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SUFFIXED CLIPPING IN THE 21ST CENTURY ENGLISH SLANG

The present article focuses on investigating the phenomenon of suffixed clipping as a productive word formation mechanism in the 21st c. English slang. It constitutes a combination of back-clipping and suffixation within one derivational act. The research database represents a selection from three English slang dictionaries, namely “The concise new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English” (2008), “Vice slang” (2008), and “The Routledge dictionary of modern American slang and unconventional English” (2009). According to the degree of linguistic formalization of the derivational morphs, the neologisms under study are categorized into two types: the morphemic suffixed clippings and the morphoid suffixed clippings. The overwhelming majority of the neologisms under study (95.1 %) are morphemic clippings, in which a truncated stem is combined with a conventional suffix. This group features both simple (-ie, -o, and -er) and compound (-ies, -os, and -ers) formatives. The most productive suffix proves to be -ie alongside its three allomorphs (-y, -ey, and -i), which accounts for the formation of 67 % of the items overall. The morphemic clippings reveal three morphoprosodic and phonological trends: the disyllabicity of the derivative, the predominance of open syllables in the derivative, and the voicing of the preserved stem-final consonant /s-/ in the truncated cluster. The insignificant number of exceptions which do not comply with the trends is explained by the linguistic need to restrict the process of truncation to the linear preservation of the minimal lexeme segment capable of conveying the original meaning. The remaining 4.9 % of the neologisms under investigation are morphoid clippings, in which a truncated stem is combined with an irregular suffix whose form and derivational meaning are yet to be investigated. This group is formed with the help of the formatives -izzle and -mbo, the morphemic status of which remains for the time being obscure.

Key words: *suffix, suffixed clipping, morphemic suffixed clipping, morphoid suffixed clipping, English slang, slang neologism.*

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СУФІКСАЛЬНЕ УСІЧЕННЯ В СЛЕНГУ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ХХІ СТОЛІТТЯ

Статтю присвячено проблемі дослідження явища суфіксального усічення, яке є продуктивним способом словотвору в сленгу англійської мови початку ХХІ століття. В основі суфіксального усічення лежить поєднання апокопи та суфіксації в межах одного словотвірного акту. Базу даних дослідження становить вибірка з трьох тлумачних словників сленгу англійської мови, зокрема “The concise new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English” (2008), “Vice slang” (2008) та “The Routledge dictionary of modern American slang and unconventional English” (2009). Відповідно до рівня лінгвістичної формалізації ідентифікованих дериваційних морфів досліджувані неологізми поділяємо на два типи: морфемні суфіксальні усічення та морфоїдні суфіксальні усічення. Більшість виявлених неологізмів (95,1%) є морфемними усіченнями, в яких ініціальний фрагмент основи поєднується з традиційним суфіксом. Одиниці цієї групи містять у своїй структурі як прості (-ie, -o та -er), так і складні (-ies, -os та -ers) форманти. Найпродуктивнішим суфіксом постає -ie поряд зі своїми аломорфами (-y, -ey та -i), за якими сумарно утворилося 67% аналізованих неосленгізмів. Морфемні усічення виявляють три морфопросодичні та фонологічні тенденції: двоскладовість похідного слова, переважання відкритих складів у дериваті та одзвінчення збереженої фінальної приголосної /s-/ у кластері, що зазнав декомпозиції. Незначна кількість винятків, які суперечать наведеним тенденціям, пояснюється внутрішньомовною необхідністю лінійного обмеження процесу усічення мінімальним елементом лексеми, здатним нести вихідне значення. 4,9% неологізмів другої групи складають морфоїдні усічення, в яких ініціальний фрагмент основи поєднується з нерегулярним суфіксом, форма та словотвірне значення якого потребують подальшого уточнення. Одиниці цієї групи утворюються за допомогою формантів -izzle та -mbo, морфемний статус яких нині залишається невизначеним.

Ключові слова: *суфікс, суфіксальне усічення, морфемне суфіксальне усічення, морфоїдне суфіксальне усічення, сленг англійської мови, неосленгізм.*

Introduction. Throughout its evolution, our civilization has heavily relied on altering the environment rather than adapting to it. This steady trend stemmed from the need to reduce human effort and gradually forced its way into different aspects of life. The universal interdisciplinary theory of minimizing effort accounts for a number of major milestones in language history too, including invention of writing (no more need to memorize humanity's oral intangible heritage); systemization and standardization of national languages (no more need to balance between a number of synonymous or semantically defective forms "floating" quasi chaotically in asystemic language fabric); phonetical, lexical and grammatical simplification (no more need to pronounce an articulatorily complex sequence of sounds if they can be altered while retaining their recognizability and understandability, or to convey a particular sense with the help of a more extended material form instead of a briefer one, or to supplement every grammar rule with a plethora of exceptions). And it is this global trend towards minimal effort that the derivational phenomenon of clipping perfectly falls into, presupposing "the reduction of a word to one of its parts, as a result of which the new form acquires some linguistic value of its own" (Арнольд, 1986: 135).

