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## **BLEND-O-RAMA: BLENDING IN THE TITLES OF EPISODES OF ANIMATED TELEVISION SERIES FOR CHILDREN<sup>2</sup>**

Often defined as a marginal word-formation process whose governing principles remain a matter of controversy, lexical blending has been examined from various perspectives over the past fifty years or so. Lexical blends have thus been described as (mostly) ephemeral linguistic creations, playful and witty, that are likely to occur in popular press, advertising, and product naming (Bryant 1974; Lieber 2010). Although we can nowadays understand the key characteristics of blends, in terms of their semantic, phonological and orthographic features, corpus-based studies of blends associated with particular types of discourse remain scarce. Television discourse is no exception. It has been cited as a rich source of blends (Mattiello 2013; Sams 2016), yet few have hitherto conducted their detailed analysis (cf. Andriani, Moehkardi 2019). Having noticed that blends frequently occur in the titles of episodes of animated television shows for children (e.g. *Smeldorado* in *Inspector Gadget*, *The Three Smurfketeers* in *The Smurfs*, *Pinknic* in *The Pink Panther*), we decided to investigate their structural characteristics. For this purpose, we collected a corpus of approximately 420 blends from the titles of animated series episodes, spanning 1950–2020. The analysis has shown that haplogy and hyphenation feature prominently in the collected blends, as well as that several splinters are repeatedly used in their formation.

**Keywords:** lexical blending, lexical blends, animated television series for children, titles of episodes, English

*If a characteristic of man is his creative use of language [...],  
then nowhere is that creativity more clearly shown,  
nowhere is genuine innovation more abundant,  
than in the words we make up.*  
(John Algeo 1980: 272)

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## 1. BLENDING IN ENGLISH

### 1.1. *Blending as a word-formation process*

Blending has traditionally been regarded as a marginal word-formation process, albeit a very productive one, because its products rarely contribute to the expansion of the English lexicon. Historically speaking, blending can be traced to the times of the Renaissance, when blends were mockingly used in literary works (cf. Cannon 1986). The practice of coining blends for literary purposes continued over the centuries, but it was not until “well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century that blends began to appear in appreciable numbers, and to be noted as a separate phenomenon” (Adams 1973: 149). Since Pound’s (1914) seminal paper on blends, linguists have proposed differing views regarding their definition, (prototypical) structure, and place within the field of morphology (cf. Marchand 1969; Bauer 1983; Plag 2003; Mattiello 2013). Nonetheless, most of them agree that blends are intentional fusions, amalgam(ation)s, or conflation(s) of two (or rarely more) words, in which at least one word has been shortened, frequently with orthographic and/or phonological overlap (i.e. haplology) which increases the semantic transparency of blends. In other words, blends come into being through the process of clipping, overlapping, or both clipping and overlapping (Renner 2015: 121), e.g. *zonkey* (< zebra + donkey), *jivernacular* (< jive + vernacular), *populuxe* (< popular + deluxe).<sup>3</sup> The constituent which has lost some of its material in the process of blending is commonly referred to as a splinter (Adams 1973; Mattiello 2013), e.g. *hered-* and *-ipity* in *heredipity* (< heredity + serendipity).

What makes blending such a popular word-formation mechanism is, possibly, its unique nature, firmly rooted in language economy, iconicity, creativity, and word-play (cf. Adams 1973; Lehrer 2007): on the one hand, it serves as a means of merging two meanings into a single, compact form (particularly suitable for denoting mixtures or hybrids of languages, animals, foods, or chemicals, e.g. *orangelo* < orange + pomelo, *frappuccino* < frappe + cappuccino); on the other hand, it produces expressive, witty, and eye-catching creations, e.g. *momager* < mom + manager, *hatchimals* < hatch + animals. For this very reason, blends are nowadays used “in a variety of domains, from slang to technoscientific terminology, from popular media culture to the corporate world” (Renner 2015: 121). To understand them, hearers/readers have to solve a linguistic puzzle – to identify their underlying source words – and by doing so, they might experience pleasure or amusement (Lehrer 2003: 380). While most blends can be identified both in speech and writing, some can only be appreciated when seen in print. These orthographic blends, frequently exploited in product names or newspaper headlines, make use of homophones or typographic devices such as letter color/size (Lehrer 2007: 120), as in *Scen-timents* < scent + sentiments, *celebraTORI* < celebratory + Tori (Spelling), or *BeLeave in Britain* < believe + leave.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These examples were excerpted from Thurner (1993).

