Lipka, Leonhard

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Leonhard Lipka

Observational Linguistics, Neologisms, Entrenchment and the Tea Party Movement

Abstract
OL is an old method for gathering data, including empirical linguistic data. Here, I demonstrate the usefulness of the technique for investigating neologisms with three case studies: on (1) the acronym F1, (2) the TPM, (3) tsunami (with various pronunciations). Tea Party and tsunami are fully entrenched today (2010) in the global speech community. Entrenchment is a relatively new NU which covers both the traditional terms lexicalization and institutionalization. All three are notational terms, which must be explained and defined explicitly. They depend on a smaller or larger (global) speech community and implicitly on a specific time. Neologisms are expressions of the naming need for new referents and concepts in a specific speech community.

Key words
Institutionalization; notational terms; naming unit (NU); Mathesius; Leisi; speech community

Introduction

Almost ten years ago, in 2003, in a volume dedicated to the memory of Jan Firbas, "an outstanding personality of European linguistics" as Aleš Svoboda put it in the very same volume, I contributed an article entitled 'Observational linguistics and semiotics' (211–222). I there defined Observational Linguistics (OL) as an old method for gathering data, originally employed in the science of anthropology under the concept of *participant observation* (G *teilnehmende Beobachtung*). I will now demonstrate the usefulness of the technique for the investigation of neologisms in two case studies of texts from TIME: 1. on acronyms and 2. on the Tea Party Movement (TPM).

In 2003 I claimed "that a useful type of participant observation is the conscious interaction with the environment or context (written signs in newspapers, magazines and spoken ones on radio, TV etc.) and the careful observation of native speakers in their native country" (Lipka 2003). This holds for print and visual media (hoardings – or 'billboards' in AmE) and advertising in general, but today also in the Internet. The spoken language and varieties of any kind, with special phonetic and phonological features, are also fruitful and accessible to the *participant observer* (p.o.). The data provide evidence and new insights for varieties of language use, including neologisms. All this is done from a cognitive perspective.

In Lipka (1999) the use of OL for gathering lexical data like *Blairites, Spice Girls, wheelie bins* is demonstrated and illustrated as carried out during a stay in Cornwall in 1997. I spent time in a place called [mauzl] – according to recommendations in tourist books – but named *Mousehole* by the natives.

1. Neologisms

As Schmid (2008: 1) specifies, neologisms are not simply 'new words', but may be regarded as words "which have lost their status as nonce-formations and are in the process of becoming or already have become part of the norm of the language – in the sense of Coseriu – but are still considered new by most members of the **speech community**". A word may be a neologism for one language user and familiar to another. The speaker may signal the newness of a word. The words may be lexicalized and institutionalized to some extent or – in cognitive terms – more or less 'entrenched' in a language user's mind or in a speech community. This might be called 'individual' and 'social entrenchment'.

1.1. Entrenchment and methodology

In the following I will use the term 'entrenchment' as a superordinate metalinguistic word for both hyponyms 'lexicalization' and 'institutionalisation'. All three are 'notational terms' – in the sense introduced by Enkvist (cf. Lipka 2002: index) – which must be explicitly defined and may be differently defined by individual authors, at different times, and there is no single correct definition. Thus, they require an explicit nominal definition. The question is how to find data and possible candidates for more or less entrenched neologisms. OL may help. Schmid uses corpora to solve this problem. Some types of dictionaries will also provide material for linguistic analyses and discuss various sources and processes for the production of neologisms.

1.2. Dictionaries

Aitchison (2001), in Supplement B23 for the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDCE3), discusses how "words pour into English" and distin-

guishes three ways: (1) loanwords, (2) word-formation, (3) "from layering" when an existing word splits into more than one meaning.

Ayto collected and defined in *The Longman Register of New Words* (R1) (1989) over 1200 neologisms from 130 sources in every medium (all published in the UK). In volume two (1990) (R2) Ayto used as sources "very nearly 200 newspapers and other journals, from many areas of the English-speaking world [...] [that] have been quarried".

