

Lexical innovation: a result of the accommodation process

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Abstract

One of the basic tenets of cognitive grammar, as developed by Langacker (1987, 1991), is that the meaning of complex lexemes can be described in terms of partial rather than full compositionality, resulting from the fact that composite expressions are frequently created by schema extension. This paper is based on the assumption that forming new words by derivation is characterised by the accommodation of the base and the affix, i.e. their reciprocal adjustment in the process of integrating them into the composite structure (Langacker 1987). The article focuses on two aspects of accommodation: profiling semantic roles and establishing new cognitive domains.

Keywords: *constructional schema, compositionality, radial category, metaphor, cognitive domain.*

1 Introduction

Cognitive grammar, the main tenets of which have been put forward by Langacker (1987, 1991) and Lakoff (1987, 1993), argues against the autonomy of grammar and formalisms of linguistic description, proposing the inseparability of language from human cognition. Furthermore, it is considered a non-modular linguistic programme as opposed to Noam Chomsky's generative grammar, in which there is a sharp distinction between lexicon and syntax.¹⁰⁴ Advocating a continuum of linguistic units, Langacker (2005) claims that each linguistic expression irrespective of its size consists of the semantic pole [S] and the phonological pole [P]. Consequently, since the language is not made up of separate modules, such as phonology, grammar, or syntax, all composite

¹⁰⁴ It should be remarked that this is the case only in those versions of the theory that adopt the Strong Lexicalist Hypothesis, as proposed by Halle (1973) and developed by Lapointe (1980) and Di Scullio and Williams (1987), among others. Other generative models do not make such a sharp distinction, for example the Jackendoff's model of Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff 2006).

structures, be it a polymorphemic word, a phrase, or a clause are approached in a uniform manner.

One of the greatest merits of cognitive grammar is its applicability to the analysis of forms regarded as ‘irregular’ by structuralist approaches focusing on the segmentation of words into morphemes. While coinages not displaying a concatenative structure, such as e.g. blends, acronyms and clippings, are found to be exceptional and not deserving of a serious linguistic inquiry in the structuralist framework, they are handled quite well in the framework of cognitive grammar. For two reasons: firstly, cognitive grammar does not distinguish between grammatical and lexical units and word formation is regarded as part of grammatical description, in which it is the meaning not the form which is of primary importance (Langacker 1987). Secondly, the analytic tools it relies on when dealing within the discussion of lexemes, i.e. schemas, prototypes, and radial categories, including metonymic and metaphorical extensions, are well suited to the discussion of both concatenative and non-concatenative processes.

2 Complex words in cognitive grammar

Complex words, referred to as composites in cognitive grammar, frequently display discrepancies between their overall meaning and the meanings of the components they are made of. According to Tuggy (2007: 108-109), “such discrepancies between the components and the composite are entirely unproblematic under the Cognitive Grammar Model. Instead of the building-block model it is helpful to adopt a scaffolding metaphor.” The building block metaphor sees the meaning of the composite expressions as ‘built up’ from the meanings of its component parts. However, as Langacker (1987) points out, this metaphor does not provide an accurate picture of how the meaning is constructed. He argues that components should not be seen as building blocks but instead regarded as elements merely motivating various aspects of the composite meaning. It means that components constitute the scaffolding on which the meaning of the complex expression is based: “component structures are seen as scaffolding erected for the construction of a complex expression” (Langacker 1987: 460). Thus, components suggest the shape of the composite structure, which, however, not only exists

independently of them but also may be considerably different. By proposing a scaffolding metaphor, Langacker (1987) implies that the scaffolding is discarded once a composite structure becomes an established unit.

Consequently, so Langacker (1987) maintains, linguistic items are more likely to be partially compositional than to exhibit full compositionality. For example, the compound *blackbird*, denoting a bird species, exhibits partial compositionality because even though the composite structure is a combination of meanings of its components, it stands for a specific type of black bird, provided that it is male as females are brown. Thus, it has undergone a specification of meaning. This can be expressed by the formula $C = [ABX]$, where X stands for a specialisation of the components' meaning. The compound *blackboard* is partially compositional too, but in a different sense than *blackbird*. The meanings of the components of this composite are non-prototypical since *blackboard* is sometimes neither a board nor black in the prototypical sense of these words. Therefore, the semantics of *blackboard* can correspond to $C = [A'B']$, where A' and B' represent the non-prototypical use of the components. As Langacker (1987) maintains, when a novel lexeme is coined, it is construed with a fairly rich specified meaning. Once the word is established, (some of) this additional meaning is preserved and, for this reason, a majority of composites have a meaning that is more precise and definite than their compositional value. For example, as regards the compound *blackboard* what is essential in its conceptual structure is that it is something for writing on, that the writing is of temporary character (always erased after use) meant for a group of people to read at a time, while the colour and material are at best of secondary importance.