Clipping as a complex and multifaceted process may occur autonomously (resulting in back-clipping, mid-clipping, fore-clipping, and edge-clipping) or in contiguity with other processes, such as compounding (resulting in acronyms and blending), transposition (resulting in back formation), and suffixation (resulting in suffixed clipping). It is on the latter mechanism of word formation involving the truncation of the word-final segment coupled with the addition of a postpositional morpheme that the present article is focused.

Suffixed clipping, also known as **embellished clipping** or **hypocoristic formation** (Mattiello, 2013: 103; McCumber, 2010: 126), is typical of informal English in general and of slang in particular. The previous studies have predominantly focused on such aspects as its prosodic morphology (Lappe, 2007); cognitive semantics, including iconicity (Brdar, 2015); sociolinguistics, based on the evidence from Australian English (Brdar, 2015; Mulder, Penry Williams, 2014), Bengali (Lowe, 2004), Dutch (Hamans, 2012), French (Scullen, 1997), Polish (Głowacka, 2005), and Ukrainian (Булава, 2003). Yet, suffixed clipping in the 21st century English slang neologisms has not been addressed as a discrete research issue yet.

The purpose of the present article is threefold. Firstly, my aim consists in identifying all the

productive suffixes contributing to the formation of the suffixed clippings coined in the 21st century English slang. Secondly, the suffixes featured in the slang items under study are to be classified according to their linguistic status and structure, and arranged with respect to their productivity level. Thirdly, it is essential to deduce the phonological and/or morphoprosodic regularities, if any, involved in the formation of the suffixed clippings under study.

The database of the research is 103 novel suffixed clippings. The items under investigation represent a selection from three English slang dictionaries: "The concise new Partridge dictionary of slang and unconventional English" (2008), "Vice slang" (2008), and "The Routledge dictionary of modern American slang and unconventional English" (2009).

Presentation of the main material.

Suffixed clipping, as was said, constitutes a combination of clipping and suffixation within one derivational act (Булава, 2003: 114).

According to the degree of linguistic formalization of the derivational morphs, i.e. whether they have already established their linguistic status as discrete morphemes or not, the suffixed clippings in the 21st century English slang fall into two groups:

- 1) **morphemic suffixed clippings**, formed with the help of conventional suffixes with the fixed form (and allomorphs, if any) as well as derivational meaning;
- 2) **morphoid suffixed clippings**, formed with the help of irregular suffixes whose form and derivational meaning are yet to be investigated.

Morphemic clippings

Morphemic clippings in the 21st century English slang derive from truncated common and proper stems conjoined with a regular suffix or its allomorph. They constitute 98 items, or 95.1% of the slang neologisms under investigation.

The morphemic clippings under analysis tend to showcase overall three phonological and morphoprosodic trends: **the disyllabicity of the derivative, the predominance of open syllables in the derivative, and the voicing of the preserved stem-final consonant /s-/ in the truncated cluster.**

The disyllabicity of the derivative means that, irrespective of the number of syllables in the derivational base, its derivative tends to contain two syllables, e.g.:

- 1) monosyllabic derivational base → disyllabic derivative, e.g. *house* → *hizzie* 'the room, apartment, or house where someone lives' (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 335);

- 2) disyllabic derivational base → disyllabic derivative, e.g. *Prozac* → *prozie* 'a Prozac tablet' (Dalzell, Victor (a), 2008: 148);

3) trisyllabic derivational base → disyllabic derivative, e.g. *tropical* → *tropo* ‘(of a building) designed for tropical weather’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 667);

4) tetrasyllabic derivational base → disyllabic derivative, e.g. *ammunition* → *ammo* ‘cash’ (Dalzell, 2009: 15).

However, the present research also features two derivatives that contain as many as three syllables: *electros* ‘electrical equipment employed for sexual stimulation’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 234) and *Viaggy* ‘a Viagra tablet’ (Dalzell, Victor (a), 2008: 195). Two reasons underlie the trisyllabic structure of these exceptions to the trend. Firstly, if the root morphemes of the slang items in question were divided into finer segments, their meaning would be undeducible from the truncated form. Obviously, in modern English the disyllabic segments *electr-* and *Viag-* prove to be the shortest linear forms capable of conveying the meanings of ‘electricity’ and ‘Viagra’ respectively. The second reason consists in the non-euphonicity of the potential structurally simpler derivatives such as /*vauz*/, for instance.

