

Neuere Forschungen zur Wortbildung und Historiographie der Linguistik

Festgabe für Herbert E. Brekle
zum 50. Geburtstag

Herausgegeben von
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der Linguistik : Festgabe für Herbert E. Brekle

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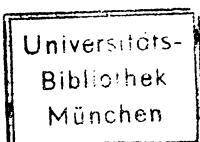
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Word-Formation and Text in English and German*

Leonhard Lipka

1. Introduction

1.1 The relationship between word-formation (in the following WF) and texts has been discussed to some extent in the literature, as reported in Wildgen (1981:5) and Dederding (1983: 49–51). As early as 1972 I had argued in my book on Verb-Particle Constructions (Lipka 1972:146) that nominalizations like *the break-up* can function as pro-forms in texts. I returned to the question of the function of WF in several articles, viz. Lipka (1977:161 f.; 1981:129 f.; 1983:928). In a survey of the state of the art in English WF, Kastovsky (1978:355, 360, 366) also discusses various functions of complex lexemes (in the following CL). This is taken up again in his book on WF and semantics 1982:165, 217).

1.2 In comparison with previous treatments, the scope of this paper will be both wider and narrower. In contrast to Wildgen and Dederding it is not restricted to nominal compounds, but will deal with various types of CLs in German and English. On the other hand it is limited mainly to written texts (but cf. 4.3), is not based on a corpus, and concentrates on textual functions and text types (the English equivalent to the German term *Textsorten*, cf. Beaugrande/Dressler 1981 and 4.1).

1.3 In recent works on text linguistics WF is hardly ever mentioned. In Halliday/Hasan's (1976:274–292) treatment of “lexical cohesion” – as a basically semantic phenomenon – CLs do not figure at all. I would prefer nowadays (cf. Lipka 1980:300 f.) not to follow their terminology, but to use ‘cohesion’ for superficial and ‘coherence’ for underlying relations. This is more in line with the distinction between cohesion and coherence as it is drawn in widely used current publications, such as Beaugrande/Dressler's introduction to text linguistics. There, however, relevant examples appear in the chapter on cohesion, under the heading of partial recurrence, since cohesion is defined as a relation between surface elements of a text. Coherence, as another criterion of textuality for Beaugrande/Dressler, is regarded as concerning underlying conceptual relationships. In my view WF in texts is relevant for both cohesion and coherence.

* I should like to thank Christopher Inman for his help with the manuscript.

2. Some Examples

2.1.1 I will start out with some German examples beginning with those given in Beaugrande/Dressler (1981:61). The first one is from Ringelnatz (*Die Walfische und die Fremde*):

- (1) Der berühmte aus gerösteten *Bananenschalen* hergestellte *Wolkenkratzer*... südlich vom *Bananenkratzer*.

In fact, we here have partial recurrence, i.e. the previously occurring constituents of the CL are combined in the nonce-formation, or *ad hoc* compound. However, there is no co-referentiality, as Beaugrande/Dressler believe; instead the CL creates a new referent, through its hypostatizing function, and at the same time provides a name for it (cf. 3.2).

In their second example, the agent-nominalization *Schildkrötenwender* precedes the mention of two of its constituents, since it is the title of the story by Erich Fried. Thus we have:

- (2) *Schildkrötenwender*

Überall, wo er eine hilflos auf den Rücken gefallene *Schildkröte* sieht, dreht er sie um und singt dann das... *Wendelied*... “Du mußt sie alle, alle *wenden*!”.

There is more to (2) than partial recurrence of elements and intertextuality. Beaugrande/Dressler never discuss the function of such CLs. In this case its use as a title – a problem to which we will return – is particularly important.

2.1.2 In (2) as opposed to (1) not all constituents of the CL are contained in the preceding or following co-text, since the agent-noun suffix *-er*, the determinatum, is missing. In Kallmeyer et al. (1974:230) a similar example is given, which I quote in abbreviated form. It differs, however, in that it concerns a complete NP, a ‘complex nominal’ (CN) in Levi’s terminology, or perhaps better a ‘complex nominalization’.

