

Word formation and cohesion in specialized languages

Katrin Menzel, Department of Language Science and Technology, Saarland University, Saarbrücken

This talk addresses the relationship between selected word formation patterns and cohesion in English as well as implications of this relationship for translation (English<->German). This topic was recognized as essential by Lipka (1987), but has not received much coverage in the literature on morphology, text linguistics and translation studies.

Lexical cohesion and language- and text-type specific word formation strategies interact. The textual relations between lexical items can be made explicit via cohesive chains of interrelated items sharing similar morphological structures. These items function as cross-clausal links signalling semantic relationships or evoking associations with formally similar words in the same text. It is beneficial for language users to extend their knowledge of word formation processes in their first (and second) language to increase their discourse competence (Menzel 2018).

The morphological level is of particular importance in languages for specific purposes (Halliday 1964:127f). I will therefore discuss word formation patterns in specialized English and English/German corpora from a diachronic, synchronic and cross-linguistic perspective.

These patterns include:

- Formations with Graeco-Latinate combining forms (e.g. *photolysis*) in scientific English, patterns that in many cases serve as internationalisms (Menzel/Degaetano-Ortlieb 2017).

- Suffixed nouns denoting actions, qualities or states (e.g. German nouns with *-heit*, *-keit*). Lexical items in specialized registers contain a high degree of word-internal complexity, and English often makes use of root morphemes with Romance/Latin/Greek etymology (e.g. *environmentality*) and suffixes from different etymological sources (*-acy*, *-hood*, *-ity*, *-iety*, *-ment*, *-ness*). There is a certain tendency in specialized English to avoid suffixed complex nouns with Germanic components or with several lexical morphemes. German specialized texts show a higher number of affixes and/or root morphemes combined within such nouns. Difficulties may therefore arise when translating specialized texts (Menzel 2018).

- Eponyms derived from personal names, a productive resource for components of new single-word and multi-word expressions in English for specific purposes (Menzel 2021). I will discuss adjective+noun and proper noun+noun eponyms and structures containing a possessive marker (*Brownian movement*, *Basset force*, *Hadley's quadrant*). From a diachronic perspective, English multiword eponyms with possessive markers have become less productive as they are potentially ambiguous and may not easily be distinguishable from true possessives indicating ownership.

- Multimorphemic adjectives (adjective compounds such as *arsenic-bearing* and adjectives negated with prefixes, e.g. *non-linear*, cf. Menzel 2020, Menzel et al. Forthcoming). Such adjectives are often used in languages for specific purposes as temporary formations for the densification and adjectivization of phrasal or clausal structures. English makes use more regularly of adjective compounds than German. We also observed an increased usage of English adjectives with affixal negation markers in scientific writing occurring in increasingly diverse discourse structures. The variation between adjective negation via affixes vs. analytic

negation marker is interesting from a contrastive perspective as in German the status of *nicht(-)* (and also in French *non(-)*) in front of adjectives as affix or free morpheme is less clear than that of the English negation prefix *non-*. The wordhood status of adjective compounds also needs to be addressed.

The patterns and findings discussed in this talk illustrate why expert language users and translators should consider the productivity and limits of word or lexeme formation patterns in the languages they are working with and the contribution of word formation choices to discourse coherence.

References:

- Halliday, M.A.K. (1964). Comparison and Translation. In: M.A.K. Halliday, Angus McIntosh & Peter Strevens. (eds.) (1964). *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. London: Longman, 111-134.
- Lipka, L.(1987). Word-formation and text in English and German. In: B. Asbach-Schnitker & Johannes Roggenhofer (eds.). *Neuere Forschungen zur Wortbildung und Historiographie der Linguistik: Festgabe für Herbert E. Brekle zum 50. Geburtstag*, 59–67. Tübingen: Narr.
- Menzel, K. (2018). Morphological awareness and translation studies. In: T. Tinnefeld (ed.) with the collaboration of R. Kresta, J. Szakos: *Challenges of modern foreign language teaching - Reflections and analyses*. Saarbrücken: htw saar 2018, p. 181-206.
- Menzel, K. (2020). Morphologische Strukturen und Wortbildungsaspekte aus übersetzungswissenschaftlicher Perspektive. In: *Interdependenzen und Innovationen in Translation und Fachkommunikation – Interdependence and Innovation in Translation, Interpreting and Specialised Communication*. Ed.: B. Ahrens, M. Beaton-Thome, M. Krein-Kühle, R. Krüger, L. Link, U. Wienen. p. 45-70.
- Menzel, K. (2021). Scientific eponyms throughout the history of English scholarly journal articles. In: *Broadening Perspectives in the History of Dictionaries and Word Studies*. H. Van de Velde and F. T. Dolezal (eds.). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. 159-193.
- Menzel, K. and S. Degaetano-Ortlieb (2017). The diachronic development of combining forms in scientific writing. In: *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow, The Journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, vol. 2 (2) 2017, p. 185-249.
- Menzel, K., M. Krielke, S. Degaetano-Ortlieb. (Forthcoming). Negated adjective constructions in English scientific journal articles. In: *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow, The Journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*. Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, vol. 1 2022.