According to Kardela (2005), a word whose meaning is compositional can be sanctioned by a constructional schema. In his view, the Polish noun *barani-ina* 'mutton' is (almost) entirely compositional because of the existence of the following constructional schema, sanctioning it: $[BARAN[INA]]/[baran[ina]]$, where the base *baran* 'ram' represents the breeding animal, while the suffix *-ina* stands for the kind of

meat obtained from it.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the noun *malina* 'raspberry' is not compositional at all, since there is no constructional schema like *[MAL[INA]]/[mal[ina]]. This word cannot be divided into a base *mal-* and the suffix *-ina* as in Polish neither the base *mal-* exists, nor the names of fruit are formed by the addition of the suffix *-ina* to the base. What this amounts to is that "an expression is said to be compositional to the extent that its composite structure derives in a regular, predictable way from its component structures" (Langacker 2008: 167).

Although the notion of compositionality is related to that of analysability, it should be emphasised that these two terms should be treated as distinct from one another. As Ungerer (2007) remarks, compositionality denotes an objective relationship that holds between the composite and its components, while analysability is concerned with the psycholinguistic perspective of the language user, i.e. whether he/she is able to distinguish components of a given composite structure. For example, Langacker (1987) claims that while language users are aware of the compositionality of derivatives such as *swimmer*, *mixer*, or *complainer*, they normally do not notice any compositional status in *computer*, or *propeller*.

With regard to lexical innovation, it should be pointed out that a novel composite word is fully analysable because in order to coin it the speaker unites components that have never co-occurred before, creating a striking new combination in the language.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, other language users are aware of the fact that it is polymorphemic. When the lexeme becomes established, it will no longer cause the activation of its components, and with the passage of time it may become opaque. Therefore it can be proposed that analysability is a diachronic dimension: it decreases with the passage of time. Thus, the noun *computer* was analysable when it was created, as initially it denoted either a person or a machine that does some calculations.

¹⁰⁵ Note other names of meat that are formed on the basis of the same constructional schema: *wieprz-ow-ina* 'pork', *wol-ow-ina* 'beef', *cielę-c-ina* 'veal', or *kon-ina*, where the first three lexemes additionally contain adjective forming affixes, i.e. *-ow-* and *-c-*.

¹⁰⁶ It has often been observed that a large proportion of novel word-formations, compounds in particular, tend to pass without notice, i.e. they do not automatically draw attention to themselves merely by virtue of being newly formed (as long as they are regular at least).

However, by now it has lost its analysability as few speakers of English these days associate the base of this word with calculating.

According to Kardela (2005), the meaning of complex new words can be described in terms of the categorisation both by a schema and a prototype. In Langacker's (1987: 4), words extensions result from the categorisation by the prototype, while the categorisation by the schema generates elaborations. What this amounts to is that extensions "imply some conflict between the categorizing structure and the one it categorizes" (Langacker 1987: 4). This can be exemplified by the noun *cook-er*, an extension from the prototype, i.e. V *-er* ↔ 'human agent', in which *cooker* stands for a piece of kitchen equipment. As regards elaboration, it is regarded as an instantiation of a schema by a more specific structure and it can be exemplified by an agentive deverbal noun *dancer*, which is fully consistent with the schema. Elaborations and extensions are tightly interconnected and frequently difficult to differentiate from each other since they are both based on the comparison of the standard (S) with the target (T). Both elaborations and extensions play a key role in generating a radial category of lexeme meanings since certain senses are connected with one another through elaboration while others are through extension.

As regards word formation outputs which are schema elaborations, these are realisations of more schematic structures by less schematic structures. According to Tuggy (2007: 84),

since schematicity is a relative matter and all concepts communicated linguistically are schematic in some degree, it should not surprise us to find hierarches of schematicity, with one concept schematic relative to others, but itself serving as an elaboration of yet more highly schematic concepts.¹⁰⁷

A schema itself is a generalisation abstracted from usage events, i.e. instances of language use. Thus, for example the concept of a noun is schematic for the concept of a simplex and a complex noun, while the latter one is schematic for [V-er], [V-ation],

¹⁰⁷ The idea of a hierarchical and schematic nature of a lexicon has been elaborated on by G. Booij (2010) in his theory of Construction Morphology.

[Adj-ity], etc. which in turn are schematic to specific nouns, such as *baker*, *consultation* and *obesity*, respectively.

