanings, e.g. *remitter*, a term with three legal meanings: 1. the principle by which a person having two titles to an estate, and entering on it by the later or more defective title, is deemed to hold the estate by the

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<sup>18</sup> *Black's Law Dictionary*, 1999, p. 582.

earlier or more valid title. 2. the act of sending back a case to a lower court. 3. one who sends payment to someone else<sup>19</sup>. With the third meaning, it is correlated with *remittee*, one to whom payment is sent.

Within the category of *-or* nouns which have an *-ee* counterpart, we witness an extension of specialized terms in the common lexicon. Many of them, although recorded in specialized legal dictionaries and described within terminological definitions, are also used by common speakers in current discourse. These are terms that persons of an average cultural level are familiar with, terms of a certain contextual mobility: *abuser* (a person who treats a person or animal in a harmful way) and *abusee* (a victim of abuse), *adopter* (one who adopts) and *adoptee* (one who is adopted), *briber* (one who offers a bribe) and *bribee* (one who accepts a bribe), *employer* (a person who controls and directs a worker under an express or implied contract of hire and who pays the worker's salary or wages) and *employee* (someone who works in the service of an employer under an express or implied contract of hire, under which the latter has the right to control the details of work performance) etc.

The idea of concurrence or plurality is expressed by the use of *co-* before some of these nouns, e.g. *co-obligor* (one of two or more persons who have undertaken an obligation) and *co-obligee* (one of two or more persons to whom an obligation is owed).

For reason of limited space, we have not dealt with historical derivatives of this type (e.g. *cognizor*, the grantor of land in a conveyance by fine, and *cognizee*, the grantee of land in such a conveyance).

## 2.2. *-Or/-er* legal terms without an *-ee* counterpart

The suffix *-or* denotes the doer of an action, but most often the derivative indicates someone who has some particular function or office: *administrator*, *auditor*, *creditor*, *governor*, *inspector*, *investigator*, *juror*, *prosecutor*, etc.

Among the *-or/-er* legal terms without an *-ee* counterpart, one can provide the following inventory of terms:

- Civil law

*abstractor* (with the variant *abstracter*), a person who prepares abstracts of title.

*abutter*, one whose property abuts another's.

*adjuster*, someone appointed to ascertain or settle a matter, especially an independent agent or employee of an insurance company.

*comptroller* (also spelt *controller*), an officer of a business or a private, state, or municipal corporation who is charged with duties commonly relating to fiscal affairs, including auditing and examining accounts and reporting the financial status periodically.

*creditor*, one to whom a debt is owned or who gives credit for money or goods. With this meaning, it is a synonym of *debtee*. It also refers to a person or entity with a definite claim against another, especially a claim that is subject to adjustment and liquidation.

*dispossessor*, a person who dispossesses.

*enumerator*, a person appointed to collect census papers or schedules.

*exceptor* (also spelt *excepter*), one who takes exception, an objector.

*executor* has two meanings: 1. one who performs or carries out some act. 2. a person

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1298.

named by a testator to carry out the provisions in the testator's will. It is interesting that the *Black's Law Dictionary* provides two pronunciations for the two meanings (the stress is also different): the former is [ek-sə-kyoo-tər], the latter [eg-zek-yə-tər]<sup>20</sup>.

*holder* has three meanings: 1. a person who has legal possession of a negotiable instrument and is entitled to receive payment on it. 2. a person with legal possession of a document of title or an investment security. 3. a person who possesses or uses property<sup>21</sup>.

*infringer*, a person who interferes with one of the exclusive rights of a patent, copyright, or trademark owner (also used in criminal law).

*inheritor*, a person who inherits; an heir.

*insurer*, one who agrees, by contract, to assume the risk of another's loss and to compensate for that loss. The person who is covered or protected by an insurance policy is called the *insured/assured*.

*investor*, a buyer of a security or other property who seeks to profit from it without exhausting the principal.

*lawgiver*, a legislator or a judge with the power to interpret law.

*legislator*, one who makes laws within a given jurisdiction; a member of a legislative body, as opposed to *legislature*, denoting the branch of government responsible for making statutory laws. The meanings of these terms are better captured by the distinction public law vs. private law (they are public law terms).

*lender*, a person or entity from which something is borrowed, but the person or entity who borrows something is a borrower. The form *lendee* as the person to whom something is lent is not provided by the dictionaries we consulted<sup>22</sup>.

*mandator*, a person who delegates the performance of a mandate to another. The person to whom the mandate is given is a *mandatary*.

*settlor*, a person who makes a settlement of property, the creator of a trust, as well as a party to the settlement of a dispute. The word *settler* has no legal meaning, it denotes one who settles in a new region with the intent to establish a residence.

*solicitor*, a lawyer, an agent or representative. In the United Kingdom, a legal adviser, also conducting legal proceedings in lower courts. A *solicitee* is not a legal term, it refers to one who is solicited.

*survivor*, a trustee who administers a trust after the co-trustee has been removed, has refused to act, or has died.

*testator*, a person who makes a will.

*tortfeasor*, one who commits a tort, a wrongdoer (in the law of torts).

*vetoer*, one who vetoes (a public law term).

*waiver*, a term which does not denote a person. It is the voluntary act of relinquishing or surrendering a legal right or advantage.

Criminal law

*abettor*, a person who encourages or assists in the commission of a crime.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 591.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 736.

<sup>22</sup> The term *lendee* appears, however, in *Wiktionary* (see <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/lendee>), which is not an academically recognized source.



*accuser*, a person who accuses another of a crime. There is no such word as *accusee*, but the one that someone accuses is called the *accused*.

