

PORTMANTEAU PHENOMENON: A LINGUISTIC AND COGNITIVE EXPLORATION

ФЕНОМЕН ПОРТМАНТО: ЛІНГВІСТИЧНЕ ТА КОГНІТИВНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

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Languages are constantly developing, adapting to the needs and trends of each time. Since any language is adapted to meet the communicative needs of its speakers, with the appearance of new realities there is a need for new words that describe phenomena, objects and trends of modern life. If the process of emergence of new realities intensifies, then the process of neologization becomes more intense.

Recently, a method of word formation called blending has been actively evolving in English and other languages. This method resembles word formation, but differs from it in that the fragments of words that are joined together are neither roots, nor bases, nor even affixes. These are simply fragments of already known words, which, when combined into a new word, ensure its recognizability. Meanwhile, this formula is quite complex for word formation and it is difficult to form new words with its help. Therefore, over time, it has been modified in various directions, and today a wide variety of lexical units composed of fragments of two or three words are called blends. They can consist of initial or final fragments of words, of a whole word and a fragment of another, they can be obtained by superimposing consonant words on each other. The loss of the telescopic principle has probably become one of the reasons for the emergence of numerous terms for such new formations. They are called blends, fusions, mergers, contaminations, hybrid words, "sandwich words", telescope words, salad words, etc. The task of the research is to identify the most striking examples of neologisms called "portmanteau words" in modern English, describe the history of their appearance, and identify new ways of formation.

This study is based on etymological analysis, which allows us to trace the origin of specific portmanteau words. Lexicographic comparison is based on how they are interpreted in different dictionaries. The authors also tried to determine which models are the most productive from a morphological point of view in modern English. The cross-linguistic approach proves that other languages are also inventive and capable of creating words in the portmanteau style.

Key words: word formation, neologisms, blends, terms invention, linguistic creations.

Оскільки будь-яка мова пристосована до задоволення комунікативних потреб її носіїв, то з появою нових реалій виникає необхідність і в нових словах, що описують явища, об'єкти та тенденції сучасного життя. Якщо процес появи нових реалій інтенсифікується, то такими ж інтенсивними стають процеси неологізації.

В останнім часом в англійській та й в інших мовах активно розвивається спосіб словотвору, який називають зрощуванням. Цей спосіб нагадує словоскладання, проте відрізняється від нього тим, що фрагменти слів, що зрощуються, не є ні корінням, ні основами, ні навіть афіксами. Це просто частини вже відомих слів, які, будучи складеними в нове слово, забезпечують його впізнаваність. Тим часом ця формула є досить складною для словотвору і складати нові слова з її допомогою важко. Тому з часом вона модифікувалася в різних напрямках, і сьогодні зрощуваними називають найрізноманітніші лексичні одиниці, складені з уламків двох чи трьох слів. Вони можуть складатися з початкових або кінцевих фрагментів слів, із цілого слова та фрагмента іншого, вони можуть бути отримані шляхом накладання один на одного співзвучних слів. Втрата принципу зрощування, мабуть, стала однією з причин появи численних термінів для подібних новоутворень. Їх називають блендами, зрощеннями, злиттями, контамінаціями, словами-гібридами, словами-сендвічами, словами-телескопами, словами-салатами тощо. У завдання дослідження входить виявити найяскравіші приклади таких слів у сучасній англійській мові, описати історію їхньої появи, визначити нові способи їх формування.

Дане дослідження базується на етимологічному аналізі, який дозволяє простежити походження конкретних портманто. Лексикографічне порівняння базується на тому, як вони трактуються в різних словниках. Автори також спробували визначити, які моделі є найбільш продуктивними з морфологічної точки зору в сучасній англійській мові. Міжлінгвістичний підхід доводить, що інші мови також є креативними та здатні створювати слова у портманто-стилі.

Ключові слова: словотвір, неологізми, зрощування, винахід термінів, лінгвістичні утворення.

Problem Statement. One of the most creative ways to evolve a language is to combine existing words to create new ones, which is where portmanteau words come in. At the crossroads between

wordplay and the need to invent terms for contemporary realities, portmanteau words have become essential in our daily lives. Formed by the fusion of two words that share part of their meaning or sound,

these linguistic creations allow us to condense complex ideas into a single term. Whether describing a hybrid meal with “brunch” or talking about a generation of “adulscents,” portmanteau words reveal not only our creativity, but also the rapid evolution of our society and our language.

The term “portmanteau word” was coined by the famous English author Lewis Carroll in his book *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871). In the book, Humpty Dumpty explains to Alice the meanings of unusual words found in the poem “Jabberwocky,” such as “slithy,” which he says is a combination of “slimy” and “lithe.” He refers to these words as *portmanteau words* [6, p. 87].

