

Name: (Con)textaholic: a corpus-based study on Italian blends among textuality and word formation

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This study is a corpus-based analysis on Italian lexical blends. More specifically, the central focus of this paper is blends' behaviour from a textual perspective inside Italian web corpora. Lexical blends are lexemes formed by two (or more) source words, provided that at least one source word has been reduced phonologically, e.g., *diversabile* < *diversa(mente)* + *abile*; *fantastiliardo* < *fantasti(co)* + *(m)iliardo* (Castagneto & Parente, 2020: 353-354). The interest in Lexical Blending increased notably in the last two decades. However, in the Italian tradition, lexical blends appear to be only occasionally studied still nowadays. Few studies (Thornton, 1993, 2004; Bertinetto, 2001; Cacchiani, 2011, 2016; Mattiello, 2013, 2019; Bombi, 2015; Castagneto & Parente, 2020) turned their attention on such formations, probably because considered "marginal" or "extra-grammatical" with regard to other word formation processes (Scalise, 1983; Dressler, 1987). Conversely, recent studies adopting different methodological approaches and frameworks have proved that blends' coinage is neither random, nor unpredictable (Kemmer, 2003; Gries, 2004; Piñeros, 2004; Renner & Lalić-Krstin, 2011; Bauer, 2012). Moreover, there is now evidence of this word formation process in typologically diverse languages (Renner, 2015: 121-122). Nevertheless, blends' textual dimension has always been scarcely explored or subsumed under a wider focus on abbreviations in general, i.e., together with other neighbouring word formation processes, such as acronyms and clippings (McArthur, 1992; Fandrych, 2004; Kjellander, 2015). In this paper, blends' occurrences are analysed by means of a scrutiny of six Italian web corpora consulted with the software *Sketch Engine* (Kilgariff *et al.*, 2014). Following a suggestion from the past literature (Lehrer, 1996, 2007; Ronneberger-Sibold, 2006; Kjellander, 2015), namely that blends are better decoded out of their context, co-textual occurrences of 10 lexical blends are examined to shed light on their textual functions – with a specific focus on textual cohesion – in order to better comprehend affinities and divergencies with nominal compounds on this respect (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Therefore, it is expected that the context in which they appear will serve to decode blends' constituents and to situate their "intralinguistic" meaning that otherwise relies solely on the encyclopaedic knowledge of the reader (Kjellander, 2015: 9). Blends' cohesive strategies that will be looked into are, as follows: total and/or partial recurrence of formatives that can function as logodeictic means of coherence (see also *textual deixis* in Fillmore, 1975: 70; Lipka, 1987: 60; Conte, 1999); occurrence of associative anaphoric and cataphoric lexical proforms (Berretta, 1992; Korzen, 2003). Finally, to draw a distinction among blends' and compounds' textual behaviour, two features will be analysed: morphosyntactic inconsistency in marking gender or number proper to subordinative blends; co-predication, that is, the property displayed by coordinative blends to doubly refer to two concepts in the same co-text (Grésillon, 1984: 134-138; Mattiello, 2013).

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