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Structural Features of Lithuanian Blends

Cechy strukturalne litewskich zbitek wyrazowych

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Abstract
The study examines 167 indigenous and translated blends collected in the Database of Lithuanian Neologisms to reveal the heterogenous structure of blends. The phenomenon arises from users' linguistic sense, their ability to creatively use language resources and their pursuit of the most expressive and economic ways of saying. The study establishes that the phonological (structural) types of syllables in blends correspond to the tendencies of Lithuanian words syllables phonological structure. Often, morphemes from initial words, which lose their morphemic status in blends, are combined. In the process of blending, it is important to aim for the morphemes of the initial words to be recognized as such. Phonemic overlap is used to preserve as many phonemes from initial words as possible. Phonological environment and, in some cases, prosodic features imply the analogy of blends to compounds.

Abstract
Badanie stanowi analizę 167 rodzimych i przetłumaczonych zbitek wyrazowych zebranych w bazie danych litewskich neologizmów (Miliūnaitė, Aleksaitė) i ma na celu określenie heterogenicznej struktury wyżej wspomnianych

zbitek wyrazowych. Powstawanie tego zjawiska wynika z wyczucia językowego jego użytkowników, ich zdolności do kreatywnego wykorzystania zasobów językowych oraz dążenia do wyrażania się w sposób jak najbardziej ekspresywny, a przy tym oszczędny w słowa. Wyniki badania wskazują, iż fonologiczne (strukturalne) typy sylab w zbitkach wyrazowych odpowiadają tendencjom struktury fonologicznej sylab litewskich słów. Często morfemy z początkowych słów, które tracą swój status morfemiczny w zbitkach wyrazowych, są łączone. W procesie łączenia ważne jest, aby dążyć do tego, by morfemy początkowych słów były rozpoznawane jako takie. Zjawisko opisywane jako nakładanie się fonemów (określanie ich wspólnych cech) służy do zachowania możliwie jak największej liczby fonemów słów początkowych. Środowisko fonologiczne i, w niektórych przypadkach, cechy prozodyczne wskazują na analogię zbitek wyrazowych do wyrazów złożonych.

1. Introduction

Lexical blending is a creative way of constructing words increasingly used and intelligently constructed by language users, attracting the attention of scientists. In this study, blends are not considered language errors (Miliūnaitė 2014: 248; Aleksaitė 2022: 173–174) but purposefully merged units of two or more words (LKE 2008: 282).

Blends are considered morphologically indivisible. Their initial words (IWs) are shortened phonetically and close phonologically, semantically, and syntactically (Murmulaitytė 2021: 99). The context is necessary to understand occasional blends (Miliūnaitė 2014: 250). The abbreviated IWs must be recognizable in order for communication to occur. Therefore, the structure of the blends must somehow imply their lexical meaning. A morpheme is the smallest unit of the language system containing form and meaning (LKE 2008: 359), critical for identifying the meaning of a word. IWs are blended by phonological and morphological constraints (Kubozono 1990: 4), thus blends are open to phonological and morphological analysis and in turn phonological and morphological components necessary for the morphonological analysis. Morphonological analysis of the word structure determines the constituent parts of words, establishes their qualitative analysis, character and composition. Thus, investigates the morphonological structure of morphemes along with the structure of syllables and morphemes (Nemickienė 2009).

How blends are interpreted among scientists in terms of word formation varies among researchers. Some consider blends, acronyms and other words of non-traditional structure as creative word-formation (Humans 2021: 104),

while others see them as word-creation (Ronneberger-Sibold 2010: 201–203). Specifically, blending is attributed to extra grammatical morphology (when it does not obey the patterns of formation) or linguistic marginality (when interaction with other branches of linguistics is emphasized) morphology (Mattiello 2013: 32–33; Ronneberger-Sibold 2010: 202). Sometimes blends are attributed to word-formation (Beliaeva 2019b: 2–3; Zaim 2017: 255; Gries 2004: 415), and partly to the realm of grammatical morphology: "<…> blending is a morphological process, although it may be distinct from ordinary morphological processes in many respects" (Kubozono 1990: 1). Blending, as a peripheral phenomenon of the system, both formally and semantically, is not as predictable as grammatically regular processes. However, it is functional, arising from linguistic resources and thus belonging to the system.