- (3) Der letzte Bus... [war] längst abgefahren, als der... Zug... gegen Mitternacht in Nienhagen ankam. Der einzige Fahrgast, der dem Zug entstieg war *ein Herr*. Er... schließlich ging er entschlossenen Schrittes in die angezeigte Richtung davon... Aber noch ehe *der nächtliche Wanderer* diesen Gedanken verfolgen konnte...

According to Kallmeyer et al. the CN *der nächtliche Wanderer* belongs to what they call “referentielle Verweisformen”, forms that are both “Konnektionsanweisungen” and “Referenzanweisungen” (referential instructions). Such forms, in other words, function at the same time both as instructions or signals for connecting elements of text and for referring to extralinguistic reality, or rather the hearer/reader’s model thereof (“Wirklichkeitsmodell”). They represent partial activations (“Teilaktivierungen”) of the referential instructions of elements in the preceding co-text. For Kallmeyer et al. the antecedent (“Bezugsform”) *ein Herr* and the CN *der nächtliche Wanderer* (“Verweisform”) are not co-referential, since they argue for a concept of mediated reference. However, for them, the CN takes up and incorporates semantic material from the co-text of the antecedent, viz. *nächtlich* from *Mitternacht* etc. and *Wanderer* from *ging entschlossenen Schrittes* etc.

I should like to add that on the morphological level *nächtlich* is only partially and indirectly related to *Mitternacht* and that the agent-noun *Wanderer* is not at all derived from a non-existent verb *wandern* in the text, but semantically related to *ging*. We thus have no direct WF processes in the text, but a morphologically complex nominal. We might, perhaps, speak of “semantic nominalization” or “semantic pronominalization”, because, clearly, preceding semantic and lexical material is taken up in the form of a CN. Such a process is, however, not recognized within Halliday/Hasan’s concept of lexical cohesion.

2.1.3 Following up the lead given by Beaugrande/Dressler with regard to Ringelnatz, an author notorious for wordplay, I have found a few more interesting examples in the abovementioned (2.1.1) story about ship-wrecked sailors who visit *Bananenkratzer*. To welcome them there will be events such as:

- (4) Rundfahrt durch Stadt und *Museehenswürdigkeiten*, as well as
- (5) Feuerwerk im Germanischen Ratskeller, *Böllerläuten*, *Glockenschüsse* oder so.

In these and many other cases of CLs in the text, no lexical material in the co-text is incorporated in the CL, so that we have no WF processes on the morphological level. This is different in the following case, when the sailors are visited by:

- (6) ein Chefarzt, mehrere *Unterärzte*, viele *Seitenärzte* und zahllose medizinische Handwerker.

Partial lexical repetition (of the suffix *-chen*), both with lexicalized CLs and nonce-formations, is found in the following passage, with a rather different stylistic function. The sailors meet “eine vornehme junge Dame”:

- (7) Ein zartes Stimmchen antwortete auf italienisch. Das kleine, blonde Persönchen verstand zwar nicht die deutsche Sprache... ihr Mütterchen vermißte sie gewiß schon... ihr Häuschen... man sollte sie einfach mit ihrem Vornamen Darlingchen anreden... ein Schlückchen Wein... Samtkleidchen... Goldkäferchenschuhchen... Gardinchen... Möbelchen... Madamchen... Negerchen... “Hälterchen”... Literchen Rum... Knöpfchen... Schimpfwörtchen... Ofenkachelchen... Treppengeländerchen... Daraus schlossen sie, daß das Häuschen ein öffentliches Häuschen wäre...

2.1.4 A similar function is achieved by rather different WF processes in a text by Karl Valentin (1941), in which he obviously parodies a Munich town council meeting. I will list only some of the CLs, mostly nonce-formations, in the order of their appearance. Some of them recur several times, thus creating lexical cohesion and coherence.