Ungerer (2007) claims that word formation items can be seen as creating extensions from a prototype. Langacker (1987) defines a prototype as a typical representative of its category. The category is made up of elements which are similar to a prototype to a greater or lesser degree and thus exhibits a family resemblance structure. It means that the semantic structure of a category has the form of a radial set of overlapping meanings. An inherent feature of each category is that it displays degrees of category membership: the elements that have the closest affinity with the prototype are regarded as prototypical, while others which diverge from the prototype in several respects are said to be peripheral. Thus, linguistic units such as affixes create polysemic categories based on family resemblance relationships. With regard to English affixation, the radial category of the suffix *-er* is the one most widely described in the literature (e.g. Panther and Thornburg 2003, Kardela 2005). According to Panther and Thornburg (2003), the most prototypical meaning of the suffix *-er*, is 'professional human agent'. This has a number of metaphorical and metonymic extensions, beginning with 'human experienter', as in *thinker*, through 'instrument', as in *tranquilizer*, 'human-like plant', as in *late bloomer*, 'human-like object', as in *sky-scraper*, 'human possessor', as in *owner*, and ending with highly peripheral ones such as 'purpose/location', as in *diner*, or 'purpose patient', as in *reader*.

2.1 Radial categories in cognitive morphology

As noted above, in cognitive grammar categories have got a radial structure based on the family resemblance relationship, which is tantamount to saying that affixes and bases can be divided into prototypical and peripheral ones. Kardela (2005) claims that the degree of the component prototypicality can be established by resorting to the Billiard Ball and Action Chain. The Billiard Ball model, proposed by Langacker (1991), encapsulates interaction between objects moving through space. Some of these objects supply the energy through their internal resources, while others receive it from the outside. When motion leads to physical contact, the moving object transmits energy to the impacted object, which in turn may set other objects in motion. From the

perspective of the Billiard Ball model, we can talk about participants of an action, both animate and inanimate, interrelations between them, qualities, space and time. Consequently, derivations can be classified as those referring to participant-related bases, such as *woman-iser*, time-related bases, e.g. *month-ly*, quality-related based, e.g. *smart-y* and interrelational bases, e.g. *runn-ing*.

The Action Chain model is based on the Billiard Ball model and constitutes its more elaborate version. According to Langacker, “an action chain is a series of forceful interactions, each involving the transmission of energy from one participant to the next [...]. Associated with actions and events are various kinds of archetypal roles” (2008:355). As Langacker (2008) further continues, in this model we can distinguish the semantic role of an agent, patient, instrument and locative. What needs to be emphasised at this point is that the Action Chain model explains derivations based on the event structure. Thus, a particular archetypal role is profiled, leading to different types of derivations. These are: agentive derivations, in which the semantic role of an agent is profiled, e.g. *writ-er*, instrumental derivations, in which the instrument is profiled, e.g. *rotat-or*, locative derivations, in which the setting is profiled, e.g. *bak-ery*, etc.

In order to establish a hierarchy of derivatives, set within a radial network, based on the above models, Kardela (2005) proposes to adopt the principle of meaning extension based on the Metaphorical Abstraction Hierarchy (Heine, Claudi, Hunnemeyer 1991, Ryder 1999):

- (1) Metaphorical Abstraction Hierarchy (MAH)
PERSON > OBJECT > ACTIVITY > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY

Thus, as (1) indicates, the highest position in the hierarchy is occupied by derivatives encoding people, at the lower level there are derivatives encoding objects, then processes, space and time, ending up with quality-related composites.

As Kardela (2005) argues, considering the scale from the point of view of the Billiard Ball model, and looking at derivatives denoting people, the highest position is occupied by derivatives coding an animate participant, e.g. *woman-iser*, at the lower

level we have bases coding an inanimate participant, e.g. *forest-er*, even lower there are derivatives coding temporal bases, e.g. *vacation-er*. Now, looking at the scale from the perspective of an Action Chain, the highest position in the hierarchy is taken by the derivatives coding an agent, e.g. *play-er*, followed by derivatives coding an instrument, e.g. *sharpen-er*, then those coding a patient, e.g. , *read-er*, and finally those coding a location, e.g. *diner*.

Bearing the above considerations in mind, it is now possible to formulate a radial category of any affix, generated through semantic extension. When looking at the polysemic suffix *-er* from the perspective of the Action Chain and MAH, the radial category of the suffix *-er* has got the following structure (beginning with derivatives with the most prototypical suffix meaning).¹⁰⁸

- 1) agentive nominalisations, e.g. *teacher*, *baker*, or *dancer*
- 2) instrumental nominalisations, e.g. *can-opener*
- 3) patientive nominalisations, e.g. *reader*, *broiler*
- 4) eventive nouns, e.g. *no-brainer*
- 5) locative nominalisations, e.g. *diner*
- 6) temporal nouns, e.g. *99-er*
- 7) attribute-based nouns, e.g. *slacker*

3 Accommodation from a cognitive perspective

The term accommodation has been introduced by Jean Piaget, who regarded it, next to assimilation,¹⁰⁹ as one of the driving forces behind the child's mentally structuring extra-linguistic reality and constructing the language (Bringuier and Piaget 1977).

