



Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Lingua xxx (2018) xxx–xxx

Lingua

www.elsevier.com/locate/lingua

Motivations and morphological variations in clipped personal names: A cross-linguistic approach[☆]

José Antonio Sánchez Fajardo^{*}, Félix Rodríguez González

Department of English Studies, University of Alicante, Carretera San Vicente del Raspeig, s/n, 03690 Alicante, Spain

Received 6 November 2017; received in revised form 25 January 2018; accepted 26 January 2018

Abstract

The process of personal-name clipping is considered productive in most contemporary languages. This research study is intended to delve into the process of clipped personal names in various languages, with the aim of deciphering convergent motivations underlying the formation of clipped names, and analogous morphological variations. The first step in the analysis is data collection: a number of 720 given names have been collected from a total of twenty-three languages, based on previous publications and questionnaires filled out by multiple native speakers and linguists. The data-processing stage has revealed that monothematic and dithematic structures are preferred, and some universal, non-diminutive endings (or suffixes) have been extracted: *-i*, *-o*, *-a*, suggesting a vocalic preference over a consonantal closure. Also, some relevant findings show how converging patterns can be used to draw a comprehensive classification of motivations and morphological variations, which sheds more light on the governing implications of clipping and hypocorism.

© 2018 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Clipping; Personal name; Motivation; Morphological variation

1. Introduction

Most research on personal names (henceforth PNs) has hitherto focused on etymology. The historical origin reveals a compendium of diachronic evidence, family tradition, and obviously, personal choice. However, personal names are not only the constructs of historical innovation, they also convey lexical categories and morphological variations. Some studies (Morpurgo-Davies, 2000; Anderson, 2007) have shown that the ‘di-etymologization’ of names and naming practices can “reveal a distinctive structure, distinctive rules for selection, and a distinctive onomastic system, not based on the meanings of the cognate common words” (Anderson, 2007:103). In other words, new approaches are aimed at exploring the synchronic features of PNs and their contextual motivations.

This blend of social functionality, grammar categorization, and personal intentionality demonstrates that the complexity of personal names relies on the multilayered process of word-formation and the motivations underlying such lexical changes and constructs. To name has been associated with the action of ‘individuating’ (Zabeeh, 1968:25), but the variety of personal names compiled, particularly clipped given names, has demonstrated that the anthropological concept of

[☆] This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: jasanchez@ua.es (J.A. Sánchez Fajardo), frdriguez@ua.es (F. Rodríguez González).

naming goes along with sociolinguistic factors. Hence clipping or lexical truncation is precisely one of these productive word-building mechanisms associated with some patterned morphological variations and specific motives.

This paper is thus intended to study the nature of clipped given names, with regards to semantic incentives and morphological changes. The analysis consists in the collection of given names from twenty-three contemporary languages: Bulgarian (Bu.), Catalan (Ca.), Croatian (Cr.), Czech (Cz.), Danish (Da.), Dutch (Du.), English (En.), Finnish (Fn.), French (Fr.), German (Ge.), Greek (Gr.), Hungarian (Hu.), Icelandic (Ic.), Italian (It.), Japanese (Jp.), Persian (Ps.), Polish (Po.), Portuguese (Pt.), Romanian (Ro.), Russian (Ru.), Serbian (Se.), Spanish (Sp.), Swedish (Sw.). The idea is to establish divergent and similar word-building patterns onomasiologically to explore which pragmatolinguistic factors intervene in the PN-clipping process. On some occasions, nicknames or pseudonyms resulting from clipped bases (e.g. *Bojo* < *Boris Johnson*) are also mentioned to exemplify the productivity and motivations of a word formation trend. These clipped PNs are seemingly connected with the morphological constituents of their corresponding full names. Surnames are excluded from the data collection stage unless their clipped forms are used as a given name or nickname with some special connotations (e.g. *Jacko* < *Michael Jackson*).

The methodological approach of this analysis necessarily involves a primary phase of data collection. Approximately 720 personal names have been extracted (see Appendices). This early stage contemplates the annotation of personal names through the revision of prior publications in this field (Pulgram, 1947; Albaigès i Olivart, 1984; Hauge and Kelly, 1987; Benson, 1990, 1992; Navarro, 1992; Bahlow, 1993; Lipski 1995; Blomquist, 1996; Ahmed, 1999; Caffarelli and Gerritzen, 2002; Cieślakowa, 2002; Anderson, 2004, 2007; Kennedy and Zamuner, 2006; Smith, 2006; Adams, 2008; Rahman, 2013; Fridrichová, 2014), and individual interviews with twenty-three native speakers and experts of the languages used in the study. The selection of interviewees was based on two major criteria: (1) native speakers of the language, and (2) specialists in language functions and use.¹ Their contribution allows for a clear and precise understanding of how these clipped words are interpreted and used within their sociolinguistic contexts.²

The questionnaire is divided into five global questions: (a) Are clipped names frequent in your language? Please think of any examples of clipped names and write them hereafter; (b) Can you think of any examples in which two names, or a name and surname, are blended, as in *Juanma* < *Juan Manuel* (Spanish)?; (c) What are the most common suffixes (or endings) attached to clipped names, as in *Ricky* (-y) < *Richard* (English)?; (d) Do you attach any diminutive suffixes to clipped bases in personal names?; (e) Think of clipped names of celebrities, politicians, etc. in your country, and explain if there is any motivation underlying the clipping process, as in *Maggie* < *Margaret Thatcher* (English)? These questions are not intended to delve into lexical productivity and frequency, but to add some more anthropological cues on the process of clipping. Once the annotation of PNs is completed, informants' introspection might reveal the nuances and connotations of clipped personal names in a given language.

The following stage, as expected, looks at the arrangement of the annotated names according to their motivations, and the morphological structure of the clipped units. The analysis of the data is vital so as to better understand how these words come into existence, and more importantly, the universalities of clipping in the formation of personal names. As the sources (questionnaires and prior studies) are mainly written, the identification of clippings has been limited to the morphological level. This does not imply that hypocorism is merely a spoken-language phenomenon as orthography or graphemes simply mirror the phonological system of languages. On some occasions, some reference to phonological motivations will be used to understand morphological variability and prominence.

2. Onomastics and clipping: a brief theoretical account

As suggested, traditional onomastics, particularly in the nineteenth century, “was largely concerned with the sources of names in Indo-European languages and the common structural principles that they appeared to share” (Anderson, 2007:101). Undoubtedly, the social practice of identity management as well as the factors of social status and power plays a role here, resulting in a complex set of personal designations which involves referential and other forms of linguistic variation. The cline of options ranges from nicknames to more formal patterns (Price and Price, 1972; Burton, 1999).

A naming system is characterized by particular forms of morpho-semantic motivation which may or may not replicate certain universal patterns. Clipping is especially related to these generalizations. Clipped personal names respond to an array of conditions and practices, tightly linked to concrete communicative situations and formulaic language use. The aim of the paper is not to account for diachronic coinage but rather to describe the morphological and pragmatic variations of clipped forms.

¹ The interviews were carried out in March of 2017 during the *Third International GLAD Meeting* held at the University of Greifswald (Germany).

² The method employed for data elicitation can lead to the inclusion of both habitually used nicknames and items that are neologisms or not necessarily widely established yet. This complies with the general intention of the article, which is to cover the different and functional dimensions of clipped personal names.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7298363>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7298363>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)