
Romanian Libfixes in the Making

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Libfixes represent a fuzzy class of morpheme-like, but not-yet morphemes, both creative and productive, i.e. they help the birth of new creative, innovative words, but also enter numerous new formations (e.g., *-licious*, 'liberated' from *delicious*). Most often they originate in lexical blending (Norde & Sippach 2019). The process involves a series of lexical blends centered around a recurrent splinter that ultimately turns into a combining form or an affix (Mattiello 2018). In our opinion, libfixes are an intermediate phase as the morpheme-like, but not-yet morphemes preserve their connection with the source-word, but combine with a large number of other word bases.

Libfixes have not been discussed in Romanian linguistics yet, so we conducted a corpus-based study, manually checking a 60,000,000-word corpus of Romanian online texts from the past 15 years. We identified 45 words formed with 7 libfixes – 6 international: *-aholic*, *-gate*, *-at(h)on*, *-g(h)ed(d)on*, *-zilla*, *-pedia*, and a purely Romanian one: *-izdă* (< Ro. *pizdă* '(slang) vulva'). CoRoLa (1bn words) and Sketch Engine Romanian corpus (2.6bn words) were also checked to establish Romanian libfix productivity. Our study shows that the 7 libfixes appear almost always in *hapax legomena*, but these nonce words signal the cognitive ease in (re)using a particular word creation pattern (Barrena Jurado 2019).

The analysed libfixes display different degrees of morphemization: Ro. *-(a/o)holic* is the most advanced and the most productive with 118 words, usually borrowings (e.g. *chocoholic*, *shopaholic*, *bookaholic*), but also nonce words from Romanian bases (e.g. *brânzoholic* 'cheese-aholic', *biciholic* 'byke-aholic'); much less productive is the only autochthonous libfix, *-izdă*, used to create derogatory female profession names, as it occurs in 44 words, most *hapaxes*.

The analysis suggests that due to the pervasive influence of global English, the *libfix* schema has become more productive in Romanian, as it has been suggested for Dutch (Hamans 2021).

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