

TRENDS OF WORD-FORMATION IN MODERN ENGLISH

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Rezumat

Acest articol prevede schimbări depistate în lexical englezii moderne din realitatea zilelor de astăzi. Aceste schimbări au loc aproximativ în toate sferile activităților omenești, reflectându-se în limbaj, iar modul acestora, bogat, are scopul formării cuvintelor noi. Împreună cu largul și tradiționalul mod de formare a cuvintelor, îmbogățirea acestora, astăzi, primesc posibilitatea de compoziții, abrevieri și altele.

On April 3, 1989 the most respectable American newspaper New York Times wrote that „annually the vocabulary bulk of the English Language grows by 15-20 thousands lexical units. Bill Bryson well-known American writer and journalist provides the following data: «When in 1987 the publishing house Random House published its second edition of the recognized dictionary it included over 50 000 words absent from the one 21 years before, and 75 000 new definitions for the old words. From 315 000 dictionary articles 210 000 were to be revised. These were the amazing changes which took place in only twenty years» [1, p. 187].

The reasons for such changes in the vocabulary bulk are mostly obvious: social and cultural changes within the modern society, technical revolution, globalization, etc.

The system of English language word-formation is well studied and described in various sources. However modern trends demonstrate the shift in the models of new lexical units formation. Alongside with the traditional types of word-formation productive methods (derivation, compounding, abbreviation, conversion, clipping) we can observe the increasing popularity of the use of such rather rare method as blending and various types of mixed lexical units.

Several decades ago the words formed through blending were absolutely rare and the very way of blending as a method of word formation was an exotic trend intended for stylistic purposes. Now the number of such words is quite large and they are perceived as an exiting way of expression of ideas [4, p. 17]. Such word as transistor, motel, medicare and many others entered the general bulk of the English vocabulary and some of them were borrowed by other languages.

The most actively developing style and registers of speech are, first of all, scientific style (registers of science and technology, military, medical technologies), advertising style (consumer advertising) and publicistic style.

Blending and abbreviation meet these requirements best..

Blending is considered by many linguists as a very rare type or word-formation combining compounding and abbreviation [6, p. 206]. The words of the type motel < motor + hotel, brunch < breakfast + lunch, transistor < transfer + resistor, stagflation < stagnation + inflation, funemployment < funny+employment and many others are formed through combining parts of morphemes into a complex, if similiated to single-morpheme, lexical unit. The new unit formed in this way meets two requirements of the language to nomination: integrity of the form and the conciseness of the linguistic means. Most spread blended words were found in military terminology, technology, medicine and some other spheres of science where the speed of information conveying is very important. Here we found the words which are already an integral part of the bulk of English vocabulary: Bionics < biology + electronics; camporee < camp + jamboree; guesstimate < guess + estimate [7].

This list may be continued. The examples show that the semantics of the blended words is formed from the semantics of the both components, that is the meaning structure of the resulting word reflects the structure of logic-semantic relations between the combined notions.

In dictionary articles we find direct indication on the complex character of the new notion [a combination of...], [a mixture of...]:

Glasphalt – a mixture of asphalt and crushed glass; brunch – meal...intended to combine breakfast and lunch; celtuce – type of lettuce that combines flavors of lettuce and celery; redox – producing or containing the processes of reduction and oxidation [3; 5].

The examples demonstrate the fact that formed through blending are semantically global and formally have form integrity. At the same time the morphological structure turns to be to certain extent dimmed. While, for example in the word *glasphalt* the morphological structure is to certain extent transparent and the word semantics can be drawn from the meanings of the components.

The semantic globality of the blending is formed through the connections and relations between the phenomena of the extra-linguistic reality for which the new word is created. However, the role of the form should not be underestimated for the semantic realisation. In blending formation the word forms seem to have major importance. Semantic globality is the main point but blending is impossible without formal conditions. In their formation the rules of phono-tactics are extremely important.

We can consider the types of these lexical formations or their models.

1. The most frequent type – combination of two abbreviated semes with insertion of a phoneme or a group of phonemes on the joint. This type covers such words as: *smog* < smoke + fog; *medicare* < medical + care; *bionics* < biology + electronics; *motel* < motor + hotel; *Spanglish* < Spanish + English; *pennant* < pennon + pendant; *transistor* < transfer + resistor.