<sup>4</sup> *BeLeave in Britain* is a newspaper headline, with ‘leave’ in the colors of the British flag (The Sun, 2016).

A myriad of scientific articles focusing on blends has been produced since the 1970s. However, corpus-based studies of blends associated with particular genres in which blends proliferate, such as newspaper headlines, advertisements, or titles, are almost non-existent.<sup>5</sup> The present paper aims at filling this void by examining blending in the titles of (predominantly American) animated television series for children. But, before that, let us briefly discuss research devoted to blending in television discourse, the development of animated series for children in the US, and the functional, as well as stylistic aspects of their episode titles.

## 1.2. Blending in television discourse

Lexical innovations can contribute to a unique linguistic identity of a television series, enhancing its longevity and success. A case in point is *Buffy: the Vampire Slayer*. Although blends are not frequent in this series, they are “particularly memorable, either because they are clever, obtrusive (or both), or central to the Buffy lexicon” (Adams 2003: 49). Another frequently cited source of nonce words is *How I Met Your Mother*. Sams (2016) examined the episodes *Slap Bet* and *Game Night* to highlight their verbal playfulness. The discussion of the most common word-formation mechanisms featured several blends extracted from the dialogs. Additionally, the author drew attention to their occurrence in the episode titles (e.g. *Slapsgiving 3: Slapppointment in Slapmarra, The Broath*). Mattiello (2013: 232) also claims that blends abound in film and TV series dialogs. She mentions several examples from *How I Met Your Mother*, noting that blending “tends to generate jocularly and to convey the idea of novelty” (Ibid.: 236).

Speaking of animated films and television shows, several authors have confirmed the existence of blends in this type of discourse. Balteiro (2013: 904) concluded that blending is particularly suitable for the creation of character names (e.g. Brattina, Catstello, Sedusa) because “blends allow phonological, morphological and semantic ‘distortions’ that make the names sonorous, musical, rapidly de-codified, and memorable to attract children’s attention”. On the other hand, Gorčević et al. (2016) showed that blends from animated films rarely enter the general English lexicon. Furthermore, a recent study (Andriani, Moehkardi 2019) devoted to blends in the TV series *Gravity Falls* revealed that, in terms of structure, the collected blends mostly consisted of a full word and a splinter, with no phonological and/or orthographic overlap. Also quite recently, Renwick and Renner (2019) explored the translation of blends in the longest-running and most successful animated show of all time, *The Simpsons*, from English into French. The authors identified over 200 blends in the transcripts of 639 episodes, including four three-element items (e.g. Frightmarestein). Their results indicate that segment overlap, serving to maximize the recognizability of the source elements, is much more frequent in these nonce blends than in institutionalized ones, which contradicts Andriani and Moehkardi’s (2019) findings.

5 On blends in videogame titles see López Rúa (2019).

## 2. AMERICAN ANIMATED TELEVISION SERIES FOR CHILDREN

### 2.1. Historical development of animated television series for children

In the early days of animation, during the 1930s and 1940s, short animations were played during the intermission between feature-length films in movie theaters across the US. “With their double entendres, references to contemporary politics, and parodies of adult-oriented genres” (Hendershot 1998: 22), they were generally comic creations that served to amuse cinema-goers. During World War II, the animation industry served as a vehicle for patriotism: to boost the public’s morale and gain support for the government’s involvement in the war, the cartoons satirized the war, enticing anti-German and anti-Japanese sentiments (Lenburg 2009: 5). Warner Brothers’ *The Ducktators* (< duck + dictators), released in 1942, represents an example of war-time propaganda – it mocks Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Emperor Hirohito, in an attempt to encourage the audience to purchase war bonds (cf. Mollet 2013). A few of the animated characters that first appeared in short theatrical productions would live on to become staples of children’s entertainment.