Although the emotional-expressive function is the most relevant aspect in blends, the principle of language economy is also significant (Aleksaitė 2022: 174). The semantics of blends originates from the merging of meanings of the IWs. Blends connote more specific semantic aspects and are morphosemantically open (Mattiello 2013: 35–36, 49). Therefore, blends are formally and semantically condensed, and new content is named by utilizing available language resources. In addition to other factors such as functional style and extralinguistic considerations, blending is related to users' linguistic intuition. If word formation is understood only as morphological, such phenomena remain on the periphery. A living language is dynamic and breaks out of theoretical constructs. Including active peripheral processes in an overall view of word formation is beneficial. Blending is becoming more popular in various languages, and changing word creation tendencies can also reflect changes in society's thinking and worldview (Zaim 2017: 251).

English blends have been analyzed from various perspectives, including phonetics and phonology (Kubozono 1990), morphology (Beliaeva 2019b), and semantics (Gries 2004). Additionally, prosodic morphology has been discussed (Plag 2003: 160; de Booij 2000: 342). In Lithuanian, both historical and modern blends have been explored to define their position in the word-formation system, while addressing problematic aspects of the analysis of the phenomenon (Murmulaitytė 2021: 95). Recently, Aleksaitė conducted research on blends from a structural perspective, providing new insights (Aleksaitė 2021, 2022: 173–177).

Blends mainly result from the interaction between phonology and morphology (Humans 2021: 124). The study is based on 167 indigenous and translated blends collected in the Database of Lithuanian Neologisms (ND) (Miliūnaitė Aleksaitė) on July 1, 2022. ND is a continuous, publicly available online database since 2011 (Miliūnaitė 2014: 254–255). Neologisms of the Lithuanian language created by language users, emerging in the public discourse are collected in ND. Blending as a part of neology is difficult to

notice in use (Miliūnaitė 2014: 247), so far accumulated only in ND (Murmulaitytė 2021: 95). In this article, blends are assessed from the perspective of structural, more specifically, segmental static morphonology. The syllable category is relevant for segmental morphonology (Kazlauskienė 2010: 60), specifically in this research the phonological structure of syllables, the number of syllables, the splitting position. Static morphonology examines phonological (structural) types of morphemes (applied when the boundaries of the IWs syllables coincide with the boundaries of morphemes) and prosodic features (relevant for this study is a stressed syllable and pitch accent) (Kazlauskienė 2010: 59).

When selecting the material, we excluded borrowed and irregularly translated blends as they do not represent indigenous blending in the Lithuanian language. Therefore, we applied structural analysis and quantitative methods to examine the research material. Firstly, we grouped blends by their type of blending, and then considered the phonological (structural) types of IWs syllables, the splitting position, any elements of phonemic overlap (if present), connector vowels (if present), phonological (structural) types of morphemes, the number of syllables, and some prosodic features such as the stressed syllable and pitch accent. Syllable boundaries were determined based on the functional syllable theory, which involves segmenting a word before the largest internal group of consonants that could be at the beginning of another word (Girdenis 1995: 121). The aim of this research is to identify the structural features of Lithuanian blends. Considering the sample of research material, strict insights cannot be formulated, but certain assumptions can be refined.

The phenomenon of language is highly complex, and it does not always adhere to strict grammatical rules. Blending is a good example of this, as language users can create unusual yet relatively regular structures as blends. This demonstrates that linguistic consciousness goes beyond grammatical standards. Therefore, when evaluating blends, it is less problematic to analyze them in terms of morphological word formation. Several researchers suggest that a psycholinguistic and cognitive approach is needed when analyzing blends (Humans 2021: 121; Ronneberger-Sibold 2010: 210; Beliaeva 2019a: 4). Blends are a result of the language system embedded in the human mind, and they are not constructed according to standard patterns of word formation. However, linguistic processes are systematically grounded. If these standards are exceeded, it may serve a functional purpose. Blends provide an opportunity to create new content in a unique and original way, thus avoiding the uniformity of linguistic expression.