¹⁰⁸ This radial category of this suffix is not very fine-grained as it does not take into account numerous extensions from the prototypical scenario of habitual occupational performance (Ungerer 2007), as exemplified by *baker*, *teacher*, etc. As Ungerer (2007) notes, habitualness can be replaced by characteristic engagement (*runner*, *snorer*), action-oriented disposition (*left-hander*, *hardliner*), possession of an attribute (*widower*), or performing a context-dependent action (*thanker*).

¹⁰⁹ Assimilation involves incorporating the elements of the outside world into the internal world, without changing its structure.

Accommodation involves altering one's own schemas, or ideas due to new information or new experiences. As a result, new schemas may be developed in this process.

The notion of accommodation has been introduced into cognitive linguistics by Langacker (1987), who remarked that it accompanies the formation of composite structures. Ungerer points out that it should be regarded as *the semantic adjustment of the components and the addition of conceptual content in the composite item* (Ungerer 2007: 653), exemplifying this process by the discussion of the compound *Christmas tree*. For its adequate conceptualisation a substantial amount of additional information has to be added, mostly of an encyclopaedic kind as there is some distance between this compound and the prototypical notion of *tree*. The accommodation process for this compound can be represented by means of the following formula:

- (2) $[ABX] = A + B$,
 where A and B stand for compound constituents, i.e. *Christmas* and *tree*, respectively, while X denotes the addition of the conceptual content

In the words of Ungerer (2007: 654)

[p]ostulating the necessity of accommodation for compounding and other word-formation processes implies a rejection of full compositionality, which means that the components of word-formation items can no longer be understood as building blocks of the composite structure.

This is in line with perceiving the structure of composite expressions in terms of a scaffolding metaphor, in the light of which the items' components merely provide some conceptual assistance in their interpretation.

Ryder (1994) in her schema-based approach towards the interpretation of noun-noun compounds defines accommodation as the modification of the already existing schemas. She claims that whenever a language user comes across a novel compound, they use their own repository of semantic information schemas (i.e. real world knowledge) in an attempt to account for its meaning. If no suitable semantic schema is found, they have to change an already existing schema. Ryder (1994: 91-2) proposes an

order of severity in altering or forming schemas, depending on the degree of change that already existing schemas undergo:

- 1) least severe - it takes place when the addition of a new schema does not go against the existing schema. An example of that may be a dog eating in a restaurant - although we are aware of the fact that dogs do not eat in restaurants, this schema does not challenge the prototypical restaurant schema.
- 2) more severe - it consists in changing the range of a variable. It can be exemplified by a brick-red cat - there is no such colour for cats.
- 3) most severe - it is about changing the value of the constant. An example of this might be a restaurant in which customers do not pay for their meals - that customers pay for their meals is central for the restaurant schema

It is the last two types of schema modification that Ryder refers to as accommodation.

Another linguist involved in the study of accommodation is Kardela (2005). Following Langacker (1987) he proposes that this concept should be understood as reciprocal adjustment of components, which takes place while they are integrated into the composite structure. According to Kardela (2005), accommodation plays an extremely important role in creating new words, at the same time entailing numerous interpretation problems. In his view, it involves the following processes:

- 1) establishing the correspondence relationship between the lexeme's components
- 2) profiling semantic roles from the Action Chain
- 3) profile shifting, e.g. from the temporal into the nominal one (taking place in the nominalisation process)
- 4) creating new cognitive domains

Since the last process is of paramount importance for the study of accommodation occurring in novel lexemes, the notion of a cognitive domain should be elaborated on at this point. According to Langacker (1987), the domain is the cognitive

structure, encompassing our knowledge about the world. It [...] “is broadly interpreted as indicating any kind of conception or realm of experience” (Langacker 2008: 44). Two kinds of conceptual domains can be distinguished: on the one hand basic domains which are cognitively irreducible, i.e. not analysable into other conceptions, such as the domains of SPACE, TIME, COLOUR or PITCH. And on the other hand there are non-basic domain, which constitute a significant majority and which consist of various subdomains. For example, when trying to define the word *sophomore*, the following domains should be used: 1) basic domains of TIME and SPACE, 2) non-basic domains, such as STUDY, STUDENT, YEAR and TWO. What should be emphasised is that the meaning of *sophomore* invokes a higher-level conception, namely what Fillmore (1982) refers to as a frame, while Lakoff (1987) calls it an idealised cognitive model (ICM). According to Langacker (2008: 46), “the ICM provides the expression’s conceptual content, the basis for its meaning, which results from construing this content in a certain manner.” As regards the word *sophomore*, it is construed as profiling a student in the second year, as opposed to e.g. *freshman*, which has the same conceptual content but profiles a student in the first year.

