SEMANTIC PEJORATION IN -IE SUFFIXED WORDS: AN EVIDENCE-BASED STUDY

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OUTLINE

- Introduction and methodology
- Suffix -ie and clipped words
- Logico-semantic structure
- Findings
- Conclusions
The study is aimed at:

- exploring the logico-semantic structure (LSS) of clippings ending in suffix -ie.
- analyzing the impact of ‘pejoration’ on the LSSs established.
- classifying the clipped words according to pragma-linguistic tags and morpho-semantic traits.
METHODOLOGY

Two stages have been described:

- Data collection:
  - extraction of -ie clipped words from prescriptive and descriptive dictionaries (COD 2010; MWD 2003; Thorne 1997; Partridge 2000).
  - revision of authentic contexts (COCA, BNC), in which these lemmas are found.

- Data processing
  - classification of clipped words according to a common LSS.
  - grouping those lemmas conveying a pejorative meaning.
  - morpho-semantic and pragmatic analysis.
-IE SUFFIX IN ENGLISH COLLOQUIAL SPEECH

- Regionalisms:
  - bankie ‘bench’ < bank in South African English
  - nappie ‘liquor’ < nap in Scottish English
  - cardie < cardigan in New Zealand English
  - swaggie < swagman in Australian English

- Diminution / Endearment:
  - girlie < girl
  - doggie < dog
  - Maggie < Margaret
CLIPPED V.S. ELLIPTICAL WORD

- Clipped word ➔ truncation of morphological segments
  
  *brollie < umbrella, carnie < carnival*

- Elliptical word ➔ omission of a full word

  *biggie < big problem, toughie < tough question*
CLIPPING & -IE SUFFIX

Morphological Structure:
Clipped base / Full base (elliptical) + -ie
(a) mensie < menstruation
(b) bestie < best friend

Logico-Semantic Structure:
(a) someone who shares same menstruation period
(b) someone who becomes the best friend
LANGUAGE VARIATION IN -IE SUFFIXATION

- *roomie* < *roommate* (semantic change)
- *weepie* < *weep* (grammatical category change)
- *baccie* < *tobacco* (orthographic change)
- *leftie* < *left-wing supporter* (pragmatic change)
- *indie* < *independent* (prosodic change)
# Language Variation in -ie Suffixation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suffixed words</th>
<th>Etyma</th>
<th>Morpho-graphemic changes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>newbie</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>Addition of letters, or extenders (-b-, -s-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>footsie</td>
<td>foot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nappie</td>
<td>nap</td>
<td>Double consonants (-pp, -bb)</td>
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<tr>
<td>swabbie</td>
<td>swab</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>shavie</td>
<td>shave</td>
<td>Deletion of ending -e</td>
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<tr>
<td>wedgie</td>
<td>wedge</td>
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<td>Hubbie hankie</td>
<td>husband handkerchief</td>
<td>Deletion of letters (-s-, -d-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountie movie</td>
<td>Mounted police moving picture</td>
<td>Deletion of adjective-forming suffix (-ed,-ing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brollie baccie</td>
<td>umbrella tobacco</td>
<td>Deletion of initial letters (um-, to-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steppie rellie</td>
<td>stepmother relative</td>
<td>Double consonant (-pp-, -ll-)</td>
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LOGICO-SEMANTIC STRUCTURES (LSS)

- LSS 1: ‘someone or something that is Adj./Adv.’ (*brownie, quickie, softie*).
- LSS 2: ‘little Noun’ (*duckie, booty*).
- LSS 3: ‘someone that belongs to Noun’ (*Aussie, Brummie* < *Birmingham*).
- LSS 4: ‘something used for Ving’ (*walkie-talkie, swabbie*).
- LSS 5: ‘someone or something that Vs’ (*movie, blastie*).
- LSS 6: ‘something or someone that causes someone to V’ (*weepie, nappie*).
- LSS 7: ‘someone who is interested in N’ (*groupie, techie*).
LOGICO-SEMANTIC STRUCTURES (LSS)

- LSS 8: ‘someone who is professionally/academically related to N’ (*bookie, brickie*)
- LSS 9: ‘pet name of Personal Noun’ (*Maggie, Eddie*)
- LSS 10: ‘something that is made of Noun’ (*woolie, glassie*)
- LSS 11: ‘something or someone characterized by having a N’ (*hoodie, nudie*)
- LSS 12: ‘something that is made by N (trademark)’ (*wellies, popsie*)
LOGICO-SEMANTIC STRUCTURES (LSS)

- Number of -ie suffixed words collected: 115 (clipped personal names not included)
- Number of LSSs: 12
- Number of pejorative/derogatory –ie suffixed words: 37
- Pejoration: LSS 1 (brownie), LSS 3 (yippie < Youth International Party), LSS 7 (druggie), LSS 11 (hoodie)
LOGICO-SEMANTIC STRUCTURES (LSS)

- **Contextual Variation** or Restriction (Ex. innie, outie)

- (i) Talk about navel gazing! Scientists have been eyeing inners and ogling outers for years now, and some of their findings are pretty astonishing. (“This is what your belly button says about you”, 12 September 2013, *The Huffington Post*)

- (ii) In class, he tells students about "innies" and "outies" (selves, of course) and counsels them to let those inner beings loose. He doesn't mention his own use of Stark to unloose gruesome fiction. (“The Dark Half”, 23 April 1993, *The Washington Post*)

- (iii) About half of David Cameron's cabinet probably have Eurosceptic tendencies – here the Guardian offers its best guesses of their positions at the moment. ("Innies, outies, unclears: where ministers stand on EU referendum”, 21 December 2015, *The Guardian*)
CONCLUSIONS

- The -ie suffixation of clipped or elliptical bases leads to wide-ranging semantic structures in English, being ‘someone or something that is Adj./Adv.’, ‘little Noun’, ‘someone who is interested in N’ ‘pet name of Personal Noun’ the most frequent ones.

- The expression of pejoration, or derogatory meaning, is linked to –ie suffixation, but not all the LSSs are involved in this process.

- Context plays a fundamental role in determining the semantic structure of the words compiled as they are dependent on collocates and intentionality of writers and speakers.
REFERENCES