- (8) Männergesangsvereinerholungsheim... Briefmarkensammlungsgesellschaft... Turteltaubenzüchterei... Nürnbergerlebkuchenfabrikationsgesellschaft... Mohnweckerlkommision.

2.1.5 To finish off the illustration of German CLs in texts I will give some examples I have come across in newspapers and elsewhere. In a letter on the documentation of linguistic research we find:

- (9) Bitte senden sie uns gegebenenfalls Ihr Material zu. Falls es für unsere Dokumentation geeignet ist, wird es bei uns *verknappetextet*.

An article in *Die Zeit* (15/7/83:3) with the title *Das Milliarden-Ding* bears the equally intriguing subheading:

- (10) *Der "Einfädler" des DDR-Kredits* versetzt seine Anhänger in Staunen.

Later in the text both puzzles (for those readers who do not possess the relevant factual knowledge) are resolved in the following passage:

Daß Franz Josef Strauß den *Milliarden-Kredit* für die *DDR*, wie er selbst sagt, "*eingefädelt*" hat...

Another complex agent-nominalization appears in the title of an article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ, 9/8/83:28), with partial repetition and variation in the text:

- (11) *Busengreifer* erhitzt Gemüt der Grünen. ...*Busengrabschen*... *Brustgriffe*... *Busengreiferei*.

Here the riddle is quickly solved in the subheading:

Abgeordneter der Fraktion wurde angeblich gegenüber Mitarbeiterinnen handgreiflich.

My final example, also a heading in the SZ (12/1/84:20), is explained in the text itself, as are the other cases:

- (12) *Dezemberfieber*. ...jener offenbar unausrottbare Bazillus, der die Verwaltung jeweils gegen Jahresende befällt und bei den Finanzexperten das "*Dezemberfieber*" genannt wird. Die kostspielige Seuche äußert sich in Ausgabewut zum Ende des Haushaltsjahres...

2.2.1 I will start my discussion of English examples with the case of *break-up*, already mentioned in 1.1. It was found in the following co-text in *Time* (21/3/69:30):

- (13) ...whelping occurs just as spring thaws begin to *break up* the winter ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Taking advantage of the *break-up*, pregnant cows among the 800.000 harps make their way south.

Obviously, we have here complete lexical recurrence, although in different categorial form. This would be a clear case of a pro-form, in the sense of Harweg, thus establishing text constitution.

2.2.2 My second example is more than just formally related to (10), in that it is another instance of the very regular and productive process of agent-nominalization. Again it is taken from *Time* (8/8/83:31):

- (14) Not since... 1941 when Rudolf Hess flew off from Berlin to Scotland... had a private trip abroad by a German leader so *puzzled* his countrymen. This time *the puzzler* was none other than Franz Josef Strauß...

I will return to this in connection with the discussion of the textual functions of WF processes. As in (2) and (3) the suffix *-er* is not present in the co-text.

2.2.3 The nominalization *brown bagging* is, like the CLs in (13) and (14), not found in the headline of the text concerned. It stems from a recent article in TIME (2/4/84:56), of which an extract is given here:

- (15) In Manhattan, where a \$ 5 bottle of wine can cost \$ 15 in a moderately priced restaurant, many customers beat the system by finding a dining spot without a liquor license and then carrying their own bottles to the establishment in a *brown paper bag*... Acting on a near forgotten law of 1969, the SLA [State Liquor Authority] sent tart notes to owners of ten... restaurants that did not have licenses. The letter ordered them to stop the practice of *brown bagging* on threat of fines or imprisonment for up to a year.

The action nominalization *brown bagging* occurs five times in the relatively short text, thus creating lexical cohesion and coherence. In addition there are other interesting coinings in which information is condensed, such as *bring-your-own-bottle restaurants* and *a frequent brown-bagging customer*. The latter CN refers to New York Mayor Edward Koch.