Carroll used the term *portmanteau* to describe these blended words because a portmanteau, in the physical sense, is a type of suitcase that opens into two equal sections. Just as a portmanteau suitcase combines two compartments into one, a portmanteau word combines parts of two (or more) words into one new word. So, in essence, portmanteau words “carry” the meanings and sounds of the original words, much like a portmanteau suitcase “carries” items in its two sections. Carroll himself was a master, creating words that remain still in the language. “Chortle”, for example, is a mixture of “chuckle” and “snort”; “mimsy is made of “miserable” and “flimsy”; a blend of gallop and triumph made “galumph”.

This research aims to examine the most prominent examples of neologisms known as “portmanteau words” in modern English, analyze and explain their historical development, and look at the ways of their formation.

Research methods. Our research is based on etymological and historical analysis which permit to trace the origin of specific portmanteaus. Lexicographic comparison is based on how they are treated in different dictionaries [4, 10, 15]. We also made an attempt to identify which patterns are most productive from morphological point in modern English. A cross-linguistic approach will prove that other languages are also inventive and are able to create words in portmanteau way.

Literature Review. Although the English lexicon contains hundreds of such blend words, there has been little discussion about factors that might influence their structure. There has been research on portmanteau words across various fields, particularly in linguistics that covers various aspects of their formation, structure, and classification. Studies explore how portmanteau words are created by blending parts of two or more words, focusing on the phonological and morphological rules that govern these processes. Derek Attridge claims that the portmanteau word is a

monster, a word that is not a word, that is not authorized by any dictionary, that holds out the worrying prospect of books which, instead of comfortably recycling the words we know, possess the freedom endlessly to invent new ones. [2 p. 201]. Denise Winterman makes a suggestion that people blend words because sometimes the words they want actually don't exist, there's a feeling they are trying to get out. [17]. According Adrienne Lehrer the coining of novel lexical items and the creative manipulation of existing words and expressions is heavily dependent on contextual factors, including the semantic, stylistic, textual and social environments in which they occur [9, p. 116]. Some scholars examine the extent to which portmanteau words contribute to language innovation and how frequently new blends are created in various languages [3, p. 11–22]. Some research suggests that while portmanteaux are less productive than other word-formation processes like affixation, they still play a significant role in enriching the lexicon [12].

Results and Discussion. Blended words often merge the beginning of one word with the ending of another. For example, ‘smog’ is a combination of ‘smoke’ and ‘fog,’ while ‘brunch’ merges ‘breakfast’ and ‘lunch. Over time, portmanteau words have become so common that we hardly notice their origins. A portmanteau word carries the meaning of both original words. This type of neologism is often used to express concepts in a creative and concise way. This creative process is used to describe new phenomena. For example, ‘permalancer’- someone who works permanently for the same company-(permanent + freelancer) or slackademic- an unmotivated student or professor- (slacker + academic).

The analysis of portmanteau words that arise in modern English and reflect the realities of everyday culture is an extremely promising and relevant topic of research. Changes in everyday culture are more radical and profound than in official cultural life: advertising, new design, new borrowed words and customs. That is why, by studying everyday life, the researchers gain insights into trends that are still noticeable at the institutional level. Words like “brunch”, “motel”, “blog” and “smog” have become ingrained in everyday vocabulary.

When two words are melded into one, they make a “blend” that provide the clearest evidence that alternative words are often considered in the course of speech. In most cases it is the second elements that controls the meaning of the whole compound. Thus, motel is a kind of hotel and brunch is a kind of lunch not breakfast. Another example is *skort*, a pair of shorts with an overlapping fabric panel made to resemble a skirt covering the front.

"*Shun the frumious Bandersnatch*" said Lewis Carroll in the nonsense poem "The Jabberwocky". He explains the new words *frumious*: "Take the two words *fuming* and *furious*. Make up your mind that you will say both words, but leave it unsettled which you will say first. Now open your mouth and speak" [5, p. 27].

The news media and entertainment are another area that creates a lot of portmanteaus. Here are a few popular portmanteaus that we may see in a news article or broadcast: *affluenza* (affluent + influenza) – a belief that a person's wealthy status causes lack of motivation and empathy; *botox* (botulism + toxin) – dermatological procedure that injects a strain of botulism into the skin to prevent and treat wrinkles; *Reaganomics* (Ronald Reagan + economics) – "trickle-down" economic policy in the Reagan presidency); *stagflation* (stagnation + inflation) – a continuous period of high inflation and unemployment

The blogosphere has enabled anyone with Internet access to share their ideas and knowledge. (*Blogosphere* = *blog* + *sphere*) [14, p. 2].

Coronageddon (coronavirus + armageddon) The word is derived from the name of the coronavirus infection (coronavirus) and the site of the final battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil (Armageddon), which is mentioned in the Bible. The contamination of the two words formed a new word denoting the idea of the inevitable end of the world caused by Covid-19 and its consequences.

