Name-based lexical patterns

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In this talk, I will discuss the form and the semantics of word-formation patterns that emerge by combining lexical units and proper names (name-based lexical patterns), such as name-name-blends (Hitlary < Hitler and Hillary) (Brangelina < Brad and Angelina), name-lexeme-blends (Killary < kill + Hilary), complex blends (Gerda Schröckel < Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel), proper name compounds (Berater-Ursula / advisor-Ursula), or derivatives (Selenator < a fan of Selena Gomez).

In studies of word formation, name-based lexical patterns are often described as marginal (cf., Kürschner 2020), creative, unpredictable or extragrammatical (Dressler & Merlini Barbaresi 1994, Wildgen 1981). I will argue that the alleged creative nature and marginality of name-based lexical patterns should be relativized by looking at the formal, semantics and pragmatics properties of 3000 types extracted from German and English reference corpora, blogs and social media. The analysis provides evidence against previous accounts by indicating that name-based lexical patterns are particularly productive and predictable in informal language use. On the other hand, they also bear variability across discourse domains and languages.

References