Having presented a general overview of the phenomenon of accommodation within the framework of Cognitive Grammar, in the next section I would like to focus on the specific case of accommodation, namely the accommodation of the constituents of novel lexemes, created by means of the suffix *-itis*.

4 Accommodation of the components of innovative coinages: the case of *-itis*

The coinages used as examples here were gleaned from the following websites: OED quarterly updates (available at <http://public.oed.com/whats-new/> and including words which have recently been added to the dictionary), www.wordspy.com and <http://neologisms.rice.edu/>. These websites are dedicated to collecting neologisms and nonce-formations in the English language.

According to the OED, *-itis* is a suffix, which in modern medical Latin, and hence in English has become the regular name for afflictions of particular body parts, especially of the type inflammation, e.g. *appendicitis* *bronchitis*, *gastritis*, *peritonitis*,

pneumonitis, tonsilitis, etc. The OED adds that in irregular trivial use the suffixation can refer to a state of mind, which is perceived as not quite a healthy one. The suffixation by *-itis* in the sense of ‘unhealthy state of mind’ has generated numerous coinages, the oldest one of which is, according to OED, *fiscalitis*:

- (3) 1903 Asquith in *Westm. Gaz.* 19 Oct. 5/1 All the people were suffering from a new disease—the disease of **fiscalitis**.

Fiscalitis denotes an agitated state of public mind caused by the activity of Joseph Chamberlain, who formed the Tariff Reform League, advocating raising duty on foreign imports instead of raising taxes. On the part of the opponents of this it generated fears of an increase in food prices.

Now note another use of the suffix *-itis*:

- (4) 1906 Asquith in *Westm. Gaz.* 27 Apr. 4/2 Several members of Parliament are suffering from a slight attack of **Suffragitis**

Here *suffragitis*¹¹⁰ refers to women’s desire to be given the right to vote manifesting itself in civil disorder activities, such as breaking windows and destroying property. Through the derivative this is conceptualised as an epidemic disease and the following passage even characterizes it along medical parameters such as etiology, age incidence, clinical features, signs and symptoms:

Acute Epidemic Suffragitis

An acute specific fever characterized by its virulence, and by the fact that it is confined to the female sex. ETIOLOGY - Whites suffer more than blacks; and the disease is commoner in towns [...] INFLUENCE OF SEX - The disease is confined to the female sex. AGE INCIDENCE - seventeen to forty-five is the most susceptible period. CLINICAL FEATURES - Stages of incubation variable. The disease has been

¹¹⁰ The status of this word is not crystal-clear: assuming that its base is *suffrage* it is a derivative, but when considering *suffragist* to be the base, which is more feasible, it is a case of neo-classical suffixation with a bound root base.

contracted in public meetings: a heated atmosphere would seem to favour its propagation. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS - Patients show a tendency to recurring utterances [...]
quoted from McClelland (2005: 21)¹¹¹

Now consider some of the contemporary coinages formed with the suffix *-itis*:

- (5) *senioritis* ‘the pattern of reduced studying and effort as well as decreased motivation that accompanies a senior year of studies’
massmerchanditis ‘the hazy feeling one gets after spending too much time shopping at large chain stores’
electionitis ‘a growing sense of fatigue with the election that affects both politicians and citizens with the latter ones expressing frustration over politics and media’
telephonitis ‘marked fondness for telephoning’
next-war-itis ‘military planning that focuses on potential future conflicts rather than on current needs’

The accommodation of the base and suffix in the above composites is primarily to be analysed in terms of profiling semantic roles and creative new cognitive domains. Since, according to Kardela (2005), profiling semantic roles from the Action Chain accounts for derivations involving event structures, and the above coinages definitely are not eventive but perceptual in their nature, as they denote various social phenomena, it seems more appropriate to adopt here the Stage Model, which accounts for perceptual experience (Langacker 1987). The central element in the Stage Model is the perceiver, who observes a particular situation in the same way as a theatre goer watches a play. The perceiver’s attention is focused on a particular stage element at a given moment in the same way as a theatre-goer concentrates on the selected action, or set of props.¹¹²

¹¹¹ The article originally comes from the January 2014 issue of the Students’ Representative Council Magazine *QCB*.