2. Combination of the initial fragment of one word with the end fragment of the second word without insertions: *Oxbridge* < Oxford + Cambridge; *brunch* < breakfast + lunch; *celtuce* < celery + lettuce; *galumph* < gallop + triumph.

3. Combination of a complete seme of one initial word with the abbreviated seme of another word with insertion of phonemes or without it: *camporee* < camp + jamboree; *spansule* < span + capsule; *workaholic* < work + alcoholic; *narcoma* < narcotic + coma.

4. Combination of two full semes with intermediary insertion (haplology): *glasphalt* < glass + asphalt; *guesstimate* < guess + estimate; *slanguage* < slang + language.

Some studies point out another type: combination of two or more initial fragments of words: *cyborg* < cybernetic + organism. This type of word-building is close to abbreviation and is on the borderline of the two methods, but there is no principal difference between it and blending: the fragments of morphemes are combined and pseudo-morphemic unit is formed perceived as a single word. That is why this type can be referred to blending.

In general we can state that new words formation through blending of two fragments of semes at the current stage of the English language development is an active process: increasing number of lexical units is formed in this way in various styles of speech. Still, they are not very usual, which gives them certain expressiveness. That is why they are popular with advertising texts intended to attract attention. That is why many blendings remain occasion formations and do not enter the general bulk of the language. Among such units we can mention: *netiquette* = etiquette in writing messages in Internet; *Skycago* = skyscrapers of Chicago; *Harvestore* = a firm specializing in storing harvest.

We should also mention that the word expressiveness persists until the transparency of its structure is preserved. When this play upon form is not perceived the word becomes neutral, like such words as – *pulsar*, *transistor*, *motel*, *telex*, *modem*, *Internet* and many others, they are not expressive any more and have no value for advertising. .

The same features can be found with another word-forming process- abbreviation. Abbreviations are «...the words made up from abbreviated initial elements (morphemes) of a word combination or made through combining of the initial letters or sounds» [6, p. 27].

Abbreviations may be divided into the following groups:

1) Initialisms:

a) letters – are pronounced in accordance with the names of letters in the alphabet: *BBC*, *MP*, *PC*, etc;

б) letters-and-sounds: *VTOL* [vi:tol] <VerticalTake-Off and Landing;

в) sounds (acronyms) – pronounced as words: *NATO* [‘neitou], *UFO* [‘ju:fou].

2) Combines, that is combining abbreviation with the initial abbreviation: Univac < Universal automatic computer.

Many linguists note that abbreviation is the most subjective and artificial way of word-building in a language. Like with blending variability and occasionality is characteristic of it, obscure etymology

In forming abbreviation we find the same rules as with blending. Depending on the use of these rules the abbreviation either becomes a single word or not. Those abbreviations where the language phonetic laws are implemented get fixed in the vocabulary system of the language due to similarity to words, these words entering word-changing paradigm and word-building system. Such formations as Teflon < tetrafluoroethylene, tacan < Tactical Air Navigation, seal < sea, air, land (kind of military forces, in Russian «морские котики» in accordance with the direct translation of the abbreviated form); Aids < acquired immunodeficiency syndrome; laser < light amplification

by simulated emission of radiation and many others are pronounced and perceived as independent words with own paradigm and word-building system.

The analysis of the two types of word-building gaining increasing productivity in the Modern English – blending and abbreviation allows the assumption that de-morphologisation and partial de-etymologisation of these new lexical units facilitates the process of secondary nomination and appearance of the new «non-motivated» morphemes. Certainly, they are only conventionally non-motivated, based upon abbreviating of the existing morphemes.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In the course of the English language development in modern times we can observe the shift in patterns of new vocabulary formation. Such patterns of word-building as blending and abbreviation become much more popular than they used to be in previous periods.

2. One of the sources providing the inflow of blending and abbreviation neologisms is slang, not only youth language but also professional slang.

3. The resulting vocabulary units demonstrate the trends of de-morphologisation and partial de-etymologisation with formation of conventionally „non-motivated” morphemes, though based on the existing lexical units, and as a result may cause serious difficulties in understanding and, accordingly, in translation.

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