2. Results

The structure of blends can vary greatly depending on the possible phonological and morphological variations of the IWs. In Lithuanian and English (Kubozono 1990: 4), blends are most commonly constructed by combining the beginning of the first IW with the end of the second IW (63%). However, there are other realized models, such as: (b) only the end of the first IW (13%), and (c) the beginning of the second IW (11%), which are shortened (see Table 1). The IW fragments are often not free morphemes, although it may sometimes occur (Humans 2021: 123). For instance, when (d) the first or (e) the second IW is an acronym or an international component (11%) (the latter resembles an affix). In contrast, Lithuanian blends are not formed from shortened IWs' beginnings or ends. If the end of the second IW is omitted, the blend will lose the ending, and if the beginning of the first IW is omitted, it can be difficult to restore the latter. Sandwich blending is also relatively rare in Lithuanian blends (1%). It is not typical to insert a part of one IW into another when creating Lithuanian blends (Aleksaitė 2022: 197). Although various types of blending are formally possible, some are realized more often than others.

Table 1. Types of blending

Blend	Formation[1]	Meaning
a. *knygiònas*	*kny-g*(*a*)[2] + (*auk-c*)*i-o--nas*	'book (*knyga*) auction (*aukcionas*)'
b. *k**laĩk**raštis*	*k**lai-k***(*us*) + ***lai-k**raš-tis*	'a newspaper (*laikraštis*) that provides dreadful (*klaikus*) information'
c. *meroreñdumas*	*me-ro* + (*re-fe*)*-ren-du-mas* (explained by the authors)	'referendum (*referendumas*) initiated by the mayor (*meras*) of Kaunas to incorporate part of the Kaunas district to the city'
d. *es'fáltas*	*ES* + *(as)-fal-tas* (explained by the authors)	'asphalt (*asfaltas*) that is covered and funded by the European Union (*ES*)'

[1] Blends, initial words, meanings are indicated from ND (Miliūnaitė, Aleksaitė) unless noted otherwise.

[2] Graphic markings: (phonemes that are omitted in blends), overlapping segment, stressed syllable, morpheme, changed ending, connector vowel.

e. *Vanag**e**ĩtas*	*Va-na-**g**(a**i**-t**ė**)* + *-**g**e**i**-t**a**s* (cf. Eng. *-gate*: *Water-gate*)	‚scandal caused by theatre critic and writer Rūta Vanagaitė's attitude towards Lithuanian post-war partisan commander Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas'
f. *zebr**ã**silas*	*zeb-r**as*** + ***a**-s**i**-las*	'zebra (*zebras*) and donkey (*asilas*) hybrid'

Blending compensates for the formal loss that occurs when syllables are shortened and the ratio of vowels to consonants changes. As shown in Diagram 1, structural types of syllables in IWs are less frequently realized in blends. This is expected because blends consist of two or more words, and syllables are dropped in the blending process. It is interesting to note that the values of opposing columns in Diagram 1 do not differ radically; specific cases do not prevail and the most common types of syllables found in IWs are not realized or are realized less often in blends. However, complex structural types of syllables not found in IWs were observed in blends. In Diagram 2, the overall number of structural types of syllables in IWs and blends are nearly equal.

Among the types of syllables found in both blends and IWs, CV and CVC syllables stand out as the most common (Diagram 1). Open-covered syllables, specifically CV, CVC, and CVV, are most typical in the Lithuanian language (Kazlauskienė and Raškinis, 2008: 25–26; Girdenis 1995: 333). Although the structural types of syllables tend to become more complex during the process of blending, the most abundant types found in blends coincide with the most common ones in the Lithuanian language. Only one less syllable structural type was found in blends than in IWs, which is related to the compensation of the vowel-consonant ratio, i.e., phonotactics. Among the less common types of syllable structures, open-covered and closed-covered syllables were observed approximately equally; open syllables were the least typical of blends. This tendency is related to the position of the IW splitting. Phoneme groups are regular structures (Girdenis 1995: 127). The phonotactic structure of blends is similar to morphologically divisible words.

Diagram 1. Phonological (structural) syllable types of Lithuanian blends and initial words