In 1948, The Paramount Decision prohibited block-booking practices with short animated films. The rise of the new entertaining medium, television, enabled animated shorts to continue to be aired. In the early 1950s, animation existed on television in two formats: as a rerun of older theatrical productions through children’s programming or as a feature of advertising (Perlmutter 2014: 38). Hanna-Barbera was among the first studios to produce animated series exclusively for a (perceived child-dominated) television audience (e.g. *The Huckleberry Hound Show*, *The Yogi Bear Show*, *Snagglepuss*). It created “clever, facetious characters whose humorous antics satirized the culture and society of the America of their time” (Ibid.: 49). The Hanna-Barbera shows were scheduled in late afternoon timeslots and mostly viewed by children, but they attracted adults too. With *The Flintstones*, Hanna-Barbera made a bold step into uncharted territory, introducing the first prime-time television animation program aimed at an adult audience. Its success spawned a number of prime-time animated series, such as *Calvin and the Colonel*, *Top Cat*, and *The Bugs Bunny Show* (Hilton-Morrow, McMahan 2003: 76). The prime-time animation fad did not last long though. Even *The Flintstones* later developed into “a kid-friendly family show by changes in the target audience” (Perlmutter 2014: 55). What caused a boom in television animation in the mid-1960s was the advertisers’ rising interest in the children’s market and the emergence of Saturday Morning Cartoons (cf. Lee 2013). Over the next twenty years, the Saturday morning timeslot became synonymous with animated series for children; prime-time animation had to wait for the arrival of *The Simpsons* to be revived.

Innumerable animated television shows for children emerged during the 1970s and the 1980s. Viewer ratings and marketing, as well as merchandizing opportunities, sparked fierce competition among networks. Near the end of

the 1960s, more than twenty million children, aged 2 to 17, tuned in on Saturday mornings to enjoy action-packed cartoons, bringing networks millions of dollars in advertising revenues (Lenburg 2009: 12). The 1970s witnessed the censoring of violence in television cartoons (e.g. *Tom and Jerry*, *The Roadrunner Show*), resulting in a shift from action-adventure shows to comedies, mysteries, and rock'n'roll group programs supposed not only to entertain but also to educate their viewers (Ibid.: 13).

In the 1990s, Congress passed the Children's Television Act, banning toy-centered programming, limiting advertising time and requiring character behavior to be justified (Lenburg 2009; Perlmutter 2014). These regulations forced many networks to banish animated cartoons from their Saturday morning schedule in favor of educational or informational programs. Nevertheless, the animation boom continued due to the growing popularity of cable channels (cf. Dobson 2009), some of which were designed specifically for children (e.g. Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, FOX Kids). Nowadays, although Saturday morning timeslot is extinct, a multitude of animated television series for children are available throughout the week, targeting preschoolers (2-6 years old) and preteens (7-11 years old) with age-appropriate content that suits their interests.

## 2.2. Titles of animated television series for children

Television animation has been exerting its influence on the daily lives of Americans since the 1950s, shaping their beliefs, cultural values, and spending habits. Nevertheless, it has not received much scholarly attention. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the titles of animated television shows have not been the subject of extensive linguistic analyses.

