

WHAT'S IN A BLENDED NAME?

Semantics and sentiment aspects of name-based lexical blending

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It is hardly a coincidence that lexical blends such as *youthquake* < *youth* + *earthquake* and *Brexit* < *Britain* + *exit* ran up as ‘Words of the Year’ several times over the past decades. Lexical blending is not only a means of creating new meanings, but also a prominent mechanism of inducing word play (Renner, 2015), actualizing satirical senses (Ronneberger-Sibold, 2012) or other expressive meanings such as hyperbolic or antithetical (López Rúa, 2012). The playful character of lexical blends can be related to their unorthodox structures that are associated with novel meanings (Beliaeva, 2016, 2019).

Proper names, on the other hand, have been widely referred to as entities having no meaning other than referential (Nyström, 2016), which can acquire various connotations and added meanings in certain contexts (Baltes, 1991; Héois, 2020). In this light, lexemes formed by blending proper names are of particular interest.

This presentation will explore the use and meaning of lexical blends that exploit proper names as their components, including those formed by blending a personal name with a common noun (e.g. *Machinari* < *machine* + *Molinari* and *Trumpocalypse* < *Trump* + *apocalypse*) and those formed by blending two proper names (e.g. *Messidona* < *Messi* + *Maradona*). The paper focusses on non-compositional aspects of meanings such as positive or negative sentiment value and potential connotations. English, Russian and Ukrainian corpus data are used to illustrate key assertions, and some insights from earlier studies (Beliaeva, to appear; Beliaeva & Knoblock, 2020) are revisited.

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