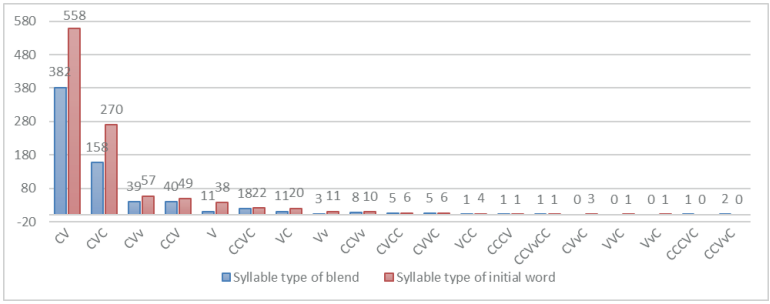
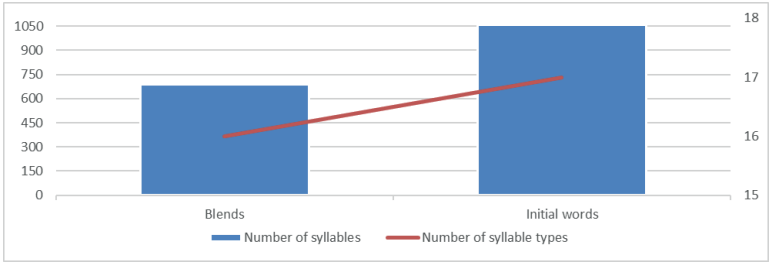


Diagram 2. Phonological length and number of realized phonological (structural) types



The coda of a syllable is more closely related to the nucleus, forming a rhyme that affects the structure of the syllable to a greater extent than the onset (Girdenis 1995: 106). In most cases, Lithuanian IWs split across the onset-nucleus boundary, with the first IW splitting in 62% of cases and the second in 35% (see Table 2). The nucleus and coda are dropped, and the lost rhyme is compensated for by the second IW and any phonemic overlap. There is a significant tendency for both IWs to split less often across the nucleus-coda boundary (8% for the first IW and 6% for the second IW) than across the onset-nucleus and other positions. Often, the IWs, particularly the second one, split along syllable boundaries (11% for the first IW and 38% for the second IW) or do not shorten at all (11% for the first IW and 17% for the second IW) (see Table 2). When the splitting position coincides with the syllable boundary and there is no phonemic overlapping, that fragment preserves the same syllable boundaries in the blend. Such an IW is even more recognizable, while the other, which has lost this element, is somewhat less recognizable. Since syllable boundaries do not perform a distinctive function

(Girdenis 1995: 116), shortened IWs should function as units longer than a syllable, like morphemes and their groups. The same principles apply when one of the IWs is not shortened, but the unabbreviated IW determines the syllable boundaries in these cases. Both types of splitting positions, particularly those along syllable boundaries, are more typical of the second IW. In such cases, the phonological structure of the IW syllable at the border of blending is maintained, which determines the phonological structure of the blend and its prosodic features. The most common combinations of splitting position types in blends are when both IWs are shortened across the onset-nucleus (26% of cases), when the first IW is shortened by the onset-nucleus and the second IW is shortened by syllable boundaries (16% of cases), when the first IW is shortened by the onset-nucleus and the second IW is not shortened (12% of cases), when both IWs are shortened by syllable boundaries (7% of cases), and when the first IW is not shortened and the second IW splits across syllable boundaries (7% of cases) (see Table 3). Various non-standard cases associated with the first (8%), second (4%), or both IWs (32%) are also observed (see Table 4). In general, the splitting positions of Lithuanian IWs in blends do not necessarily occur across the same syllable position. This is in contrast to English blends, where the opposite is observed (Kubozono 1990: 5). This difference is likely due to the phonological length of the words, as Kubozono studied monosyllabic blends while most Lithuanian blends are polysyllabic.

Table 2. The most common types of initial words splitting position

Blend	Formation	Splitting position
a. *kle**r̃k**vabalis*	*kle**r-k***(as) + (*ka*) ***r-k**va-ba-lis*	**onset-nucleus**; nucleus-coda
pišiausýbė	*PIŠ* (premjerė Ingrida Šimonytė) + (*vy-r*) *iau-sy-bė*	acronym; **onset-nucleus**
b. *energihòlikas*	*e-ner-gi-*(*ja*) + *-ho--li-kas*	**according to syllable boundaries**; the international component
*projek**tãr**as*	*pro-jek-**ta***(*s*) + (*pro--le*)-***ta**-ras*	nucleus-coda; **according to syllable boundaries**
c. *ver**ktì**nis kiau**ra**diãtorius*	*ver**k-ti*** + (*šau*)***k-ti**-nis kiau-**ra***(*s*) + ***ra**-di-a--to-rius*	**not shortened**; nucleus-coda nucleus-coda; **not shortened**