The titles of TV series, in general, can be likened to newspaper headlines (cf. Carter, Nash 1990; Rafferty 2008) because they are concise, descriptive, evocative, and witty. Consider the following: *Long Distance Call (The Twilight Zone)*, *Trick or Treatment (M.A.S.H.)*, *Sympathy for the Devil (Chicago Hope)*, *All that remains (< cremate + remains, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation)*, *Much Ado About Everything (Melrose Place)*. The aim of these titles is to catch attention, summarize the storyline, or simply serve as displays of linguistic ingenuity for us to admire and enjoy. As Crystal (1998: 101) noted for newspaper headlines, ludic titles make use of puns, exploit our shared cultural heritage by alluding to titles of books, movies, and popular songs, or tap into our linguistic intuitions by referring to idioms, proverbs, collocations, and the like. A jocular tone is even more likely in animated television series for children because it is in line with the children's playful disposition, inventiveness, curiosity, and tendency to experiment with language (cf. Crystal 1996; Burridge 2004).

According to Solomon (1994: 229), the episode titles of the first cartoon series produced for television, *Crusader Rabbit*, released in 1949, were 'shameless puns' (*West we Forget*, *A Midsummer Night's Scream*). A cursory glance at the titles of theatrical animations (*Hamateur Night*, *Comicalamities*, *Farmer Al Falfa's Egg-citement*, *Pedigreed*) suggests that blending has been

performing the same function since the dawn of animation in line with their comedic nature. Be that as it may, the characteristics of these ludic creations have still not been the subject of in-depth linguistic analyses.

Bearing this in mind, the goal of the study is twofold: (1) to examine the structural characteristics of blends, including their underlying phonological and graphological motivations, and (2) to identify potentially productive splinters.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

To collect a representative sample of blends for this research, we first compiled a list of 250 animated television series for children.<sup>6</sup> Many of these series were rather old, so the list was expanded with 50 relatively recent ones broadcast by the Nick Jr, Cartoon Network, Boomerang, and Disney Junior channels. It is worth pointing out that some animated television shows had been discontinued after several seasons but were later revived. Several thousand episode titles of the selected 300 animated TV series, spanning 1950–2020, were then meticulously analyzed in terms of the word-formation devices involved in their creation. This led to the identification of 422 blends, some occurring as single elements in the episode titles (e.g. *Mewnipendence*, *Eel-lectric*, *Gymnasium*) whereas others were part of more complex lexical or syntactic structures (e.g. *Minnie's Bow-tique*, *The Great Phatsby*, *The Egg-pire Strikes Back*).

Considering that blends structurally resemble compounds, disagreements arise with respect to the status of hyphenated blends. Blends of this sort are relatively rare in scholarly works (cf. Pound 1914; Bryant 1974; Algeo 1977; Mattiello 2013; Bauer et al. 2015). Fandrych (2008: 111) maintains that hyphenated formations (e.g. *hi-tech*) constitute a subtype of compounds because the hyphen explicitly separates the two constituents which should be merged in blends. While some blends can certainly be interpreted as clipped/clipping compounds (cf. Plag 2003; Bauer 2012), especially when they contain initial splinters, the boundaries are fuzzy. Moreover, a hyphen seems to be performing an important function in many novel blends – increasing their transparency by drawing attention to one of their constituents (e.g. *Eggsquisite* in Lehrer 2007: 120).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, both hyphenated and non-hyphenated blends were included in the corpus.

The blends which have become part of the lexical stock (e.g. *frenemies*, *bro-mance*, *staycation*) were excluded from the quantitative and qualitative analyses. So were the combinations of full words and frequent splinters that have evolved into combining forms or affixes, e.g. *Franken-*, *-geddon*, *-bot*, *-licious*, *-matic*,

6 See the list available at <https://www.ranker.com/list/best-kids-cartoons/ranker-tv> from which cartoons ranked 1 to 250 were selected. Although the list claims to feature cartoons for kids, several animated TV shows whose target audience is adults were spotted. Having examined their content, *The Simpsons* were included in the corpus while *American Dad*, *South Park* and *Family Guy* were disregarded so that the corpus could be deemed representative of animated shows for children.

