

Shortening as a factor in word formation

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This presentation wants to show that the traditional view on word formation as a concatenative process is too restricted. Truncation or shortening can also lead to new word forms.

To elucidate this, the following word-formation processes will be discussed:

- Clipping
- Hypocoristic formation
- Acronym formation

I will then examine forms of embellished clipping and embellished hypocorisms, which derive from earlier shortened forms of their source words.

In addition, I will briefly consider certain forms of diminutive formation in which the source word is first shortened.

Finally, examples will be presented of blending and libfixing, processes which also initially require shortening.

The examples to be discussed come mainly from English and Dutch.

The following examples illustrate how these processes work:

(1a) Monosyllabic Clipping:

vampire > vamp
captain > cap

(1b) Disyllabic clipping

alcoholic > alco
psychopath > psycho

(2) Hypocoristic formation (Dutch)

Cornelis > Cor
Catherina > Kaat
Alfred > Fred

(3) Acronyms (Dutch)

AL	< Holland Amerika Lijn	‘transatlantic shipping company’
DAF	< Van Doornes Aanhangwagen Fabriek	‘truck factory’
NOS	< Nederlandse Omroep Stichting	‘central Dutch broadcaster’

(4) Embellished Clipping

journalist > journo
pregnant > preggo
lesbian > lesbo

(5) Embellished Hypocorisms (Dutch)

Jacob > Japie
Johannes > Hannie
Eva > Eefje

(6) Diminutives of shortened source word (Dutch)

jochie	< jongen	'boy'
makkie	< (ge)makkelijk	'something which can be done easily'
gympie	< gymschoen	'gym shoe, sneaker'

(7) Blending

adver(tisement) + (edi)torial	> advertorial
Hunga(rian) + (Ame)rican	> Hungarican
gi(gantic) + (e)normous	> ginormous

(8) Libfixing

vacation	> -cation	radar	> -dar
	staycation		jewdar
	brocation		gaydar
	gaycation		muff dar

What all these examples demonstrate is:

- that these are word-formation processes
- that shortening is essential in all these different processes
- that in some cases, a concatenative process may occur following shortening.

References

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- Hamans, Camiel (2024b). Prosodic aspects of non-morphemic word formation. *Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia*. Tom XXIV: 7-20.