Table 3. The most common combinations of splitting position types in blends

Blend	Formation	Splitting position
a. *pliurpalỹvas*	*pliur-pa-l*(*as*) + (*na-ra-t*)*y-vas*	onset-nucleus
b. *padainaklamúoti*	*pa-dai-n*(*uo-ti*) + (*de*)*-kla-muo-ti*	onset-nucleus; according to syllable boundaries
c. *meš**k**eliõnė*	*meš-**k**(a)* + ***k**e-lio-nė*	onset-nucleus; not shortened
d. *te**p**ýba*	*te**p**-*(*ti*) + (*ta*)*-**p**y-ba*	according to syllable boundaries
e. *žirne**lĩs**tika*	*žir-ne-**lis*** + (*žur-na*)*-**lis**-ti-ka*	not shortened; according to syllable boundaries

Table 4. Some examples of non-standard types of splitting positions

Blend	Formation	Splitting position
a. *k**eks**kavãtorius*	***KEKS*** (Kaunas – Europos kultūros sostinė) + ***eks**-ka-va-to-rius*	acronym; not shortened
b. *alachohòlikas*	*A-la-ch*(as) + *-ho-li-kas*	onset-nucleus; the international component
c. *e**urãs**amtis*	*e**u-ras*** + (*kia*)***u-ra-s**am-tis*	not shortened; across the nucleus (diphthong)

Overlap of some elements of IWs is common in Lithuanian blends. The purpose of phonemic overlap is to maintain as many phonemes as possible, making it easier to recognize the IWs (Gries 2004: 416, 419). 93 and 74 of cases with/without phonemic overlap were found, respectively. Overlap is represented phonetically and graphically in 42% of cases, not at all in 44% of cases, and with additional alternants that do not overlap but are similar sounds in quality/quantity in 14% of cases (see Table 5). Consonants are the most common sounds to overlap (Aleksaitė 2021: 28). The structure of the phonemic overlap is diverse, with overlap mainly occurring through C (42%), CV (26%), three phonemes (VVC, VCC) (13%), V (10%), four phonemes (CVVC, CVCV, CCVC, CVCC, VCVC) (7%), and rarely through CC or VV (1%). The splitting positions of IWs are mostly similar to each other (Beliaeva 2019b: 4). The way elements of phonemic overlap are represented in the structural types of blends' syllables depends on the overlap structure and the IWs' splitting position.

Table 5. Types of phonemic overlap

Blend	Formation	Phonemic overlap
a. *žal*stiẽčiai	*ža-l*(*ie-ji*) + (*v*)*al*s-tie-čiai	[al]
b. *pliurpalỹvas*	*pliur-pa-l*(*as*) + (*na-ra-t*)*y-vas*	–
c. *šeim*ū̃nas	*šei-m*(*a*) + (*s*)*ei-m*ū--*nas*	[eim]; *š* : *s*

Phonotactically, IWs can be shortened in various ways, but moderation is crucial. If too many phonemes of the IW morphemes are dropped, the distinctive function is disturbed, making it more difficult to restore the lexical meaning of morphemes and words. Table 6 shows that only four examples have been found where just one phoneme of the IW remains. It can be assumed that both IWs need to be recognized in blends, and extremes of shortening are possible only when there are some constraints on the first point. In Lithuanian, only a single phoneme derived from a pronoun can form a root morpheme (LKE 2008: 361). Therefore, in other cases, the phoneme does not imply meaning. The question is, what motivates blending in such proportions? The second IW phonologically compensates for the formal loss, and in some cases, the phonemic overlap and alternating similar sounds help to restore the first IW. Table 6, graph 3 and 4 show some simulated modifications of blends where IWs can be considered more recognizable than in the original blends. In these cases, a longer fragment of the first IW is avoided, possibly due to morphological word formation patterns, inaccurate connotations, phonological length, and loss of a specific semantic tone.

