

Croatian Blends from Personal Names

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This contribution examines Croatian blends that include names of persons (first names, surnames, or nicknames); that is, blends from personal names (Cacchiani 2011). The initial focus is on their morphological structure. The second step considers semantics (following Bauer 2012) and the discursive function.

The data stem from a Croatian dictionary of lexical blends (Marković et al. 2016) that records more than 5,000 units found in 550 sources representing different registers and discourse (e.g., fiction, journalistic texts, scientific texts, online forums, and colloquial language). For this analysis, a few parts of the dictionary were systematically examined (566 lemmas), containing 149 blends from personal names: their share in the sample is 22 to 28%, which indicates that the entire dictionary includes more than such 1,000 blends. At this workshop, initial steps are presented for a planned broader endeavor that aims to examine around 500 blends from personal names.

The majority of the 149 blends (around 89%) include two constituents (entire words or parts of words); in this sub-group, the predominant patterns (75%) are name + common noun, name + name, and name + adjective. A much smaller share (around 9%) includes three constituents (e.g., two common nouns and a name, or two names and a common noun), and only two blends include four constituents. An interesting tendency observed in some blends is combinations of Slavic elements and loanwords (in their original form, or somewhat adapted).

At this point of the ongoing analysis, only preliminary observations can be made on the meaning and discursive function of Croatian blends from personal names. Such blends including common nouns or adjectives with negative semantic prosody inherit that negative prosody. Some blends are neutral, indicating a possessive relation (e.g., between people and their work or creation), whereas some have negative semantic prosody in addition to indicating possessive relations. A considerable number relate to negative evaluation, although some blends also relate to positive evaluations. Another tendency is their use in contexts with irony and sarcasm (e.g., ones that criticize political attitudes). Some lexical blends are found

in multimodal discourse samples with corresponding visual blends, in which case the relation of the two and their contribution to the overall discourse deserves attention.

In the subsequent steps of the project, attention will be given to the structure, semantics, and discursive function of a larger dataset; that is, around 500 blends included in Marković et al. (2016).

References

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