Recognition as a factor in language change

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Aim of this research: to show the importance of recognition by the language user of segments and patterns as a factor in language change.

Four processes are presented briefly to emphasize the importance of recognition.

1. **Clipping**

Clipping with final o-
psycho < psychopath
homo < homosexual
dipso < dipsomaniac

Embellished clipping

Clipping + *-o*
Afro < African
lesbo < lesbian
relo < relative

Pseudo embellished clipping

Monosyllabic word + -o
sicko < sick
creepo < creep
kiddo < kid

Compare **German hypocoristics**

First names, clipped + *-i*	Family names, clipped + *-i*	Monosyllabic family names + *-i*
Heini < Heinrich	Schumi < Schumacher	Schmitti < Schmitt
Ulli < Ulrich	Gorbi < Gorbachev	Krammi < Kramm
Peti < Peter	Honni < Honnecker	Frahmi < Frahm

Conclusion:

- *the language user recognizes in a series of clipped nouns like* psycho *a common final element* -o *in an also common metric pattern (disyllabic, trochaic forms).*
- *Subsequently, he/she assigns morphological status to this common element and extrapolates on the basis thereof to a productive use. Finally, even without clipping the base words as long as the final result is a recognizable trochee.*

- *In the case of* Heini *etc., the naïve language user again recognizes the common pattern – disyllabic clipped forms with final* -i *that share an endearment reading – thus he starts to extent the reach of this process to another group of names (family names) and finally to monosyllabic family names.*

2. **Suffix reinterpretation**

Suffix -cide	Suffix -icide	Suffix -ticide
homicide	aborticide	hospiticide
suicide	Sparticide	scabieticide
patricide	adulticide	
Common segment -icide	Common segment -ticide	

Conclusion

- *In all these cases, the naïve language user recognizes a common element, in a (small) series, which also seems to fulfil the same morpho-semantic role. This common segment is called a confusivum by Zabrocki (1962).*
- *Therefore, the language user assigns a status to these confusiva,*
- *Which gives him the opportunity to use these new 'morphemes' productively.*

3, **Libfixing** (Zwicky 2010)

apocalypse > **-(p)ocalypse**	anniversary > **-iversary**	Armageddon > **-(ma)geddon**
snowpocalypse	monthiversary	snowmageddon
heatpocalypse	blogiversary	carmageddon
Trumpocalypse	hashtagiversary	Obamageddon

Conclusion

- *In libfixing, the segmentation of the model is done consciously, whereas the recognition of common segments in for instance disyllabic clipped forms on* -o *is an unconscious process.*
- *However, the meaning of the newly formed words show that the language user recognizes or reminds the underlying original form. This, of course, is a cognitive process.*
- *In addition, the language user appears to recognize not only the meaning of the original word but also the syllabic form, which he follows precisely while inserting new syllabic material. Obamageddon seems to be an exception. However, the extra initial syllable is unstressed. Thus, the original stress pattern is maintained.*
- *The subsequent productive use of these 'liberated' non-morphemic segments is similar to the productive use of embellishment suffixes.*
- *The underlying cognitive process hereof is also the same: assignment of morphological status, followed by productive use.*

4. **Blending**

Blend		Source Word 1		+ Source Word 2
fertigation (N)	<	fertilize	(V)	irrigation (N)
simulcast (N)	<	simultaneous	(Adj)	broadcast (N)
flexitarian (N)	<	flexible	(Adj)	vegetarian (N)

NB Characteristics of blends
SW2 is the head:
SW2 are nouns → blends are nouns, whatever the part of speech of SW1 is.
Blends takes the stress pattern pf SW2: *fértilize+irrigátion> fertigátion*,
Blends insert at least as much syllabic material from SW1 as has been deleted from SW2: flexitarian < flexi- + -tarian
σ σ σσ

Blend production

- 1. Start with SW2
- 2. Align SW2 to the right edge
- 3. Count down from right to left until you reach the stressed segment
- 4. All (or part of) what is in front of the stress in SW2 may be truncated
- 5. Fill the vacated structure of SW2 with corresponding material from SW1, starting with the utmost left element.

Conclusion

- *Blending is clearly a non-morphemic process of word formation.*

- *The cognitive aspects of blending relevant here are*
- *The language user remembers/recognizes and re-uses the structure of SW2*
- *In terms of:*
- *A. stress pattern*
- *B. syllabic structure.*

NB **This recognition process is not exactly the same as the recognition of confusiva in the case of (embellished) clipping and suffix reinterpretation. It is, however, a cognitive process which forms the basis for a non-morphemic word-formation process.**

Final conclusion

Recognition as a factor in language change and as motor for productivity

- **Two forms of recognition can be distinguished:**
- **A. recognition of similar elements/segments without any morphological status, that subsequently and consequently are assigned morphological status (embellished clipping and suffix reinterpretation)**
- **B. recognition of the original form of which a segment originates and subsequent assignment of the grammatical (morphonological) status and properties of the original form to this segment (libfixing and blending).**
- **Both forms of recognition make use of a different form of analogy.**
- **Recognition is a cognitive process.**

References

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