Table 6. Moderation of shortening

Blend	Formation	Modification	Constraint
a. *žurmulỹs*	*Ž*(*a-li*) + (*š*)*ur-mu--lys*	*žalmulys	the analogy to the words of the root *žal-* is semantically not quite accurate
b. *coliū̃gas*	*c*(*u-ki-ni-ja*) + (*m*) *o-liū-gas* (explained by the authors)	*cukinliūgas; cukliūgas	more syllables; additional connotation
c. *žeũras*	*ž*(*ia**u**-**r**us*) + *e**u**-**r**as* (explained by the authors)	*žiauras	‚who is cruel'
d. *žverýga*	ž(**v**ė-**r**is)+ **V**e-**r**y-ga	*žvėryga	‚who is bestial'

The cases where one of the IWs is already shortened (12) are intriguing. This type of blending is particularly popular when done by analogy because the international component resembles an affix. For example, '-holikas' is already considered an independent morpheme in English, and blends with this structure resemble neoclassical or suffixal formations (Beliaeva 2019b: 2, 9). However, the status of other similarly structured international components is not always the same. Although they are often popular when blending by analogy, they are usually not productive, regular, or independent of their IWs (Mattiello 2013: 34–35) (see Table 7). In such cases, the meaning of the blend does not explicitly imply the main IW. Instead, (a) the semantic connection between the two IWs is felt, and the analogue is formally imitated, or (b) the fragment of the second IW coincides with an existing morphological word formation pattern. The analogy of blends to existing word formation patterns induces blending. Poor decisions made when codifying new loanword equivalents disseminate this phenomenon (Miliūnaitė 2014: 261). Perhaps the dissemination also depends on certain patterns of productive word formation becoming passive (Murmulaitytė 2021: 103).

Table 7. Affix-like international components of blends

Blend	Formation	Meaning
a. *energihòlikas*	*e-ner-gi-*(*ja*) + *-ho-li-kas* (cf. Eng. *alcoholic*)	'which depends (cf. *alkoholikas*) on the energy (*energija*) source'
b. *memùžė*	*me-m*(*as*) + (*mei-l*) *u-žė* (the existing word formation pattern *-užis*, *-ė*	'virtual lover (*meilužė*) who understands what memes (*memas*) are'

Phonologically, IWs tend to be quite lengthy, especially the second one, as shown in Diagram 3. On average, the first IW consists of 2.7 syllables, the second 3.6, and the blend 4.1. The length of the IW is partly determined by its origin, with blends consisting of new loanword stems typically being longer than those with indigenous morphemes in the ND (Murmulaitytė 2021: 98). While trisyllabic blends have been found, blends are typically longer than individual IWs, with an abundance of four- and five-syllable blends (Diagram 4). It is worth noting that IWs are rarely longer than the blends they form, the first IW is typically shorter than the blend, and the second IW is more frequently identical to the blend. When the blend is longer than its longest IW, the extra syllable can aid in restoring the IW. Therefore, based on phonological length, the second IW can be considered the primary word in analysed Lithuanian blends.

Diagram 3. Phonological length (number of syllables)

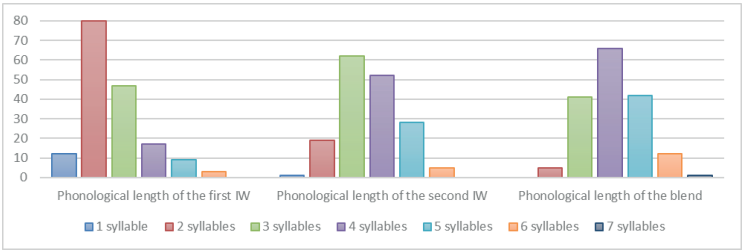
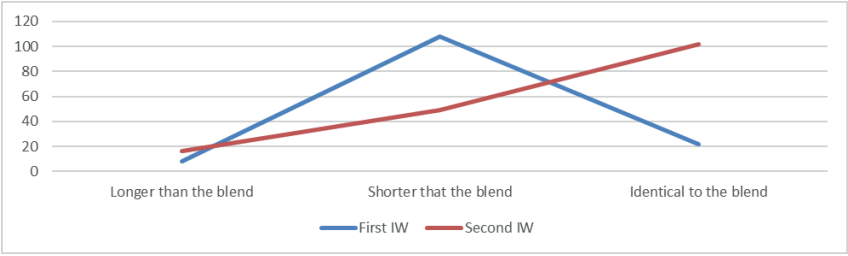