The predominance of open syllables in the derivative is characteristic of the overwhelming majority (96 items) of the suffixed clippings under investigation. Again, there are two examples where the initial syllable is closed and which, therefore, fail to comply with the trend: *Numbo* ‘Number 6, a branded cigarette’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 465) (derivational base *Number* [6]) and *Tonky* ‘a member of the Batonka tribe’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 658) (derivational base *Batonka*). Nevertheless, the preservation of the second consonant of the cluster in both cases is due to the linguistic necessity of preventing the loss of the denotational meaning of the root morphemes. It is equally noteworthy that the slang item *Tonky* differs structurally from the other morphemic suffixed clippings in that it results from both apocope (i.e. truncation of the word-final segment (Borys, 2018: 10): *Batonka* → *Batonk-*) as well as apheresis (i.e. truncation of the word-initial segment (Borys, 2018: 26): *Batonka* → *-tonka*), whereas suffixed clippings are prototypically formed with the help of the former only.

The voicing of the preserved stem-final consonant /s/ in the truncated cluster is found in the slang items *bessie* /*bezi*/ ‘best friend’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 49) (derivational base *best* [*friend*]); *bezzie* ‘best’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 50) (derivational base *best*); *cuzzies* ‘HM Customs & Excise’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 182) (derivational base [*HM*] *Customs* [*and Excise*]); *fezzie* ‘a festival’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 248) (derivational base *festival*); (*h*)*ozzy* / *ozzie* ‘a hospital’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 347) (derivational

base *hospital*); *muzzy* ‘a moustache’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 448) (derivational base *moustache*); *prozzy* ‘a girl who is (allegedly) sexually available’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 516) (derivational base *prostitute*); *quezzie* ‘a question’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 524) (derivational base *question*). What accounts for the voicing of the preserved stem-final consonant is its new, intervocalic, position. Thus, the element *-zza*, identifiable in diminutive anthroponyms, is not a suffix, as claimed by L. Bauer, R. Lieber, and I. Plag (Bauer et al., 2013: 402), but results from a combination of the voiced root-final consonant /s/ with the word-final *-a*, the allomorph of the suffix *-er*. Meanwhile, a few instances of the /r/-to-/z/ interchange, as in *Barry* → *Bazza*, *Morrissey* → *Mozza*, *Sharon* → *Shazza* (ibid.: 402) can be explained by the phenomenon of morphological rhotacism.

The morphemic clippings are formed with the help of three simple, i.e. morphologically indivisible, suffixes (*-ie*, *-o*, and *-er*) as well as three compound, i.e. morphologically divisible, suffixes (*-ies*, *-os*, and *-ers*).

-ie-morphemic clippings

The diminutive affix *-ie* is found to be the most productive simple suffix, accounting for the formation of 69 neologisms. It is represented by three allomorphs, only one of which, *-y*, proves to be as common as *-ie*. The affix serves to express **diminutiveness** in such thematic groups of slang as:

1) **body**, e.g. *muzzy* ‘a moustache’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 448) (derivational base *moustache*);

2) **clothes**, e.g. *chemmie* ‘a shirt; a blouse’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 131) (derivational base *chemise*);

3) **devices**, e.g. *pokie* ‘an electronic poker machine’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 505) (derivational base *poker* [*machine*]);

4) **drugs**, e.g. *muggie* ‘marijuana’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 445) (derivational base *muggles* ‘(sl.) marijuana’);

5) **emotions**, e.g. *aggie* ‘angry, agitated’ (Dalzell, 2009: 8) (derivational base *aggravated*);

6) **food and drink**, e.g. *benny* ‘an order of Eggs Benedict’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 48) (derivational base [*Eggs*] *Benedict*);

7) **occupations**, e.g. *reegie* ‘a police officer in the Regional Crime Squad’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 536) (derivational base *Regional* [*Crime Squad*]).

The suffix is also found in one proper name, the pseudonym *Eppy* ‘Brian Epstein, manager of the Beatles’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 236) (derivational base *Epstein*), where it is employed in the diminutive function too.

The other two allomorphs, *-ey* and *-i*, are featured in only one slang neologism each: *Rhodey* ‘a white Zimbabwean’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 538)

(derivational base *Rhodesian*) and *shotti* ‘the front passenger seat in a car’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 579) (derivational base *shotgun (seat)* ‘(sl.) the front passenger seat in a car’) respectively.