¹¹² Langacker (2008) emphasizes that there is a close affinity between the Billard Ball Model, the Action Chain Model and the Stage Model: “” (Langacker 2008: 357). The combination of archetypes is present

As regards semantic roles, whose inventory is quite limited in most discussions of the Action Chain, Langacker (1987: 284) notes that [...] “it can always be refined and articulated into more specific types on the basis of further data, or a finer-grained analysis” [...]. Therefore, for the purpose of the analysis to follow I am going to use a more elaborate inventory of semantic roles, including, apart from AGENT, INSTRUMENT, PATIENT and SETTING, also ATTRIBUTE, CAUSE, THEME and EVENT.

Thus, in the light of the above, accommodation can be seen as profiling semantic roles from the Stage Model. In the well-established derivatives, i.e. those denoting diseases, the PATIENT is profiled, i.e. the body part, such as tonsils or the appendix that undergo the change of state due to inflammation, as in *tonsillitis* or *appendicitis*. In more recent or quite contemporary coinages, on the other hand, the following semantic roles are profiled from the Stage Model:

- (6) ATTRIBUTE, i.e. *fiscal* and *senior*, as used in *fiscalitis* and *senioritis*¹¹³
 AGENT, i.e. *suffragist*, as used in *suffragitis*
 EVENT, i.e. *election* and *next war*, as used in *electionitis* and *next-war-itis*
 THEME, i.e. *telephone* and *mass merchandise*,¹¹⁴ as used in *telephonitis* and *massmerchanditis*

Seen from the perspective of the Stage Model as well as MAH, the derivative encoding an AGENT in its base, e.g. *suffragitis* occupies the highest position on the scale of metaphoricity, followed by a lexeme encoding a THEME, e.g. *telephonitis*; next there are lexemes that can be categorised as ACTION, e.g. *electionitis* and *next-war-itis*

in the canonical event model, which represents the event which is the focus of attention, i.e. is apprehended by the viewer, not directly involved in it.

¹¹³ Both *fiscal* and *senior* constitute examples of semantic concentration (Booij 2010), as the meaning of the whole compound, i.e. *fiscal policy* and *senior year*, is projected onto one of its constituents, namely the modifier.

¹¹⁴ *Mass merchandise* has been used here as an instance of OBJECT for ACTION metonymy, as it is not mass merchandise itself that causes tiredness but doing shopping in supermarkets selling merchandise.

and at the end of the scale are derivatives encoding QUALITY, e.g. *fiscalitis*, *senioritis*, *massmerchanditis*, and *next-war-itis*.

Apart from profiling semantic roles from the Stage Model, the accommodation of components in these composites consists of the addition of new conceptual content through the metaphorical or metonymic extension of the meaning of the suffix *-itis*. This is how new cognitive domains get established.

To begin with, the meaning of the suffix *-itis* in the oldest coinage attested by OED, i.e. *fiscal-itis* is a result of the MIND is BODY metaphor, where the human mind is conceptualised in terms of the human body, hence an unhealthy state of mind is perceived as an ‘inflammation’ of the mind. Furthermore, the meaning of *-itis* is a result of WHOLE for PART metonymy, since the target, which is agitation of the public opinion caused by the plans of introducing a new fiscal policy, is accessed through the source, belonging to the same domain, or ICM, which is ‘unhealthy state of mind’. This metonymy is rooted in the perception of agitation as one of the symptoms/manifestations of an unhealthy state of mind.

The meaning of the suffix *-itis* in a lexeme such as *suffragitis* also undergoes a metaphorical shift, followed by a metonymic shift. As can be seen from the above quotation (from McClelland 2005: 21), the suffragette movement is metaphorically perceived as a kind of epidemic disease. Diseases have always been used as metaphors, e.g. pestilence (bubonic plague) gave rise to the figurative meaning of *pestilent* ‘harmful or dangerous to religious, moral, or social order’ (dating back to 1475), while *leprosy* became an emblem of decay and corruption. DISEASE understood as a cognitive domain can be frequently employed as a political metaphor, where the elements of this domain obtain a metaphorical meaning. As Mio observes, “the DISEASE metaphor implied notions of ‘spreading ideas’, ‘infecting others’, ‘healthy and sick economies’ and ‘cures’. Quite clearly, it is the job of governments to promote the ‘infection’ of good ideas and to ‘cure’, or at least ‘immunise against’ bad ideas” (1997: 124).

Thus, the suffragette movement is conceptualised in terms of the following metaphor: SUBVERSIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENT is DISEASE. In this metaphor the target domain is connected with the source domain through numerous mappings. According to McClelland (2005), the suffragists were quite determined in their fight and

during one of their protest marches they did not disperse even when sprayed with water from a hose. Thus, <intensity of inflammation> corresponds to <aggravation of protest> and <resistance to treatment> corresponds to <opposition to government and police>. As McClelland remarks, the ideas of the suffragette movement are propagated during mass meetings, so <disease contraction> corresponds to <adopting the suffragette ideas>. Other mappings include: <symptoms of a disease> corresponds to <the suffragists' activities> and <medical treatment> corresponds to <political actions> aimed at eradicating the movement.

