**Blending in English and Latvian compared.**

Keywords: blending; clipping; nonce; Latvian; English

Blending, while particularly prominent and much discussed in English, is attested across a variety of typologically diverse languages. This word-formation process exists in both English and Latvian, however, its frequency and productivity differ significantly. Blending in Latvian is relatively rare, primarily due to the inflectional nature of Latvian. By contrast, clipping, is a common word-formation strategy in both languages, often in conjunction with compounding or the use of semi-affixes.

A precise definition of blending remains contested among linguists. Some classify a word as a blend if it includes a single clipped component, whereas others argue that phonological telescoping is essential. This lack of consensus contributes to ongoing ambiguity in the terminology surrounding blending. A prototypical approach is often used to navigate these conflicts (Renner, 2012: 3), but a more rigorous delineation of blending remains needed (Bauer, 2012: 19). Contrastive analysis offers additional insights into these discussions.

In Latvian, the creative and productive use of blending began to emerge towards the late 20th century, largely due to English influence, suggesting a word-formation pattern borrowing (Sakel, 2007: 15). This English-induced expansion parallels developments in languages such as Polish (Konieczna, 2012) and Slovene (Sicherl, 2018). Until the 21st century, most borrowed blends in Latvian were transparent or semi-transparent internationalisms, retaining recognizable structures and meanings, as in *stagflācija* (stagflation). Both languages frequently employ international components in blends.

Several types of blending can be identified in both English and Latvian. True blends include English *guestimate* (*guess estimate*) and Latvian *okupeklis* (*okupācija piemineklis* - occupation monument). Back-clipping compounds include English *sitcom* (*situation comedy*) and Latvian *nacbols* (*nacionālais boļševiks* - national Bolshevik). Front-clipping compounds are rare in English, as in *podcast* (*iPod broadcast*), and absent in Latvian, where *podkāsts* was adopted as a loanword. Other patterns include compounds with a back-clipping and a full word, such as English *eurofighter* (*European fighter*) and Latvian *santehnika* (*sanitārā tehnika* - sanitary technology), a structure widely used in Latvian. Compounds with a full word plus frontclipping: English *motorcade* (*motor cavalcade*), Latvian *kafijholiķis* (*kafija alkoholiķis - coffee alcoholic)* are not as frequent in Latvian and tend to have a few standard splinters. Both languages use splinters that function as semi-affixes (Lehrer, 2006: 592), including elements like *-cracy*, *-holic*, *-gate*, *eco-*, and *euro-* . An interesting distinction appears with semantically similar elements that differ structurally; for example, *phobia* functions as a full word, whereas *-phobe* is a suffix; as a result *homophobia* and *homophobe* fall into different linguistic categories.

A distinctive feature of Latvian is that blending occurs exclusively with nouns. This is likely due to the inflectional complexity of Latvian verbs—such as tense, mood, person, and number—which makes it difficult to merge two words in a way that would result in a recognizable or practical blended form.

The frequency of nonce blends varies widely, ranging from one-time instances to occasional widespread use, though the latter challenges the concept of a nonce blend. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a proliferation of nonce blends, particularly partial blends, appeared in both English and Latvian, incorporating elements such as *covid-*, *-demic*, and *corona-* (Rožukalne & Liepa, 2022).

Corpus data reveal diverse but often unreliable frequencies for blends in both languages. While some blends are well represented, others are scarce or absent in corpora, although several infrequent examples have been documented by the author in both languages.

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