7 An apostrophe occasionally performs a similar function (e.g. *Bub'let*, *Magnif'eyes*, *Pet'acular*, *Carb'tastic*).

-(o)rama, -rific, -thon, -tainment, -tastrophe, -umentary, -zilla.<sup>8</sup> However, combinations of clipped words and affixes or combining forms (e.g. *applet* < application + *-let*, *ecotage* < *eco-* + *sabotage*) were added to the corpus.<sup>9</sup>

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Structural aspects of blends

A prototypical blend consists of an initial part of the first source word and the final part of the second source word (cf. Bauer 2003; Cannon 2000), with the parts often overlapping phonologically and/or graphologically. Consequently, blends are commonly subdivided into overlapping and non-overlapping ones (cf. Mattiello 2013: 121). As mentioned before, hyphenation can be viewed as a graphological feature of blends that facilitates morphological segmentation necessary for the successful interpretation of blends. In our corpus, hyphenated blends were not uncommon (32%). Therefore, they deserve a closer inspection.

A quantitative analysis of the data (Table 1), performed in SPSS 21.0, showed that haplology played an important part in the creation of blends (70%). Non-overlapping blends were far less frequent in the corpus material (30%). These figures support the thesis that haplology plays a vital role in the formation of nonce blends in animated television discourse (Renwick, Renner 2019).

Type of blend	Number of blends in the corpus
overlapping	295
non-overlapping	127
total	422

Table 1. The frequency of blends according to their morphonological and graphological properties

In the category of overlapping blends, a rather small number emerged through the complete overlap of source words, i.e. with no loss of material (e.g. *drugly*, *clambulance*, *omnipresent*, *Cosmonopoly*, *Kimitation*, *Catlantis*, *damesnia*, *Bradventure*, *Hexcalibur*, *ninjability*). In most overlapping blends the constituents overlapped both phonologically and graphologically, e.g. *Scroogey* (< *Scrooge* + *Scoobey*), *Pinkasso* (< *Pink* + *Picasso*), *pranksta* (< *prank* + *gangsta*), *Finsterella* (< *Finster* + *Cinderella*), *handemonium* (< *hand* + *pandemonium*), *starfari* (< *star* + *safari*), *twistory* (< *twist* + *history*), *spellementary* (< *spell* + *elementary*), *Hamelot* (< *ham* + *Camelot*), *Mandace* (< *man* + *Candace*), *clazyzy* (< *clay* + *crazy*), *hornucopia* (< *horn* + *cornucopia*), *spellcial* (< *spell* + *special*), *Bammnesia* (< *Bamm* (-Bamm) + *amnesia*), *catteries* (< *cat* + *batteries*). As we can see, the overlapping graphemes were sometimes distributed discontinuously. Much less frequently, the constituents overlapped phonologically, but

<sup>8</sup> In line with Böhmerová (2010), Lalić-Krstin (2016), Bauer et al. (2015), and Mattiello (2017, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Following Adams (1973), Cannon (1986), Algeo (1991), Lalić-Krstin (2010), and López Rúa (2012).

not orthographically, e.g. *beerest* (< beer + dearest), *poohper* (< Pooh + party pooper), *friendzy* (< friend + frenzy), *cookironi* (< cook + macaroni), *psychiatricks* (< psychiatrics + tricks), *Mewberty* (< Mewni + puberty), *Pinkcome* (< Pink + income), *Hercufleas* (< Hercules + fleas), *scaraoke* (< scary + karaoke) or vice versa, e.g. *trollidays* (< troll + holidays), *memnagerie* (< meme + menagerie), *termighty* (< termite + mighty), *bicyclops* (< bicycle + cyclops).