Diagram 4. Phonological length ratio



The context and phonological composition of a blend play a significant role in restoring the IWs and understanding the meaning of the blend. The semantic transparency of the blend is dependent on the phonological similarity between the IWs (Gries 2004: 427; Ronneberger-Sibold 2010: 204). Morphemic parts of the IWs (morphemes that later lose their morpheme status) are often blended, with the first IW being shortened in 55% of cases, the second in 11%, and both in 19% of cases (see Table 8). Connector vowels or vowels that appear as such, as well as phonemic overlap, may also be present. The structure of blended phoneme groups indicates the primary morphemes of the IWs. Only 15% of cases don`t have blended fragments with a splitting position that coincides with the morpheme boundaries. Typically, the ending or formant of the first IW is dropped, and the root morpheme or prefix (if present) remains; in rare cases, the suffix is retained. The second IW is either an international component resembling an affix or only keeps the formant. Blending according to morpheme boundaries also includes cases where IWs are not shortened, and the blend is still considered morphologically indivisible when the IWs split at the morpheme boundary. Morpheme boundaries are disregarded when blending, resulting in levelled morphemes due

to phonemic overlap. Although word formation patterns are imitated, they are not according to grammatical principles. The IWs are not particularly morphologically complex, with the stems of new loanwords no longer being synchronously divided, and old loanwords or native words having slightly more diverse morphological structures. It can be observed that blends, like compounds (Murmulaitytė 2021: 99), tend to be made from primary words or at least give up derivatives (one of them) affixes. In general, there is a tendency to retain some of the morphemes of IWs, allowing for clarification of the semantics of blends.

Table 8. Shortening of initial words by morpheme

Blend	Formation	Morphemic analysis of IWs
a. *murmãnas*	*mur-m*(*ė-ti*) + (*g*) *ur-ma-nas*	*murm-*(*ėti*) + (*g*)*urman-as*
b. *kiau**ra**diãtorius*	*kiau-**ra***(*s*) + ***ra**-di-a--to-rius*	*kiaur-a*(*s*) + *radiatorius*
c. *poilsenýbė*	*po-il-s*(*is*) + (*di-d*) *e-ny-bė*	*poils-*(*is*) + (*did*)*-enybė*
d. *barb**a**liaũsė*	*bar-b**a***(*r-as*) + (*k*) ***a**-liau-sė* (explained by the authors)	*barba*(*r-as*) + (*k*)*aliaus-ė*

It is not only the phonological length that determines which IW is considered the primary one; the blend is also influenced by the prosodic features of the latter. In 86% of blends, the stressed syllable and pitch accent (a) are entirely taken from the second IW. Typically, the second (58%), third (35%), and less frequently, the first (6%) or fourth (1%) syllable from the end of the blend is stressed, and the same pitch accent as in the second IW is retained (see Table 9). A similar tendency, with the exception of the pitch accent remark, is also observed in English (Beliaeva 2019b: 15). Instances were also observed where a fragment of the first IW was stressed. Before blending, the same syllable of both IWs (4%) or the last and the first syllable of IWs, respectively (2%), were stressed (b and c). In these cases, the pitch accent of the blend depends on the first IW, while the stressed syllable is determined by the second IW. A few examples (2%) were found where a connector vowel or a vowel of phonemic overlap that appears connecting (d) is stressed. 6% of blends in the research material are provided unstressed (e).

In most cases, the prosodic features of the blend are influenced by the second IW in some way. When some of the prosodic features of the main IW are not adopted, identifying it in the blend becomes more challenging unless

the fragment itself is phonologically lengthy. Therefore, it can be asserted that the second IW (1) is the primary one, responsible for determining both the phonological and prosodic features of the blend, and (2) is more crucial to recognize in the blend. Conducting additional analysis of the semantics of blends would be beneficial to clarify this statement further.

Table 9. Prosodic features

Blend	Formation
a. *seimokratūrà*	*Sei-m*(*as*) + (*pro*)*-ku-ra-tū-ra*
b. *dvi̇rlentė*	*dvi-r*(*a-tis*) + (*ried*)*-len-tė* (cf. Eng. *Bikeboard*)
c. *Knỹgstokas*	*kny-g*(*a*) + (*Vud*)*-sto-kas* (location in the US)
d. *stiliãbaisa*	*sti-li*(*us*) + (*p*)*a-bai-sa*
e. *pusbr**ol**akis*	*pus-br**o**-**l***(*is*) + (*vil-k*)***o***-*la-kis*

