Expanding the boundaries of word formation: phrasal compounding in German between creativity and routine

Katrin Hein

Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS), Mannheim
hein@ids-mannheim.de

Phrasal compounds like *Leck-mich-am-Arsch-Tag* ('kiss-my-ass day') or *Beckham-im-Gedächtnis-Grätsche* ('Beckham-in-mind straddle') are characterized by the integration of a syntactical unit (sentence or phrase) into a complex word and therefore are an example par excellence for the interplay of word-formation and multi-word expressions at the lexicon-syntax interface (cf. Hein 2015). As it will be illustrated by the help of corpus data from written and spoken German, the pattern also gives interesting insights into the relation between creativity and routine.

From the perspective of word-formation, phrasal compounds can count as 'creative' in that they diverge from the prototypical pattern of determinative compounding in which two lexical immediate constituents are combined in order to form a new complex word (e.g. *Bilderrahmen* 'picture frame'). This divergence from the "routine in compounding" can come along with expressive effects. Since also phrasal modifiers (e.g. <u>*Zu-mir-oder-zu-dir*</u>-*Gequatsche* 'my-place-or-yours chatter') can be seen as (creative) instantiations of more abstract linguistic patterns (e.g. [X *or* Y]), the interplay of creativity and routine is likewise relevant for the inserted multi-word expressions (cf. Steyer/Hein 2018: 125). This is underlined by the observation that also non-linguistic patterns like stereotypes are at work in the phrasal non-heads (cf. Finkbeiner/Meibauer 2016: 39), e.g. *Ich-kann-Golf-Schi-und-Wandern-und-bin-schöner-als-die-andern-Franz* ('I-can-golf-skiing-and-hiking-and-I-am-more-beautiful-than-the-others Franz').

The morphological as well as the phraseological perspective on phrasal compounding suggest that routine is a central prerequisite for the creative coinage of complex words and multi-word expressions. Without the connection to the entrenched/prototypical patterns, creative coinages would neither lead to expressive effects nor to easily understandable units.

References: • Finkbeiner, R. & J. Meibauer (2016). Boris ,Ich bin drin' Becker (,Boris I am in Becker'). Syntax, semantics and pragmatics of a special naming construction. *Lingua* 181, 36–57. • Hein, K. (2015). *Phrasenkomposita im Deutschen. Empirische Untersuchung und konstruktionsgrammatische Modellierung*. Tübingen: Narr. • Steyer, K. & K. Hein (2018). Usuelle satzwertige Wortverbindungen und gebrauchsbasierte Muster. In S. Engelberg, H. Lobin, K. Steyer & S. Wolfer (eds.), *Wortschätze. Dynamik, Muster, Komplexität.* Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Sprache 2017. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 107-130.