I do believe that we may distinguish a particular category of NWs – 'buzzwords' – which according to LDCE3 are both special and thought to be very important, at a particular period. The dictionary illustrates with the example *superhighway* used in the 1990s. To my memory, it was actually *information superhighway*. In TIME 2010, in the first number of the year – with B.S. Bernanke as *Person of the Year* (formerly *Man of the Year* on the cover) – a list of 'buzzwords' of 2009 is given, including *sexting* 'sending lewd messages or photos via cell phone', *death panel* 'a fictional group alleged to be in charge of rationing care in health care reform proposals', *birthers* 'conspiracy theorists, who deny Barak Obama was born in the U.S.' and *green shoots* 'signs of economic recovery'. In the Longman Dictionary 'buzzword' is defined as "a word or phrase from one special area of knowledge that people **suddenly** think is very important".

In the introduction to R1 Ayto distinguishes as "bread-and-butter roots to the formation of new words": compounding, the addition of prefixes and suffixes, blending and "the omnipresent acronym" and also conversion, i.e. all productive processes of Word Formation (WF).

Another possible source of data is *The Oxford Dictionary of New Words* (ODNW) edited by E. Knowles with J. Elliot (1998). Its reliability is somewhat questionable when we find words like *millennium bug*, *lambada*, *Majorism*, *le Shuttle*, *BSE* – which to my mind died out long ago, since the *millennium* – and others firmly entrenched like *Internet*, *www*, *African-American*, *DVD*, *CD*, *HIV*, *MRI*. On the other hand we have *aquacise*, noun and verb 'physical exercise carried out in shallow water', entrenched in German as *Wassergymnastik*.

2. Case studies

2.1. The omnipresent acronym: Formula One

In TIME March 15, 2010: 35ff the participant observer found an interesting article 'The Turbulent Times of Formula One. A sex scandal, a deliberate crash, teams quitting', with many acronyms of various types beginning with the abbreviation F1 for *Formula One*. Most of them are firmly entrenched internationally, such as *FIA* (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile) and names of carmakers like FIAT (Fabrica Italiana Automobile Torino), BMW (Bayerische Motorenwerke). Furthermore a lot of compounds with F1 such as *F1circus*, *F1's festival* of fossil fuel, *F1driver*, *F1's TV viewers*, *F1cars*, the new *USF1team*. Of course,

the function of all these new naming units (NUs) is to save time and space. In the following I will discuss this new metalinguistic term in greater detail.

2.2. The Tea Party Movement (TPM)

In Vol. 175, No. 8 of TIME, March 1, 2010: 32ff there are examples of NWs formed by productive WF processes from the lexicalised compound *Tea Party* – from the historical name *Boston Tea Party* – reminding of "the spirit of America's tea-dumping colonists in Boston". "The Tea Party is not a political party, not yet…," and it "finds its strongest spirit among conservative Republicans". There are also suffixal derivatives like *Tea Partyism* and *Tea Partyer*. The TPM "is just one expression of a vast discontent unsettling the country". Others are discussed under the heading "The Three Flavors of Tea". "Tea Parties have become magnets for conspiracy mongers". Also "grass roots uprisings come and go". At a demonstration, signs were held up saying "STOP SOCIALISM NOW" and "NO GOVERNMENT HEALTH BILL". According to TIME "if any one person is the founder it's Rick Santelli", the CNBC commentator.

In the New York Times (April 6 2010: 3) the participant observer found another instance of mention of TP under the title *As Discontent Grows, So Does Anger* stating: "The Fox News host Glenn Beck, a galvanizing figure for the *Tea Party Protesters*..." which is interesting in that no explanation is given and needed for TPM, which seems to prove that this naming unit is now fully entrenched for readers of NYT.

The TP is indeed everywhere – not only in TIME and NYT. So we must conclude that, today, it is fully and globally entrenched in most media. Also, compounds and derivatives are found, e.g. in NYT, on November 11, 2010, p.1 we have Tea Party Activists (twice), TP members, Tea Partiers, TP rallies. It is also used for word play, as in TIME (11/15: 3, 38): "reading Tea Party Leaves" and the headline: Boiling Tea. To finish off the TPM, in TIME 8 November 2010: TP is used four times on one page and referred to as: "the populist, anti-elitist Tea Party".

A recent number of TIME (9/27) bears on its cover: It's Tea Party Time – as an attention seeking device (ASD). Participant observation in German, English, American papers, journals and magazines clearly show that the Tea Party and derivatives are now fully established, institutionalized or entrenched internationally.