Covidpreneur (covid + entrepreneur) comes from the name of the coronavirus infection (Covid-19) and enterprising businessmen (entrepreneurs) who skillfully profit from the pandemic by reselling masks, antiseptics, sprays, etc. The neologism, based on contamination, includes the standard nomination of the virus and the root word entrepreneur.

Portmanteaux are often used for catchy headlines or terms:

The rise of covidpreneurs. [16].

Brexit is the elephant in the room which few want to talk about [14, p. 10].

(*Brexit* = *Britain* + *exit*, the 2016 referendum for Britain to leave the European Union.)

How will *Obamacare* affect middle-class families? (*Obamacare* = *Obama* + *care*, – popular term for the Affordable Healthcare Act passed during the Obama presidency).

Netiquette is essential for maintaining online civility. (*network* + *etiquette*)

The technological world is infamous for its nicknames, acronyms, and abbreviations. But most technological shorthand is actually made of portmanteaus: *bionic* (biology + electronic) – mechanical body parts; *cyborg* (cybernetic + organism) – robotic human or animal; *email* (electronic + mail) – elec-

tronic method of communication; *intercom* (internal + communication) – loudspeaker system that sends audio messages to selected people; *podcast* (iPod + broadcast) – an audio talk show that was first available on iPods; *webinar* (web + seminar) – meeting or lesson available on the Internet; *webcam* (web + camera) refers to a camera that streams or captures images for use on the web.

It was Roderick's pride and joy and he had loaded it with enough extras to make it top of the range: tinted windows, rain sensors, satnav and more besides [8, p. 125].

Some of foods may actually be portmanteaus: *frappuccino* (frappé + cappuccino) – iced coffee drink; *grapple* (grape + apple) – hybrid of a grape and an apple; *mocktail* (mock + cocktail) – cocktail without alcohol.

Cronuts are the latest craze in pastry innovation. (*croissant* + *donut*)

Is *turducken* the ultimate holiday feast? (turkey + duck + chicken)

Conversational portmanteaus: *brainiac* (brain + maniac) – a very smart person, *bromance* (bro/brother + romance) – close friendship between two males, *chillax* (chill + relax) – admonition to tell someone to calm down, *frenemy* (friend + enemy) – friends who don't always get along, or enemies who don't always fight with each other, *hangry* (hungry + angry) – the feeling you get when your hunger affects your emotions.

Many portmanteaus are hiding in the dictionary as regular words: *dumbfounded* (dumb + confounded) – surprised into silence; *electrocute* (electricity + execute) – to kill with electricity; *fortnight* (fourteen + night) – period of fourteen nights, or two week.

Every period has brought in the English language new terms, including portemanteau words, from other cultures. Language does not stand still and the process of importing words goes on. People who use more than one language sometimes contribute to creating blends. There is no general agreement as to how the various lexicons are organised in the minds of bilingual and multilingual speakers [7, p. 210].

If a person knows two languages reasonably well, words are possibly subconsciously activated in both languages and it is shown by the occurrence of blends.

Here are few examples:

Springling is a blend of the English word *spring* and the German word *Frühling*.

From German: *Doppelgänger*; a blend of *doppel* (double) + *gänger* (walker or goer) meaning a look-alike or ghostly counterpart of a living person. *Schadenfreude*, a blend of *Schaden* (harm) + *Freude* (joy), used in English to describe the pleasure derived from someone else's misfortune.

Words of French origin: *Franglais*, a blend of *français* (French) + *anglais* (English). This term is widely used in both English and French to describe a mix of the two languages, particularly when English influences French vocabulary or grammar. *Velcro*, a true French portmanteau of *velours* (velvet) + *crochet* (hook), Originally coined as a brand name in French, it became genericized and is widely used in English. Other examples of portmanteau words in English that were inspired by French blending are *frappuccino* (*frappé* (French for "iced") + *cappuccino*), *camcorder* (camera + recorder) (influenced by the French taste for compact blends), *chunnel* (Channel + tunnel (for the Channel Tunnel between England and France)).

English has borrowed portmanteau words from a variety of languages besides French. Below are examples of portmanteaux from different languages that have made their way into English:

From Italian: *Viticulture*, a blend of *vita* (life) + *cultura* (culture), relating to the cultivation of vineyards. *Allegro*, a blend of *alla* (in the manner of) + *egro* (quickly). It is commonly used in English for a musical tempo indicating a brisk and lively speed.

From Japanese: *Pokemon*, a blend of *pocket* + *monsters* – or *Poketto Monsutā* borrowed into English as the name for the popular franchise. *Anime* is shortened from *animēshon* to describe Japanese animated works.