-o-morphemic clippings

The second most productive affix in the 21st century English slang neologisms proves to be **-o**. It accounts for the formation of only 15 items, or more than sixfold fewer than **-ie**. The affix serves to express **pejorativity** in such thematic groups of slang as:

1) **buildings**, e.g. *Wanno* ‘Wandsworth Prison’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 687) (derivational base *Wandsworth*);

2) **drugs**, e.g. *robo* ‘dextromethorphan’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2009: 820) (derivational base *Robitussin*);

3) **ethnicity**, e.g. *Leb(b)o* ‘a Lebanese person’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 396) (derivational base *Lebanese*);

4) **food and drink**, e.g. *bevo* ‘an alcoholic drink’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 50) (derivational base *bevy* ‘(sl.) an alcoholic drink, especially beer’);

5) **lifestyle**, e.g. *romo* ‘a follower of the New Romantic youth fashion of the early 1980s’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 546) (derivational base [*New*] *Romantic*);

6) **social background**, e.g. *yarco* ‘a member of a subcultural urban adolescent grouping in Yarmouth, Norfolk, that seems to be defined by a hip-hop dress and jewellery sense’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 712) (derivational base *Yarmouth*).

Besides the above-mentioned **pejorative** function, the suffix may equally express an **augmentative** or **intensifying** meaning in adjectives such as *fabbo* ‘fabulous; excellent’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 240) (derivational base *fabulous*) or *morto* ‘mortified’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 440) (derivational base *mortified*); nouns such as *bizzo* ‘an ill-tempered woman’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 60) (derivational base *bitch*) or *epo* ‘an attack, an outburst’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 236) (derivational base *epilepsy*).

-er-morphemic clippings

The least productive of the three simple suffixes detected is **-er**. It serves to create **informal mutations** of more neutral words. The affix in its regular form is found in two examples only: *ecker* ‘MDMA; a tablet of MDMA’ (Dalzell, Victor (a), 2008: 65) (derivational base *ecstasy*) and *Fezzer* ‘a Ford ‘Fiesta’ car’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 248) (derivational base [*Ford*] *Fiesta*).

The suffix equally possesses one allomorph, **-a**, that is identifiable in the slang item *lezza* ‘a lesbian’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 399) (derivational base *lesbian*).

-ies-, -os-, and -ers-morphemic clippings

The compound suffixes **-ies**, **-os**, and **-ers** are formed by virtue of combining the simple suffixes **-ie**, **-o**, and **-er** with the plural ending **-s**. They are added to stems readymade within one derivational act and are, therefore, treated on a par with simple suffixes.

The affixes **-ies** and **-os**, found in nine *pluralia tantum* slang neologisms, express the derivational meanings of **plurality** and **diminutiveness**. In the slang items under study, these suffixes designate either **collectiveness** or **binarity**. The semantics of **collectiveness** is detected in the lexemes *electros* ‘electrical equipment employed for sexual stimulation’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 234) (derivational base *electric [sex toys]*); *photies* ‘photographs’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 492) (derivational base *photographs*); *prellies* ‘Phenmetrazine, a chemical stimulant marketed as Preludin’ (Dalzell, Victor (a), 2008: 147) (derivational base *Preludin*); *steggies* ‘steroids’ (Dalzell, Victor (a), 2008: 177) (derivational base *steroids*); *wimmos* ‘women’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 701) (derivational base *women*). The meaning of **binarity** is conveyed by the neologisms *stillies* ‘stiletto shoes’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 621) (derivational base *stilettos*) and *trainies* ‘trainers, sports shoes’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 663) (derivational base *trainers*).

The informal affix **-ers** also expresses the derivational meaning of **plurality** in two *pluralia tantum* neologisms: **binarity** in *tezzers* ‘testicles’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 645) (derivational base *testicles*) and **collectiveness** in *voddors* ‘vodka’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 682) (derivational base *vodka*).

Morphoid clippings

Morphoid clippings in the 21st century English slang derive from truncated common and proper stems concatenated with an irregular suffix. The latter, in its turn, results from reanalysis. By **reanalysis**, also known as **metanalysis proper** (Campbell, 2004: 117), is meant a structural change within a word or phrase, which consists in the etymologically or morphemically inadequate segmentation of the unit into its constituents and leads to the formation of a new word or morph. The word formation mechanism involved is occasionally referred to as **libfixing**, also known as **recutting** in historical linguistics, or extraction of an affix-like formative (a morphoid) from one word in order to conjoin it to a free stem of another word (Hamans, 2015).

