
Wannabe approximatives: creativity, routinization or both?

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APPROXIMATION is a complex functional domain comprising FAKENESS, IMITATION, RESEMBLANCE, and VAGUENESS (Masini & Micheli 2020). In morphology, approximative constructions can be traced back to a variety of sources, including modal expressions, such as *wannabe* (<*want to be*). In this paper we present a corpus-based analysis of *wannabe* in English as well as in five other languages the word has been borrowed into (Danish, Dutch, French, Italian and Finnish), where it collocates with both native and English stems. A few examples featuring some of the various construction types are given in (1a-c).

- (1) a. *The guy was a wannabe-gangster.*
b. *This **Elvis wannabe** finally meets his dream girl.*
c. *yet another piece of **Hollywood-wannabe** rubbish*

In order to explore the semantic and morphosyntactic profiles of the *wannabe* constructions we compare 500-word samples for each language, drawn from the TenTen web-based corpora at Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014), addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: How are the different construction types distributed across each language and what is the morphosyntactic status of *wannabe* in these constructions?

RQ2: Which collexemes (nouns, adjectives, NPs) are found in each language?

RQ3: How productive are the *wannabe* word-formation patterns?

RQ4: How creative are these word-formation patterns?

Following Beliaeva (2019) we assume a trade-off between creativity and productivity, whereby both concepts are seen as gradient. For *wannabe* constructions, we argue that they are on the gradient between creativity and routinization, with different positions for different languages, depending on how they are integrated in existing constructional networks and on varying degrees of association with the original unverbated VP.

References: • Beliaeva, N. (2019). Blending creativity and productivity: on the issue of delimiting the boundaries of blends as a type of word formation. *Lexis* 14. • Kilgarriff, A. et al. (2014). The Sketch Engine: ten years on. *Lexicography* 1, 7-36. • Masini, F. & S. Micheli. (2020). The morphological expression of approximation: the emerging simil- construction in Italian. *Word Structure* 13(3), 371–402.