In line with Fandrych’s approach (2008), the overlapping blends can further be classified into the following subpatterns (Table 2):

Type of blend	Number of blends in the corpus
full word + final splinter with overlap	173
initial splinter + full word with overlap	48
overlap of full words	20
orthographic	20
insertion of one word into the other with overlap	18
initial splinter + final splinter with overlap	16
total	295

Table 2. The frequency of various structural patterns in overlapping blends

Evidently, the most frequent pattern concerns the fusion of a full word and a final splinter, e.g. *Aquatraz* (< aqua + Alcatraz), *ghoulery* (< ghoul + gallery), *spellcial* (< spell + special), *timephoon* (< time + typhoon), *quackodile* (< quack + crocodile), *scarestitute* (< scary + substitute), *cauldronation* (< cauldron + coronation), *smurfony* (< smurf + symphony). Much less common were combinations of an initial splinter and a full word, e.g. *Washington* (< Washington + toon), *scrying* (< scream + crying), *Rashomoron* (< Rashomon + moron), *Amademoose* (< Amadeus + mouse), *Excalibanana* (< Excalibur + banana), *beautopia* (< beauty + utopia), *ninjustice* (< ninja + justice), *Franpsycho* (< Francisco + psycho), *monstory* (< monster + story). The prototypical pattern, consisting of an initial and a final splinter, was identified even more rarely, e.g. *Duxorcist* (< duck + exorcist), *Panchurian* (< Pancho + Manchurian), *perfumance* (< perfume + performance), *mumkey* (< mummified + monkey), *Jokahontas* (< joke + Pocahontas), *Patnocchio* (< Patrick + Pinocchio), *koality* (< koala + quality). Intercalative blends, in which “the sounds of one source lexeme are interspersed between the sounds of the other” (Kemmer 2003: 72), were quite infrequent as well, e.g. *avogodo* (< avocado + god), *Pygmoelian* (< Pygmalion + Moe), *Debarted* (< departed + Bart), *oppor-toon-ities* (< opportunities + toon), *empowerment* (< empowerment + paw), *hypnotazed* (< hypnotized + Taz), *prehisnoric* (< prehistoric + snork), *Cleocatra* (< Cleopatra + cat), *Inspongeiac* (< insomniac + SpongeBob). Orthographic blends which made use of typographic devices or special symbols were extremely rare (e.g. *CATastrophe*, *ASTRONomical* < Astro, a character name, *JAW\$* < Jaws, the movie title). More common were orthographic blends in which a hyphen was used to reveal verbal play (see p. 62). Interestingly, the longest blend is *Simpsoncalifragilisticexpiala(annoyedgrunt)cious*, a pun on *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*, which contains two substitutes: *Simpson* for the initial overlapping



segment *super* and *annoyed grunt* (i.e. Homer's well-known exclamation d'oh) for the near-final segment *do*.

In non-overlapping blends, we can identify a broader range of structural subpatterns (Table 3). In these blends, the combination of a full word and a final splinter prevails as well, e.g. *mousing* (< mouse + nothing), *fishketball* (< fish + basketball), *Jurassicnicula* (< Jurassic + Bunnacula), *hagracy* (< hag + piracy), *clawruption* (< claw + eruption), *smurfiplication* (< smurf + multiplication), *Gonzonocchio* (< Gonzo + Pinocchio), *mooncation* (< moon + vacation). The prototypical pattern was, once again, detected much less frequently, e.g. *Bubbeo* (< Bubba + Romeo), *Hindentanic* (< Hindenburg + Titanic), *Brinky* (< Brain + Pinky), *Bunnicumoji* (< Bunnacula + emoji), *Canderemy* (< Candace + Jeremy), *Dukenator* (< Dukey + Terminator), *Gummadoon* (< Gummi (Bears) + Brigadoon), *crocoigator* (< crocodile + alligator). Other combinations were far less frequent, with the notable exception of an initial splinter followed by a full word, e.g. *Hercurock* (< Hercules + rock), *coconapple* (< coconut + apple), *Albrittina* (< Alvin + Brittina), *poltersmurf* (< poltergeist + smurf), *Excaliferb* (< Excalibur + Ferb), *mer-pup* (< mermaid + pup), *Virtu-Ron* (< virtual + Ron).