If we consider the textual function of *brown bagging*, we can state that it resembles pronominalization, since it takes up anaphorically in a CN previous lexical material. Furthermore, it brings about considerable information condensation, since it might be paraphrased as:

'The practice and action of bringing or smuggling a bottle of liquor, wrapped in a *brown paper bag* to a restaurant which is not licensed to sell alcoholic drinks'.

3. The Functions of WF in Texts

3.1 This brings us to the general problem of the functions of WF which might be distinguished from the narrower question of its textual functions (in the following TF). Compounds and nominalizations in particular may effect a high degree of information condensation, by structural reduction of morphological elements, as compared to paraphrases. Kastovsky (1982:217) gives the following example:

- (16) I know *an alleged discoverer of time-travel*.

In a discussion of the general functions of WF (Lipka 1983: 928) I mentioned *pen-friend*, paraphrasable as:

'A person, esp. in a foreign country, whom one has come to know by the friendly exchange of letters, but whom one has usu. never met'.

Both examples, however, are not embedded in a co-text and thus do not take up previous lexical or semantic material.

3.2 Let us look now at the opinions expressed by various authors on the general functions and TFs of WF. Kastovsky (1978:350, 360) mentions "Informationsverdichtung" and naming and classifying functions. In connection with the "Pronominalisierungsfunktion" he (1978:362 f.) gives some interesting examples from texts. These functions are echoed in his book, where in addition (1982:165) the naming function is stressed and related to the concept-forming power of words and to hypostatization (cf. Lipka 1977).

The Regensburg Project on nominal compounds, and, in particular, Wildgen (1981), on whom I will concentrate, distinguish two types of textually relevant compositional processes: “Variationsprozesse” and “Analogieprozesse”. Details of the further subclassification cannot be discussed here (cf. Wildgen 1981:3 ff., 7, 9), however, I will single out two processes by way of illustration: anaphoric thinning out (“anaphorische Verdünnung”, e.g. *Geldtransportauto* → *Geldauto*) and anaphoric composition (“anaphorische Komposition”, e.g. *das grammatische Telefon* → *das Gramatiktelephon*). Wildgen also discusses cataphoric processes and distinguishes between primary and secondary ones. With regard to specific TFs he recognizes a “raffende Funktion”, which amounts to information condensation in texts, and the use of CLs as “Textgliederungs-sigale”, in particular as headlines (1981:11, 31, 23).

Dederding (1983), like Wildgen, is concerned with nominal compounds, and refers without being specific to the general coherence of texts (“Textverflechtung”) achieved by the means of WF. Both argue, rather unconvincingly, against the pronominalizing or pro-ing function of CLs. Dederding (1983:63) isolates two particular TFs, both deriving from the referential specification of the determinatum (“Grundwort”) in a compound: 1. safeguarding the explicitness of textual connection (“zur Sicherung der Eindeutigkeit von Konnektionsanweisungen”) and 2. increasing redundancy (“zur Erhöhung der Redundanz”). Both processes, however, are restricted to compounds, in which the determinatum is a free lexeme.

3.3.1 In my own approach to the functions of WF, the pronominalization function of example (13) was pointed out as early as 1972. Later (1977:161 f.) the hypostatization effect of CLs, in connection with their referential and naming function was stressed. In an article on lexicalization (1981:129 f.), I recognized the information condensation function, linked to formal reduction and linguistic economy, as well as the pronominalization and naming functions. Finally, in a discussion of the pragmatic aspect of WF (1983:928), I referred to the classifying (*wine glass, beer glass*), naming (*Reagonomics, space shuttle*), pronominalization and information condensation functions of CLs. Obviously, not all of these are equally relevant for texts.

