LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN CROWN YOUR TEDDY WITH A ROSE GARLAND, BUT CAN YOU PADDLE THE BOAT WITH THIS SPOON?

THE TRUE BEHAVIOUR OF PSEUDO DENOMINALS AND THE TRUE BEHAVIOUR OF PSEUDO DENOMINALS



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Results



JELKE BLOEM

ILLC, UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM
J.Bloem@uva.nl

ADINA CAMELIA BLEOTU

ICUB, UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST cameliableotu@gmail.com

AIM

- to test, on the basis of two acceptability judgment tasks answered by 100 native speakers of English, whether the distinction between true and pseudo location, locatum and instrument denominal verbs holds
- to argue denominal verbs are all derived from nominal roots expressing *n*-like concepts rather than that only some denominals are root-derived (Kiparsky 1997), since the results reveal significant effects of the semantic similarity of the PPs to the denominal verb's incorporated nominal.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- According to Kiparsky (1982, 1997), followed by Arad (2003, 2005), there are two types of denominal verbs, which can be distinguished depending on whether they can take a PP denoting a different 'object' from the one incorporated in the verb:
- i) true denominal verbs (imply the specific use of the incorporated instrument e.g. tape —> see (1a))
- ii) pseudo-denominal verbs (generic, do not require any particular instrument e.g. hammer-> see (1b))
- (1) a. #Lola taped the poster to the wall with pushpins.
 - b. He hammered the desk with his shoe.
- According to Harley & Haugen (2007), there is no such distinction, and verbs of the *tape*-type do not necessarily entail use of the conflated root (one can *tape with band-aids* / *mailing labels*): taping with pushpins is bad because the characteristic manner of use of pushpins is quite distinct from that of tape

EXPERIMENT

Hypothesis

- * There is no distinction between true and pseudo-denominals.
- ❖ The illusion of a distinction is given by the degree of similarity between the root and the PP object.

Participants

❖ 100 native speakers of English

Methodology

* acceptability task: Likert scale from 1 to 5

Materials

- ❖ 56 sentences (28 test sentences and 28 fillers)
- ❖ 28 verbs consisted of 12 instrumentals, 8 location and 8 locatum verbs
- *There were four types of test sentences based on those of Kiparsky (1997):
- (i) sentences with true denominals considered unacceptable by Kiparsky
- (ii) sentences with pseudo-nominals considered acceptable by Kiparsky
- (iii) modified sentences with true denominals
- (iv) modified sentences with pseudo-denominals
- ❖ For the denominals considered true by Kiparsky (1997), the PPs were made more semantically similar to the incorporated object (2a), while, for those considered pseudo-denominals, the PPs were made less similar (not an object type n) (2b):
- (2) a. He crowned her #with a hat. / with a rose garland (true) b. Tom paddled the canoe with a board / # with a spoon. (pseudo)
- * The test sentences vary in two ways:
- (i) they can have PPs that are similar or non-similar to the incorporated object of denominal verb
- (ii) they can have pseudo or true denominal verbs (following Kiparsky's classification).
- * There were two versions of the test, in which each denominal verb was presented only once, preventing the participants from seeing the same verb in both a similar and non-similar condition. Each version was presented to 50 participants.

participants rate denominal verbs with semantically similar PP objects higher than those with non-similar PP objects for both true and pseudo-denominals (see Figure 1)

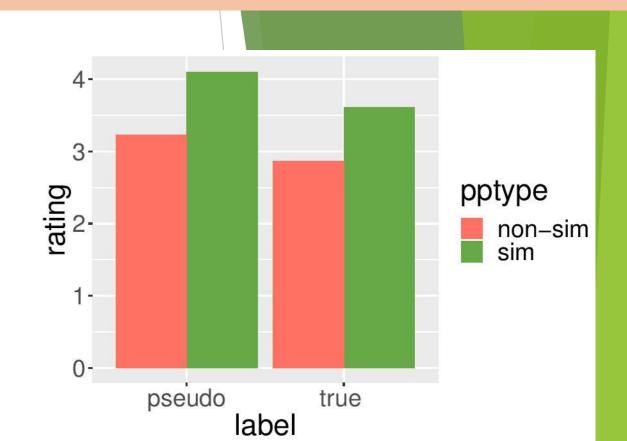


Figure 1: Mean ratings for pseudo and true denominals, for items with similar and non-similar PP objects

- ❖ Statistical analysis: a linear mixed-effects model, where we modeled the effect of the factors similarity (similar / non-similar) and type of denominal (true/pseudo) on the ratings given by the native speakers, while controlling for verb type (instrument/location/locatum) as a fixed effect and participant and verb as random effects with random slopes for the within-subjects factor similarity
- ❖ Figure 2 (3rd bar, "Similar PP objects") => denominal verbs with PP objects similar to the incorporated object are rated higher than those with non-similar PP objects Figure 2 (bottom bar, "Pseudo-denominals") => pseudo-denominal verbs in Kiparsky's classification are rated higher than true-denominals

❖ The results confirm the hypothesis that acceptability depends mainly on similarity of the PP object to the incorporated object of the denominal verb.

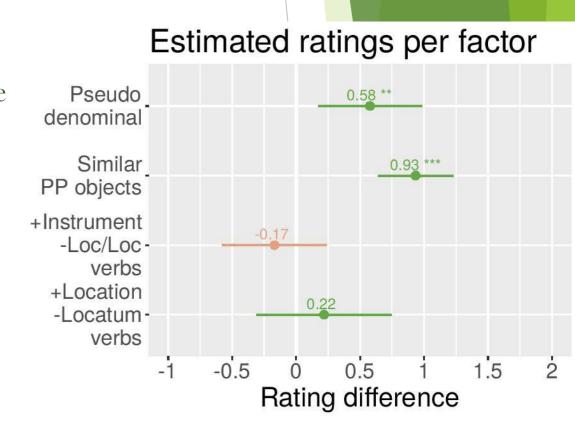


Figure 2: Estimated effects of the tested factors on the denominal ratings. The lines represent confidence intervals. ** represents significance at the $\alpha = 0.01$ level, *** at the $\alpha = 0.001$ level.

THEORETICAL ACCOUNT

- * The distinction between true/ pseudo denominals is pragmatic, not structural.
- ❖ Denominals are derived from roots which are or become nominal
- * The roots are n-like(hammer-like, tape-like)=> similarity drives acceptability
- ❖ Denominals are NOT derived from something bigger than the noun. i.e. OBJECT TYPE n, a function returning all objects similar to n (including n itself).

Why? The proposal is uneconomical (an additional silent projection) & nouns have been argued to have meaning, but no reference below the word-level (Acquaviva 2009)

- ❖ Denominals are NOT derived from acategorial roots
- *Borer (2014) argues there are no denominals derived from nouns (* to destruction)
 BUT there are many counterexamples: to proposition, to champion, to disillusion!
- * The distinction between location & locatum / instrument verbs is structural.
- ❖ Instrument PPs=adjuncts, location & locatum PPs= arguments (Rissman 2010, 2011)
- ❖ Incorporation is a syntactic process governed by the Head Movement Constraint, disallowing head-movement from adjunct position (Harley 2008)
 - => instrument verbs are derived through direct conflation of the manner root onto the verb (($[VP [V] V [VRoot]_n]$), unlike location and locatum verbs, which are derived via successive conflation ($[VP [V] V [PP [P] P [VRoot]_n]]$)

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