
What is creative to whom and why? Creativity in word-formation and phraseology against the backdrop of shared conventions and individual routines

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Utterances are creative to the extent that they stretch linguistic conventions. According to the Entrenchment-and-Conventionalization Model (Schmid 2020), these can be defined as mutually known regularities of behaviour that speakers adhere to because they mutually expect each other to adhere to them. These regularities in turn pertain to various dimensions, broadly speaking the symbolic, syntagmatic, paradigmatic and pragmatic ones, all of which can be exploited for creativity. For example, using a lexical item with a new metaphorical meaning comes down to stretching a symbolic regularity, coining a new word by applying a conventional word-formation pattern extends the paradigmatic range of a syntagmatic and symbolic regularity.

Routines, in contrast, are defined as highly entrenched patterns of associations in the minds of individual speakers. These patterns are extracted and entrenched from conventions in use and therefore also multi-dimensional. They are marked by inter-individual and intra-individual (i.e. contextual) variation. One speaker's routines can come across as being creative to another speaker in a given context.

Linguistic creativity must be understood against the backdrop of usage-based communal conventions (the macro-level) and individual routines (the micro-level). I will discuss how this socio-cognitive perspective on conventions and routines can contribute to understanding different types and degrees of linguistic creativity in the fields of word-formation and multi-word expressions.

The main challenge for deciding what is creative to whom in these two fields lies in the continuum from morphologically or lexically fixed elements (such as the compound *watertight* or the proverb *a stitch in time saves nine*) to partly and fully variable patterns of regularities (e.g. N+Adj, or V+able_{Adj} or N and N, i.e. irreversible binomials). Complex lexemes or multi-word units can be unconventional on the lexically specific level, while – and also because – they follow conventions on the level of variable patterns. I will focus on the borderline area between word-formation and multi-word expressions populated by compounds (especially phrasal ones), restricted collocations, phrasal verbs and light-verb constructions.

References: • Schmid, H.-J. (2020). *The Dynamics of the Linguistic System. Usage, Conventionalization and Entrenchment*, Oxford: OUP.