3.3.2 Considering the English and German examples presented in 3., I will now try to extract specific TFs. In some cases, viz. (1), (2), (3), (6), (10), (11), (13), (14), (15) all or some of the constituents of the CL are contained in the preceding or following co-text, thus creating lexical cohesion and coherence. Consequently, we must acknowledge certain anaphoric and cataphoric pronominalization processes, in which the CL is (partially) motivated. However, complex nonce-formations in texts, do not necessarily repeat lexical material, as can be seen most clearly in (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9). Here, the TFs are of a stylistic nature, sometimes with a combination of purposes which are difficult to separate, such as parody, ridiculing of extralinguistic referents and certain text types, and linguistic playfulness. The repetition of *chen* in (7) presumably aims at both the *Persönchen* and the naive sailors and at typically naive text types. Valentin in (8) clearly ridicules German officialese jargon, which tends to coin ever growing tapeworm-words (another English German nonce-formation).

3.3.3 In some of his famous advertisements, Valentin, incidentally, exploits other non-textual functions of WF, viz. a combination of naming and hypostatization. Thus a fictitious object is created and named by the use of *Semmelbrösel-Reibmaschine* and *Nasentröpflerlauffangungsundheruntertropfverhütungsapparat*.

The same procedure is used in many of Morgenstern's (1963) well-known nonce-formations, with partial recurrence, in his poems, especially the *Galgenlieder*, such as *Mondkalb*, *Mondschauf*, *Monduhr*, *Kartoffelmaus*, *Mitternachtsmaus*, *Nachtwindhund*, *Schluchtenhund*. He even wrote a whole poem, entitled "Neue Bildungen der Natur vorgeschlagen", which consists entirely of such CLs, beginning with: *Der Ochsenspatz*, *Die Kamelente*, *Der Regenlöwe* and ending with: *Die Gänsechmalzblume*, *Der Menschenbrotabaum*. Obviously, various syntagmatic and paradigmatic linguistic relations are involved here, and again hypostatization is relevant.

3.3.4 A closer look at the first group of examples, from (1), (2) to (14), (15), reveals that the TFs of CLs are usually combined. Thus, repetition on the morphological level creates lexical cohesion and consequently coherence. It is normally linked with formal reduction, information condensation, and referential function, which may lead to hypostatization. The naming by CLs of new objects for which a simple lexeme does not exist is basically non-textual, but provides transparency and partial motivation. Classical pronominalization is not based on overt morphological relationships. If we go beneath the linguistic surface structure of a text, we must recognize deeper semantic connections that may be taken up by CLs, as in the case of *der nächtliche Wanderer*.

Partial lexical recurrence will only strengthen such connections, or ties, but is not necessary for "semantic pronominalization". Example (9) is an extreme case, in that the semantic material contained in the non-lexicalized CL *verknappetextet*, is not present in the co-text even in different lexical garb. In order to understand it we have to make inferences and use inferential strategies (cf. Lipka 1980: 302–308.) If an intriguing non-lexicalized CL or CN is used as a title, the resulting cataphoric relations create suspense, and such nonce-formations are consequently employed as attention-getting devices in journalistic texts, as in (10), (11), and (12), but also in (2). This function is never mentioned in the literature, but Wildgen (1981:23) at least refers to the frequency of *ad hoc* compounds, as "Textgliederungssignale", due to their abstract character.

4. A Problem: WF, Text Types and Authors

4.1 We have seen that the use of WF in texts is not independent of the particular text type (*Textsorte*), and that individual authors tend to coin more novel CLs than others. More precise correlations, however, present a problem.

Let me say in passing that the relatively recent term *Textsorte* may itself serve to illustrate the effect of hypostatization (cf. 3.2, 3.3.1, 3.3.3). In 1972 some fifteen linguists tried to reach an agreement on its use and definition. But even today many people are under the delusion that *Textsorte* denotes a single well-defined, independently existing referent. They cannot see its notational character, as I call it, following Nils Erik Enkvist, i.e. the fact that it must be explicitly defined – for example as a configuration of text-internal and -external features – in order to refer successfully.

