Why are there more English words ending in -ness than ending in -ity? What is it about some endings that makes them more widely usable than others? Can we measure the differences in the facility with which the various affixes are used? Does the difference in facility reflect a difference in the way we treat words containing these affixes in the brain? These are some of the questions examined in this book.

Morphological productivity is one of the most contested areas in the study of word-formation. This book takes an eclectic approach to the topic and concludes by applying the findings for morphology to syntax and phonology. Bringing together the results of twenty years' work in the field, it provides new insights and considers a wide range of linguistic and psycholinguistic evidence.

Laurie Bauer is Professor of Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington. He is the author of English Word-Formation (Cambridge University Press 1983) and Introducing Linguistic Morphology (1988).
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MORPHOLOGICAL PRODUCTIVITY

LAURIE BAUER
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Preface

In 1995, when introducing a talk based on material later published as Bauer (1996) at the Free University of Amsterdam, I commented that I had been working on morphological productivity for over twenty years, but still did not feel that I had a coherent picture of the topic. In the intervening five years, I believe that I have achieved some degree of coherence in my view, and this book is an attempt to communicate that understanding. I still regard the picture presented here as provisional, and I expect it to change in the next five or ten years. Twenty-five years ago, morphological productivity was not at the forefront of linguistic theorising, but today, thanks to the dispute between connectionists and purveyors of alternative views of morphology, it has taken on a far greater importance. This not only makes it timely to provide a statement of a position, but guarantees that further research in the near future will outdate some of the comments that are made here. It is my hope that the work presented here will provide a stepping-stone in the development of a new deeper understanding – even if it is one which contradicts my own cherished positions.

I should like to thank all those who have helped in the evolution of this work over a number of years, but especially those connected with the production of this book: Mark Aronoff and Salvador Valera read and commented on a draft of the book, and made many useful suggestions, as did anonymous referees for Cambridge University Press; Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy provided examples and bibliographic help; colleagues and students from the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University commented on individual portions of the work; and colleagues from the School of Mathematical and Computing Sciences at Victoria University gave help and advice on statistical matters. And most of all, I should like to thank my wife, Winifred Bauer, for all her editorial and academic help.