From Spanish: *Spanglish*, a blend of *Spanish* + *English*. It refers to a mix of Spanish and English used especially in bilingual communities. *Telemundo*, a blend of *televisión* (television) + *mundo* (world). This word was borrowed as the name of a major Spanish-language TV network.

From Greek: *Automobile*, a blend of *autos* (self) + *mobilis* (movable, from Latin) is used to describe a self-powered vehicle. *Telegraph*, a blend of *tele* (far) + *graphos* (writing) was borrowed to describe long-distance communication via written signals.

From Dutch: *Yacht*, a blend of *jacht* (hunt) + *schip* (ship), describes a recreational sailing vessel.

We can classify portmanteau words by different criteria:

- By the number of stems: bipartite vs multipartite words. Examples: *expose* (expect+suppose) vs *edutainmentology* (education + entertainment + technology).

- By their syntactic role: *cosplay* (a noun), *to chillax* → *chill* + *relax* (a verb), *hangry* → *hungry* + *angry*, *craptastic* → *crap* + *fantastic* (adjectives), *chillaxingly* → from *chillax* + *-ly* (an adverb).

- By semantic meaning: they can denote food and drinks (*cronut*, *spork*); describe states, quali-

ties, or feelings (*frenemy*, *dispensable*); name people (*workaholic*, *netizen*).

These examples show how English adopts and integrates linguistic innovations from other languages, enriching its own vocabulary with creative blends. These words obviously have the potential for a long life in English. They can appear with the expansion of language (new concepts, new needs), allowing the creation of terms to quickly and concisely describe phenomena.

However, considerably more work is needed in order to understand fully how the various languages are interwoven by speakers. Portmanteau words are a wonderful illustration of the adaptability and creativity inherent in any living language. By merging two concepts into a single term, they reflect not only the rapid evolution of our societies, but also the way in which our need for conciseness and novelty influences the way we communicate. These neologisms, which combine humor, precision and modernity, are witnesses of our times. They remind us that language is not fixed, but that it constantly evolves with those who use it. As our world changes and new phenomena appear, it is certain that other portmanteau words will enrich our vocabulary, adding a touch of creativity to our linguistic daily life.

It is obvious that portmanteaus are popular. They are often concise, and catchy what makes them easier to remember and use. By combining the meanings of two words into one, they allow speakers to communicate complex ideas quickly. Considering the rise of social media, meme culture, and the tech industry, we can predict that the language will continue to create more blends. Recent examples fill gaps for emotions that are difficult to capture. '*Probsolutely*' means a definite maybe, while '*textpectation*' is a constant checking of the phone for messages and '*hangry*' describes the feeling of being irritated because a lack of food.

Blending has increased in popularity during recent decades especially in commercial and advertising texts. Advertised goods can be *swimsational*, *sportsational*. TV offers *docufantasies*, *dramacons* and *rockumentaries*. These words are eye catching and exciting. But we can not be sure if they are long lasting and will enter the language vocabulary.

The Office redefined TV comedy with its **moc-kumentary** style. (*Mockumentary* = *mock* + *documentary*).

The rise and fall of Brangelina captivated fans worldwide. (*Brangelina* = *Brad* + *Angelina*).

The word 'Oxbridge' was coined by William Thackeray in 1850 as a portmanteau of Oxford and Cambridge, referring to their combined ancient universities.

Oxbridge is being replaced at the apex of UK universities by “Stoxbridge” after St Andrews overtook Oxford and Cambridge at the top of the latest Guardian University Guide. [1]. This word gave way to other similar portmanteaus:

The Loxbridge Triangle: Integrating the East-West Arch into the London Mega-region.

Woxbridge – Spring Doctoral Conference 2011 [15].

However, if we do one day truly become ‘Doxbridge’, DH1 will be a whole lot less fun [13].

Conclusion. Portmanteau words are therefore a fascinating linguistic tool, which demonstrate the ability of languages to adapt and evolve according to the communication needs of individuals. They allow people to communicate complex ideas in a succinct and creative way. They also reflect cultural and technological evolution, by introducing new concepts or describing emerging phenomena. In addition, these words often add a touch of humor or modernity to

language, making communication more engaging and dynamic.

Portmanteau words are a testament to linguistic evolution and the creativity of speakers. They allow the creation of short and punchy words to express complex ideas in a few syllables. Portmanteau words play a vital role in language, enabling rapid and inventive expression. Whether in literature or the media, they enrich vocabulary and facilitate the description of new social, technological, and cultural realities. Their continued use is a testament to linguistic creativity and the adaptability of languages to the constant changes in society.

Portmanteaux are powerful tools in literature and media to encourage imagination, humour or succinctly convey complex ideas. They attract attention, making them ideal for creative storytelling, persuasive headlines, and effective branding. Learning these words will help to understand better how language evolves, the way people create new linguistic forms and how society and language influence each other.

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