*aider*, one who aids another (especially in the commission of a crime).

*maintainor* (in criminal law), a person who meddles in someone else's litigation by providing money or other assistance; a person who is guilty of maintenance.

*offender*, someone who has committed an offence, a crime.

*trespasser*, one who intentionally and without consent intrudes on the privacy or property of another.

In procedural law, one can mention:

*fact-finder*, one or more persons – such as jurors in a trial or administrative-law judges in a hearing – who hear testimony and review evidence to rule on a factual issue. Also termed *finder of fact*; *fact-trier* or *trier of fact* (in a judicial proceeding).

*receiptor*, a person who receives from a sheriff another's property seized in garnishment and agrees to return the property upon demand or execution. A *receiver* is a neutral person appointed by a court to take custody, manage and preserve money or property that is subject to litigation<sup>23</sup>.

*viewer*, a person appointed by a court to investigate certain matters or to examine a particular locality and make a report of the facts, including personal opinion.

Other derivatives of this type are: *carrier*, *doer*, *murderer*, *pleader*, *purchaser*, *reporter*, *sequesterer/sequestrator*, *successor*, *supervisor*, *voter*, *wrongdoer*, etc.

### 2.3. –*Ee* legal terms without an –*or*–*er* counterpart

A noun derived with the suffix –*ee* generally denotes a person who is the object of some action. When such a derivative refers to the person that the action is being done to, there is normally a correlative form, e.g. *appointor* and *appointee*, *payor* and *payee* etc. But when the derivative designates someone who has carried out a particular action, there is no –*or*–*er* counterpart, since these terms do not have a passive character, e.g. *absentee* (a person who is not present, a person who is away from his or her usual residence), *abstainee* (someone who refrains from doing something, especially voting<sup>24</sup>; the word *abstainer* is not semantically and legally the counterpart of *abstainee*, it has the meanings 'someone who practices self denial as a spiritual discipline' and 'a person who refrains from drinking intoxicating beverages'<sup>25</sup>), *cohabitee* (in this particular case, *cohabitee* is a synonym, not a correlative of *cohabiter* and *cohabitant*<sup>26</sup>), *divorcee* (a divorced person, especially a woman, with the spelling *divorcée*), *escapee* (one that has escaped, especially an escaped prisoner), etc.

A particular situation involves such derivatives as *abandonee* or *confinee*. An *abandonee* is one to whom property rights are relinquished; one to whom something is formally or legally abandoned. The term *abandoner* is not recorded as a legal term in specialized dictionaries, it is yet mentioned as a noun formed from the verb *to abandon*<sup>27</sup>. Similarly, a *confinee* is a person held in confinement, i.e. imprisoned or

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<sup>23</sup> <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/receiver>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.translegal.com/legal-english-dictionary/abstainee>.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/abstainer>.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/cohabitee>.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/abandoner>.

restrained. There is also a noun, *confiner*, without an entrenched legal meaning.

Other legal terms ending in *-ee* without an *-or/-er* counterpart:

*appellee*, a party against whom an appeal is taken. Its current counterpart is *appellant* (a party who appeals a lower court's judgment, seeking reversal of that judgment). It was formerly termed *appealer*, which became obsolete. In the history of English law, it denoted a person who formally accused another of a crime, challenging a jury or providing information on an accomplice.

*chargee*, the holder of a charge on property or of a security on a loan; one charged with a crime. On the other hand, a *charger* has nothing to do with the legal meaning of *charge*, it means 'one that charges, an instrument used for charging storage batteries, or even a cavalry horse'.

*mergee*, participant in a corporate merger, whereas the *merger* is not, semantically, a correlative of *mergee*, for it is not a person, but the combination of two or more corporations.

### 3. Conclusions

Following this analysis, one can discover a series of regularities which appear as communicative norms of legal language and, at the same time, characterize suffixation with the morphemes *-or/-er* and *-ee*. The regularities concern the fact that most legal terms formed with the suffix *-or/-er* are correlative with an *-ee* form, thus relating the person performing an action, the agent, and the person undergoing that action or receiving something, the recipient (e.g. *offeror* vs. *offeree*).

There are also several irregularities which encourage reflection and prevent rules from becoming routines. First of all, they express a lack of correlation pointing out the second and third categories of terms, i.e. there are terms formed with the suffix *-or/-er*, without an *-ee* counterpart, and terms formed with the suffix *-ee*, without an *-or/-er* counterpart.

A further way in which irregularities may be regarded relates to complex situations within the same category. For instance, although some terms are coined on the same verbal stem and they are thus formally correlated, from the semantic and legal standpoint they refer to persons or notions belonging to different legal fields or circumstances (*adjudicator* and *adjudicatee*, *acceptor* and *acceptee*, *drafter* and *draftee*). The variants *-er* and *-or* may have different meanings, e.g. *deviser* vs. *devisor*, *settler* vs. *settlor* (the *-or* term acquiring a specialized legal sense), or there are legal terms with several meanings and a counterpart only for one of them, e.g. the term *remitter*, which has three meanings, is correlative with *remittee* when it refers to someone who sends payment to someone else.

We hope that this analysis will clarify certain issues regarding the mechanisms of term formation in the specialized language of law, also enhancing didactic and methodological application, since explaining the morphological structure and meanings of a derivative may lead to word comprehension and faster externalization of scientific knowledge<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> For more details on the description of derivational suffixes as a means of teaching English as a second/foreign language, see Kristen Foster, *A Concise Description of Derivational Suffixes in English with Pedagogical Applications for the ESL Classroom*, available at: <http://www.academia.edu/10707740/>

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