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CLIPPING IN ENGLISH SLANG NEOLOGISMS

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Résumé

The paper addresses the issue of clipping in contemporary English slang formation. My primary concern has been to identify the phonotactic, morphotactic, graphic, logical, derivational, and syntactic features of clipped English slang neologisms coined in the early 21st century. The analyzed data have been collected from three explanatory dictionaries of English slang and cover the period from 2000 to 2008. The major findings based on the novel slang material refer to the redefinition of the term *clipping*, elaboration of a new three-level taxonomy of clippings, and establishing common and distinctive features of the diverse types of pure clipping under investigation. Clipping is treated as a non-concatenative mechanism of word formation that is characterized by the deletion of a single segment / multiple

segments of a word form with a prototypically complete or non-prototypically partial semantic condensation and the informalization of the resulting unit. The taxonomy of clippings presupposes the distinction between pure and expanded clipping, with the pure clipping being split into sequential and non-sequential, the former being further subdivided into monoclipping and ambiclipping; finally, monoclipping embraces back-clipping, fore-clipping, and mid-clipping, whereas ambiclipping is represented by edge-clipping. The common features inherent to all slang clippings involve the loss of correlation between the syllable structure of the original lexical item and that of the resulting neologism, the loss of correlation between the morphemic structure of the original lexical item and that of its derivative, and the phonetization of orthograms. Whilst the first two characteristics stem from the very nature of shortening per se, the third one is connected with the sociolect background (i.e. slang), in which clipped words are produced and subsequently employed. The distinctive features primarily rely on the position of the eliminated segment in the word and refer to the processes of alternation, lexicalization, (de)capitalization, "gapped" derivation, as well as shed light upon the graphic anomalies.

Key words: clipping, English slang, slang neologism, pure clipping, sequential clipping, monoclipping, back-clipping, mid-clipping, fore-clipping, ambiclipping.

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