

Lexical blending as wordplay

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In this paper, I will first argue that the formation of any lexical blend implies some form of wordplay as the process is conscious, not governed by rules of word-formation and involves deliberately playing with a variety of possible outputs which, in some cases, may be co-institutionalized (e.g. Eng. *aprium* vs *apriplum* vs *pluot* vs *plumcot* to designate plum-apricot hybrids).

I will then present a typology of the various features which may increase the wordplayfulness of the output of an operation of lexical blending:

- formal complexity (e.g. Fr. *Galligrasseuil* < *Gallimard* + *Grasset* + *Seuil*; Eng. *Cablinasian* < *Caucasian* + *Black* + *Indian* + *Asian*; Eng. *chortle* < *chuckle* + *snort*; Pol. *KoPuNa* < *KPN* + *komuna*),
- phonological and grammatical transgression (e.g. Grk. *mbatáta* < *malakía* + *patáta*; Eng. *planetesimal* < *planet* + *infinitesimal*; Fr. *gazinière* < *gaz* + *cuisinière*; Fr. *clavarder* < *clavier* + *bavarder*; Eng. *Brangelina* < *Brad (Pitt)* + *Angelina (Jolie)*),
- phonic and graphic punning (e.g. Bsq. *sagardo* < *sagar* + *ardo*; Eng. *Ebonics* < *ebony* + *phonics*; Chin. *báigǔjīng* < *báilǐng* + *gǔgàn* + *jīngyīng*; Eng. *pharming* < *pharmaceutical* + *farming*; Pol. *ban(knoty)* < *banknoty* + *knoty*; Ger. *BegeisTerung* < *Begeisterung* + *T*),
- semantic play on words (e.g. Fr. *pantacourt* < *pantalón* + *court*; Sp. *dictablanda* < *dictadura* + *blanda*).

I will finally discuss how lexical blending is a creative technique which plays with words (both inputs and outputs) in a complex interaction which explores the limits of lexical creativity and recognizability.

References

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