Morphoid clippings constitute a fairly limited group, which features as few as 5 units, or 4.9 % of the slang items under analysis. The two suffixed morphoids identified in the present research are **-izzle** and **-mbo**. The reasons behind categorizing these formatives as morphoids are their formal discreteness and semantic defectivity (Жеребило, 2010: 205).

This study contains four morphoid clippings in **-izzle**, namely: *bizzle* ‘a male companion’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 60) (derivational base *brother*); (*fo*) *shizzle* ‘certainly’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 576) (derivational base *for sure*); *nizzle* ‘a close friend’ (Dalzell, 2009: 697) (derivational base *nigger*); *sizzle* ‘a female companion’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 585) (derivational base *sister*). The slang neologism *nizzle* is also provided with an optional spelling, *nizzel*, thus forming the new allomorph **-izzel**. Conversely, only one morphoid clipping in **-mbo** is detectable in the 21st century English slang: *Chrimbo* ‘Christmas’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 140) (derivational base *Christmas*). Formally, each of the five examples in question comprises a **root morpheme**, represented by a word-initial clipped segment, concatenated with a **morph** resulting from metanalysis by analogy with the existing derivationally heterogeneous lexical items featuring **-izzle** and **-mbo** in the final position. Semantically, the formatives **-izzle** and **-mbo** are for the time being deprived of a conventionalized denotational or connotational meaning, which issues from their delimitation in the function of postpositional morphs as recently as in the 2000s.

The common feature shared by all the morphoid clippings in **-izzle** is the cultural (hip-hop subculture), ethnical (African Americans’ speech), and territorial (American urban slang) restrictions on their usage. Suffixed clippings in **-izzle** used to be fairly popular in African American hip-hop followers’ sublanguage in the early 21st c., thriving on phrases like (*fo*) *shizzle my bizzle*, (*fo*) *shizzle my nizzle*, or (*fo*) *shizzle my sizzle*. The morphoid also used to be actively employed in nonce word formation, predominantly due to its euphemistic function, as in *shizzle my mizzle fizzle dizzle!* instead of the taboo *suck my motherfucking dick!* (Dalzell, 2009: 869). However, M. Widawski claims that **-izzle** is now considered dated (Widawski, 2015: 35).

The morphoid **-mbo** found in the slang item *Chrimbo* ‘Christmas’ (Dalzell, Victor, 2008: 140) (derivational base *Christmas*) results from the metanalysis of the conventionalized etymologically heterogeneous informal lexemes *bimbo* (borrowing from Spanish); *dumbo* (suffixation: *dumb* + *-o*); *el crumbo* (pseudo-

borrowing based on *crumb*); *himbo* (blending: *him* + [*bi*]*mbo*); *jumbo* (deonymization: *Jumbo* → *jumbo*); *mumbo jumbo* (partial reduplication: [*m*]*umbo* + [*j*]*umbo*); *Zimbo* (suffixed clipping: *Zimb[abwean]* + *-o*). Yet, an only example identified in this study does not provide sufficient evidence to assert the discretization of **-mbo** as a novel English suffix.

Conclusions. Suffixed clipping proves to be a productive word formation mechanism in the 21st c. English slang. According to the degree of linguistic formalization of the derivational morphs, the items under study fall into two groups: the morphemic suffixed clippings (a truncated stem is combined with a conventional suffix) and the morphoid suffixed clippings (a truncated stem is combined with an irregular suffix whose form and derivational meaning are yet to be investigated). The overwhelming majority of the neologisms under study (95.1%) are morphemic clippings, featuring both simple (**-ie**, **-o**, and **-er**) and compound (**-ies**, **-os**, and **-ers**) formatives. The most productive suffix proves to be **-ie** alongside its three allomorphs (**-y**, **-ey**, and **-i**), which accounts for the formation of 67% of the units overall. The morphemic clippings reveal three phonological and morphoprosodic trends: the disyllabicity of the derivative, the predominance of open syllables in the derivative, and the voicing of the preserved stem-final consonant /s-/ in the truncated cluster. The insignificant number of exceptions which do not comply with the trends is explained by the linguistic need to restrict the process of truncation to preserving the minimal lexeme segment capable of conveying the original meaning. The remaining 4.9% of the neologisms under investigation are morphoid clippings, formed with the help of the formatives **-izzle** and **-mbo**, whose morphemic status remains for the time being obscure.

Further synchronic studies focusing on suffixed clipping samples from other periods in English as well as in other languages will need to be undertaken to enhance our understanding of the derivational phenomenon from phonological, morphoprosodic, semantic, and cross-lingual perspectives.

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