

## SHORTENINGS IN ENGLISH: CLIPPING AND BLEND IDENTIFICATION

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The strain of modern life is obviously one of the reasons for the development of shortenings. According to Hans Marchand, the shortening of common nouns in English is no older than for centuries [1: 448]. In Algeo's new-word classification scheme [2], shortenings consist of acronyms and initialisms, clippings and backformations. The oldest records of clippings in English language history are from the second half of the 16-th century, e.g.: *coz* > *cousin*, *gent* > *gentleman*.

The term *clipping* was used in 1933 for the first time, before this there were other terms such as *stump-word* and *truncation*.

A *clipping* is defined as the shortening of a single word, whereas the shortening and subsequent combining of two words result in a *blend* [3: 39]. Since words and phrases can sometimes not be distinguished clearly, a distinction between clipping and blend may also be difficult. For this reason, the following criteria for their classification are proposed:

1. If the word is shortened at its beginning and/or at its end, it constitutes a clipping. Clipping mainly consists of the following types: back clipping or apocopation – *graf* > *graffiti*, *vid* > *video*, fore-clipping or aphaeresis – *hood* > *neighborhood*, middle clipping or syncope – *mersh* > *commercial*, complex clipping that is used in compounds – *telegram* > *cable telegram*, *op art* > *optical art*, *org-man* > *organization man*. A blend is formed if there is clipping at more than one place and/or there is overlap. Therefore, *drama-doc* > *drama documentary* is a compound clipping, and *des res* > *desirable residence* is a blend.

2. If the base word consists of one than more word, it must be determined whether it can be viewed as a word unit or as a phrase. If the former case results in the description of a new concept, the shortening is a blend, cf. *ballute* > *balloon* + *parachute*, *floatel* > *float* + *hotel*, with the clipping *bubble* > *magnetic bubble* and *cable* > *cable television*. In the latter case, a clipping is involved if only the initial or final part (and not the intermediate part) of the base is shortened.

3. Apart from this distinction, the meaning of the clipping generally corresponds to the meaning of the base, although the stylistic level may vary. In comparison, the meaning of the blend may deviate from the meaning of its base form. The formation of “blending” can be treated as a two-step process. The first step consists in coining an auxiliary “full version” naming unit consistent with the onomasiological model of word-formation. Such a naming unit is then formally reduced in an unpredictable way. Such a change then necessarily takes place in the Lexical Component.

4. The easiest way to draw the distinction is to say that those forms which retain compound stress are clipped compounds, whereas those that take simple word stress are not. By this criterion *midcult*, *pro-am*, *sci-fi*, *sitcom*, *romcom*, *bofro* are all compounds made of clippings.

5. Many clippings are stylistically marked and restricted to slang, colloquial speech, and jargon, some of them are not used in formal written style, e.g. *yup* > *yuppi*, *pseudo* > *pseudo-intellectual*, *impro* > *improvisation*. A clipping may lose its stylistic marking over time and become the “normal” expression in the standard language, e.g.: *movie* > *moving picture*, *rock* > *rock music*, *rap* > *rap music*, *high-tech* > *high-technology*. New meanings may also be added to the original one, e.g.: *to nuke* > *nuclear weapon* extended its mean “to destroy” into “to microwave”.

5. Clippings are often homonymous. They are disambiguated by context, e.g.: *cat* > *catalytic converter*, *chair* > *chairperson*. In general, the homonyms are not created intentionally, but coincide with other pre-existing words in English.

#### **References:**

1. Marchand Hans *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-formation*. München: Verlag C.H.Beck. Second edition, 1969. Pp. x-xxvii, 1-545.
2. Algeo John “Where Do All the New Words Come from?”, *American Speech*. Vol. 55, No. 4, Winter, 1980. – pp. 264-277.
3. Roswitha Fisher *Lexical change in present-day English: a corpus based study of the motivation, institutionalization, and productivity of creative neologisms*. – Tübingen: Narr, 1998. – 209 p.