2.3. The NU **tsunami**

When, in 2004, a catastrophic tsunami hit several countries in South East Asia, the word – as a consequence – was used around the world for the disaster and thus was globally entrenched. In fact, it is a Japanese loanword, as explained in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1999) as follows:

> ***tsunami*** [tsu:na:mi] a long high seawave caused by an earthquake or other disturbance. Origin C19: from Japanese, from *tsu* 'harbour' & *nami* 'wave'.

Thus, it is a wave in the harbour – from below – called Seebeben in G as opposed to Erdbeben (earthquake). In the days following the terrible disaster the word was naturally used everywhere. But when the participant observer heard it on American radio and TV it was simplified and always pronounced [su:na:mi] but elsewhere the original Japanese pronunciation was used as a NU for the event.

2.4. NUs and new words

In an article in *SKASE*, Vol 3, No. 3, 2006, I thoroughly discussed the concept of Naming Unit (NU) from its origins, as introduced in 1961 by the famous Prague linguist Vilém Mathesius as an acronym substituting for various terms, viz 'word', 'lexeme', 'lexical unit', 'complex word', 'compound' or 'collocation'. He had set up four types of NUs including acronyms: "shortening of words and coining of new NUs (e.g. *YMCA; kodak*).

I pointed out in the article (2006: 33) that in Cognitive Linguistics and Prototype Theory "naming means setting up NUs for language-specific classes of objects or categories". Also, that "the existence of a NU may lead to **hypostatisation** as defined and stressed by E. Leisi which is very often the case in concept-formation by NWs, as Schmid (2008) repeatedly points out.

The concept of NU plays an important, if not a central role in recent, research and linguistic theories and is crucial for a functional, onomasiological approach to language and for the empirical study of WF, for semantics and pragmatics, i.e., the use of language in context from the standpoint of OL. The term and the concept denoted or named by it from its origins in 1961 to the most recent work by Lipka (2006) and Štekauer (1999) proves its importance. Štekauer (1999: 80, 98) speaks of "the sign-nature of naming units" and stresses "the lexical component contains a list of Naming Units" and further "the basic unit of word-formation is the naming unit". Also "word-formation rules generate fully regular and predictable naming units". Mathesius' ideas were only published in English in 1975 in a book edited by Josef Vachek, translated by Libuše Dušková under the title *A Functional Analysis of Present Day English*. In a number of publications including two books, Štekauer – (1998) and (2005) – has assigned a central position to NUs. He (2005: 224) views each new Naming Unit as a result of "a very specific and real act of naming by a coiner" and states (2005: 212) that Mathesius regarded "the naming act as a cognitive phenomenon".

In 2006 (33ff) I discussed a number of case studies for illustration of NUs, relating partly to etymology and to the history of linguistic expressions and of their referents, such as *America, Google, Mercedes, AUDI*, the *papamobile*, space shuttles like *Challenger, Columbia, Discovery* and also types of whisky, vodka, wines and cheeses.

2.5. Concept-formation and lexical creativity

In Munat (2007), the editor of this volume in her Introduction discusses neologisms and 'concept creation' and creativity as the process how we "build new concepts" as well as "metafunctions of novel formations" and "novel word play as an ASD" (an acronym for Attention-Seeking-Devices).

3. Conclusions

Participant observation is a method for gathering linguistic data, including neologisms from observing a speech community and their use of language, possibly by living with the people whom one observes and their use of neologisms and their coining and entrenchment. Definite proof is their inclusion in specific dictionaries and their use in texts and contexts. Both Aitchison and Ayto stress productive WF processes, including the "omnipresent acronym". Various case studies from print media illustrate this, even specific pronunciations show entrenchment.

Abbreviations

LDCE – *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
NU – naming unit
ODNW – *Oxford Dictionary of New Words*
OL – Observational Linguistics
R1 – *The Longman Register of New Words*
R2 – *The Longman Register*, Volume 2
TPM – Tea Party Movement
WF – word formation

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Leonhard Lipka, professor emeritus, was born in 1938 in Jägerndorf/Krnov. He studied English (with Marchand) and Romance Linguistics (with Coseriu) from 1957 ff in Tübingen. PhD 1965, Habilitation 1971. Full professor of English Linguistics at university of Frankfurt/Main 1972-1975. 1975-2003 chair of English Linguistics at university of Muenchen. Emeritus 2003.

Address: Prof. Leonhard Lipka, Rothschwaigestr. 51, D-80997 München, Germany. [email: lenuta.lipka@web.de]