Other coinages, such as *senioritis*, display a metaphorical extension of the suffix *-itis* according to the MIND is BODY metaphor, as a result of which the human mind is conceptualised as a physical organ which can suffer from a disease. Since *-itis*, i.e. the source represents the target, namely a state of boredom, apathy and laziness, we can talk here about WHOLE for PART metonymy, where 'unhealthy mind' as such provides access to one of its aspects, which is apathy. However, since *senioritis* does not designate laziness in its general sense but stands for a pattern of reduced studying and effort in senior years, there is yet another metonymy at work here, which is CAUSE for EFFECT: the target 'less studying' is accessed through the source 'boredom and apathy'.

As regards *electionitis*, this may refer to two things: firstly frustration with politicians as felt by the general public and caused by the election campaign. In this case *-itis* undergoes a meaning extension first by the MIND is BODY metaphor (see above) and then by the WHOLE for PART metonymy, as being frustrated (target) is merely an element of an unhealthy state of mind (source). Secondly, it could refer to fatigue and exhaustion felt by politicians resulting from a tight daily schedule of electoral campaigning. In this case the meaning of the suffix *-itis* stems from metonymic extension in the course of WHOLE for PART metonymy. That is: being ill and showing symptoms such as suffering from pain, a high temperature, being dizzy, feeling tired, etc. is selected as a reference point in order to access the target, which is experiencing fatigue and exhaustion.

Two other coinages, *massmerchanditis* and *telephonitis*, display the same kind of metonymic extension of the suffix *-itis* that occurs in *fiscalitis*, *senioritis* and

electionitis, which is WHOLE for PART metonymy. In *massmerchanditis* an unhealthy state of mind serves as a reference point, providing access to one of the possible symptoms of a mental disorder, such as disorientation, while in *telephonitis* the same domain, i.e. being mentally unfit, which is the source, provides access to one of its manifestations, i.e. being obsessed with something, in this case a telephone.

The interpretation of *next-war-itis* requires the knowledge of the political context, as this word is attributed to the US Secretary of Defence Bob Gates, who in May 2008 argued for concentrating more on present wars rather than preparing for potential future wars. The meaning of the coinage can be construed in two different ways:

- 1) assuming that focusing on prospective wars is an obsession of a particular politician, or political party, meaning extension of the suffix *-itis* is a result of the same WHOLE for PART metonymy which is invoked in *telephonitis*.
- 2) presuming that concentrating too much on prospective wars is not an obsession but wrong military planning, the meaning of the suffix *-itis* can be explained in terms of the cognitive domain of DISEASE, which, as noted above, is often used as a political metaphor. When seen from this perspective, *-itis* first underwent a metonymic shift in the course of PART for WHOLE metonymy, where the target, which is the disease as such is accessed through the source, which is a specific kind of a disease, one that is of inflammatory nature. Through the ERRONEOUS POLITICAL ACTION is DISEASE metaphor wrong military planning has been conceptualized as an illness.

The above analysis has shown that there are numerous semantic subschemas for the suffixation process by *-itis*. Rainer (2003: 198) has proposed to refer to such a process as semantic fragmentation, which “means that a once semantically homogenous word-formation process is split up in the course of time into a series of different processes”. Thus, as a result of the semantic fragmentation process, the radial category of the suffix *-itis* can be represented in the following way:

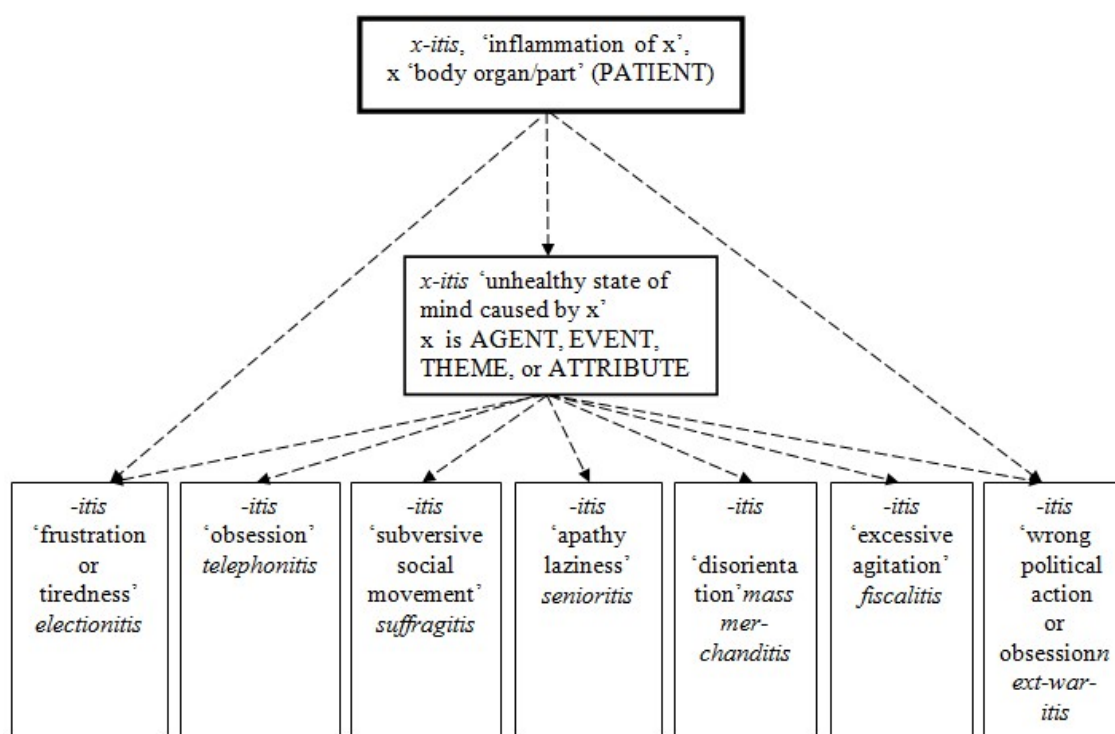


Figure 1 Radial category of the suffix *-itis*

Note that *-itis* denoting INFLAMMATION OF A BODY ORGAN constitutes a prototypical meaning of the suffix from which a new cognitive domain is created through metaphorical extension, i.e. UNHEALTHY STATE OF MIND, which, in turn, serves as the basis for bringing about more peripheral domains by metonymic extension, such as FRUSTRATION, OBSESSION, SUBVERSIVE SOCIAL MOVEMENT, APATHY, LAZINESS, DISORIENTATION, EXCESSIVE AGITATION. Additionally, two other cognitive domains were created through both metonymic and metaphorical extension of the prototypical meaning of the suffix *-itis*, which are TIREDNESS and ERRONEOUS POLITICAL ACTION.

5 Conclusion

The discussion of the accommodation of the base and affix constituting innovative coinages derived by the suffix *-itis* has shown that it involves two major processes:

- 1) profiling semantic roles from the Stage Model, in the course of which ATTRIBUTE, EVENT, AGENT or THEME are profiled, instead of the prototypical PATIENT
- 2) creating new cognitive domains by means of :
 - a) metaphor, such as MIND is BODY and POLITICAL ACTION is DISEASE
 - b) metonymy, such as WHOLE for PART, PART for WHOLE and CAUSE for EFFECT.

As the above analysis has revealed, new cognitive domains are established mainly by metonymic extension¹¹⁵ and the principal type of metonymy that is commonly invoked is WHOLE for PART metonymy, characterised by the target representing a secondary subdomain of the source.¹¹⁶ Thus, metonymical targets, such as FRUSTRATION, OBSESSION, APATHY, HAZINESS, etc. can be seen as subdomains of the source, which is UNHEALTHY STATE OF MIND.

This pilot study, together with some others mentioned in the present paper, shows that word-formation can be accommodated within the framework of cognitive grammar. However, the relative scarcity of work done on the radial category approach to affixation in English¹¹⁷ calls for a more extensive research in the field with a view to describing the hierarchical nature of the English lexicon. Taking a cognitive approach not only to affixation but to the whole field of word-formation has several merits. First of all, this framework provides an insight into cognitive processes going on in the

¹¹⁵ This confirms the results of the research carried out by Rainer (2003), who studied semantic extensions of the Spanish suffix *-azo*, which he also found to be predominantly metonymy-based.

¹¹⁶ According to Barcelona (2003), this is the so called schematic metonymy, i.e. both the source and the target belong to the same domain.

¹¹⁷ Much more work in this respect has been done in the Slavic tradition, e.g. Polish has been described quite extensively within cognitive framework by Kardela (2000, 2005), and Croatian by Raffaelli, and Kerovec (2008).

human mind, such as categorisation, attention phenomena, e.g. salience, abstraction, figure-ground organisation, situatedness, as well as metaphorisation and metonymisation and the way in which they are coded by the linguistic structure. Besides, cases regarded as exceptions in traditional approaches are no longer considered to be such, but are seen as non-prototypical items, occupying in peripheral places within a particular category.

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