The relationship between blends and compounds needs to be discussed. Blending and compounding are less productive in English and Lithuanian languages than derivation, especially suffixation (Beliaeva 2019a: 13). However, blends are often compared to compounds since they are typically formed by two words (Aleksaitė 2022: 173, 176). Aleksaitė points out two similarities between blends and compounds: they may contain a connector vowel, and the formation's ending may not match the inflection of the second IW (Aleksaitė 2022: 176). Nonetheless, the latter feature is not very typical of blends (Murmulaitytė 2020: 44). Only four such cases were found in the research material (see Table 10). In terms of semantics, blends appear to be similar to compounds (e.g., determinative and copulative clauses) and to the main IW in terms of syllable structure, phonological length, and prosodic features. Connector vowels can be seen as a formal similarity between blends and compounds. Blends that contain definite or possibly connector vowels depending on the case of the first IW constitute 12% of the research material (see Table 11). As blends are morphologically indivisible, it is often unclear whether certain vowels indeed connect. In some cases, the connector vowel is not distinguished, but the phonological context of the blend, and sometimes the prosodic features, suggest the possibility (see Table 11). The structure of blends is heterogeneous. The variability of forms is evident from instances where the possible connector vowel receives stress different from that of the main IW. Morphosyntactically and semantically, even before blending, IWs can be inflected for case, linked by determinative relationships and meanings.

Table 10. Blends quality to change the inflexion of the second initial word

Blend	Formation	Meaning
*bal**d**ēlės*	*bal-**d**(ai) + (ban)-**d**e-lė*	'popular furniture (*baldai*), which mass production (cf. *bun – bandelė*) results in huge areas of forest being cut down'
*ir̃k**l**entė*	*ir-k**l**(as) + **l**en-ta* (explained by the authors) (cf. Eng. *stand up paddle board*)	'board (*lenta*) rowed with one paddle (*irklas*) while standing or kneeled down
*varš**k**epùris*	*varš-**k**(ė) + **k**e-pu-rė*	'a square pastry with a curd (*varškė*) filling made of puff pastry, which is folded like a pocket'
tarsą́jus	*Ta-r(y-bų) Są-ju(n-ga)* (explained by the authors)	'the type of human created by the Soviet (*Tarybų*) Union (*Sąjunga*) – *homo sovieticus*'

Table 11. Connector vowels (undoubtful, possible) of the blends

Blend	Formation
a. *padainą̤klamúoti*	*pa-dai-n(uo-ti) + (de)-kla-muo-ti*
b. *orọpọkalìpsė*	*o-r(as) + (a)-po-ka-lip-sė*
c. *skiepọbùsas*	*skie-p(ai) + (au-t)o-bu-sas*
d. *stiliãbaisa*	*sti-li(us) + (p)a-bai-sa*

Blends do not emerge in the language system by chance. Their phonological and semantic originality sets them apart from the somewhat limiting rules and patterns of morphological word formation that govern compounds. In creating new words, the choice of IWs, their modification, and their composition are motivated by this originality (Ronneberger-Sibold 2010: 208). Blending, while relatively regular, is structurally diverse and only partly predictable, from the choice of IWs and their order to the type of blending used (Beliaeva 2019b: 21). Linguistically competent language users are sensitive to these processes of morphology, but word formation can deviate from them through analogy and fundamentally different principles. Thus, the creation of words is at their disposal.

3. Conclusions

Blending is a creative phenomenon that reflects the dynamics of language and the subtle shift of human linguistic consciousness. It is a reflection of users' linguistic sense and ability to dispose of language resources creatively.

The evaluation of the morphological structure of blends reveals several important aspects:

a. The most common phonological types of blend syllables correspond to the tendencies of the Lithuanian words syllables phonological structure, with open syllables tending to become closed at the IW splitting position.

b. Structural types of IWs morphemes show that often morphemic parts of IWs are blended, but it is important to keep the morphemes of the IWs recognizable as such because lexical morphemes and affixes create meaning.

c. The formal loss of shortened IWs is phonologically compensated, sometimes with phonemic overlap.

d. Blends tend to exceed the average phonological length of words in Lithuanian by more than one syllable, which may complicate the economic aspect of such formations.

e. The second IW is the main word in blends, determining their phonological and prosodic features.

f. Blends are induced by the analogy to existing morphological word formation patterns. It is important for one of the IWs fragments to not imply inaccurate connotations or lose necessary specific semantic tone.

g. The structure of blends is heterogeneous, and the analogy of blends to compounds suggests the need for further studies to evaluate their link from morphosyntactic and semantic perspectives.

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