4.2 Wildgen (1981:3, 6, 23) repeatedly mentions the relevance of text type for creative WF processes. In a preliminary report on the Regensburg Project the following were listed as rather promising for *ad hoc* compounds: texts that play with language (such as the “Streiflicht” in the *SZ*, observations by Sigi Sommer), ironic texts (*Spiegel, Stern*), quasi-literary texts (feature articles), aggressive texts (leaflets, parodies), and advertising copy. In addition, headlines are specifically mentioned.

4.3 However, the use made of the means of WF in different text types and by different authors seems to vary considerably. In a collection of works by Ringelnatz (1962), which includes the prose-text from which (1) and (4)–(7) are taken, the poems contain far fewer novel CLs, such as *Ringelnatzmiene, Hochseekuh, Junggesellenfüße, Fliegenleim-Selbstmord* (and *Fliegenmann, Pustegehtaus-Lauf*, and *Schmolls Schweigen*).

It seems that Morgenstern is considerably more prolific in his *Galgenlieder* and *Der Gingganz* (cf. 3.3.2). Some of his further coinings are: *Henkersmaid, Henkersmädchen, Astwurmloch, Klabauterfrau, Glockentönin, Teufelslegendchen, Fiedelbogenpflanze, Neumondweib, Großstadtbahnhoftauber*, and *Toilettenkünste*. It is difficult to measure and compare creativity, but the relative frequency of nonce-formations is definitely higher than in Ringelnatz’s poems.

The use of productive and creative processes of WF in English and German seems to depend both on the author and text type. The frequency of such processes is, however, probably overestimated. I have recently read several modern English novels, by a variety of contemporary writers, with a view to finding examples of the type *brown bagging*. They include: David Lodge (1965), *The British Museum is Falling Down* and (1984), *Small World*; Patricia Highsmith (1977), *Edith’s Diary*; Tom Sharpe (1973), *Indecent Exposure*; and Roald Dahl (1979), *My Uncle Oswald*. In none of them have I been able to locate a single instance of the first group of examples – (1) to (15) – with specific TFs, nor did I encounter any other conspicuous use of WF.

The situation seems to be similar in spoken contemporary English. In the corpus used for her investigation of extended reference (“erweiterte Verweise”) Krenn (1985:220) found hardly any evidence for a contribution by WF processes to cohesion and coherence in spoken texts. One of the rare examples is the following (1985:224):

- (17) It now seems that world trade is starting to *recover* again... a major element of *this recovery* is likely to be a drop in the price of oil.

5. Conclusions

5.1 It is perhaps not accidental that my English examples (13) to (15) all stem from TIME, which in more than one respect has been the model for the German *Spiegel*. There is stylistic affinity also with *Die Zeit*. Some journalistic text types therefore seem to favour the use of WF for various purposes. This also holds for officialese and legal jargon in German (cf. (8) as a parody) and technical language (cf. Dederding, who uses patent specifications as a corpus, and his own coinaging (1983:57) *Substitutionsverhinderungsgrund*). Individual authors, however inclined to wordplay, do not always guarantee a high frequency of novel CLs, as the cases of Ringelnatz and Valentin have shown. The frequency of the use of WF processes depends on the intentions underlying

a particular text. Finally, the contemporary English novel, but also casual conversation in English, seem to be unmarked cases, with a very low incidence of novel or textually relevant CLs. From all this it is clear that more research is required to throw additional light on this problem.

5.2 With regard to the TFs of WF, we must keep in mind that they are not mutually exclusive, but usually combined in a CL or larger nominalization. They may serve anaphoric or cataphoric lexical and semantic pronominalization, and thus produce cohesion and coherence. By formal reduction, information condensation is achieved, which also involves semantic processes. At the same time the relationship between the constituents is obscured, which may be exploited in headlines for creating suspense. The repetition of specific means or processes of WF, as in (6) and (7), may create specific stylistic effects. Classifying, naming, and hypostatization (also found with simple lexemes) are not TFs of WF proper.

From all this it becomes clear that WF, if viewed from a non-narrow perspective, is not restricted to morphology, but is an essential aspect of any text, the only natural unit and form of language in use and the original linguistic sign.

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