Type of blend	Number of blends in the corpus
full word + final splinter	79
initial splinter + full word	18
initial splinter + final splinter	16
full word + thematic vowel + final splinter	4
insertion of one word into the other	3
initial splinter + combining form	2
combining form + thematic vowel + final splinter	2
full word + initial splinter	1
initial splinter + thematic vowel + full word	1
initial splinter + final splinter + final splinter	1
total	127

Table 3. The frequency of various structural patterns in non-overlapping blends

In other words, combining forms or thematic vowels were only marginally productive in the formation of non-overlapping blends, e.g. *Bunzilla* (< Bunnacula + -zilla), *Yzbot* (< Yzma + -bot), *Doofapus* (Doofenshmirtz + -a- + platypus) + *poparang* (< pop + -a- + boomerang). Intercalative blends were also fairly infrequent, e.g. *Indianrockolis* (< Indianapolis + rock), *aduckyphobia* (< arachnophobia + ducky), *virt-ed-go* (< vertigo + Ed). Finally, the corpus featured a single combination of a full word followed by an initial splinter *appleoni* (< apple + onion) and a single three-element blend *Chestaroldcula*, a mixture of the names of three characters (< Chester + Harold + Bunnacula).

As noted above, hyphenated blends were not infrequent in the corpus. In the majority of them, the hyphen singles out one of the components, a full word, in order to facilitate the morphological segmentation and identification of the contributing words, e.g. *pup-tacular* (< pup + spectacular), *aunt-venture*

(< aunt + adventure), *boo-ryshnikov* (< boo + (Mikhail) Baryshnikov), *ice-ca-traz* (< ice + Alcatraz), *sponge-cano* (< sponge + volcano), *par-tea* (< party + tea), *ca-dad* (< cadet + dad), *posei-dam* (< Poseidon + dam), *apoca-lice* (< apocalypse + lice), *monstrosi-deedee* (< monstrosity + Deedee). Intercalative blends, known to be semantically challenging (Lehrer 1996), thus become more transparent, e.g. *a-Tom-inable* (< abominable + Tom), *de-duck-tives* (< detectives + duck), *Indes-Tuck-tible* (< indestructible + Tuck), *im-possum-ible* (< impossible + possum). Moreover, a number of hyphenated blends exploited the phonological similarity of source words or their parts (i.e. homophony), e.g. *me-ow*, *a-maze-ing*, *cat-astrophe*, *cat-ch*, *orc-hestra*, *mane-ia*, *gi-ants*, *max-imum*, *prom-ise*, *purr-gatory*, *key-pers*, *boo-tique*, *cat-aclysm*, *talon-ted*, *lice-enced*, *delhi-catessen*, *sis-tem*, *musket-tears*. Since animated television series target children, whose implicit knowledge of word-formation mechanisms has not been fully developed yet, the hyphen purposely draws their attention to a single source word, visually separates the inserted one in the case of intercalative blends, or brings to light wordplay in orthographic blends.

To sum up, the structural analysis of blends in animated television series for children has suggested that the most common pattern, in both overlapping and non-overlapping blends, concerns a full word followed by a final splinter (in line with Lehrer 2007; Lalić-Krstin 2010; Danilović Jeremić, Josijević 2019; Renwick, Renner 2019). These findings are possibly related to the semantic transparency of blends. When one source word remains intact, it facilitates the identification of the second source word on account of semantic plausibility (Lehrer 2003: 372). Lehrer's (1996) psycholinguistic experiments focusing on the interpretation of novel blends have indicated that it is precisely the word + splinter structural pattern that poses the least difficulty for subjects.

It is also worth noting that certain episode titles contained two blends, e.g. *Rome-Old and Juli-Eh*, *Chipwrecked Shipmunks*, *The Tiglet and Pigger Switcher-Roo*; the last two display a playful reordering of elements in successive words (i.e. shipwrecked chipmunks, Tigger and Piglet). Three blends, *eggcellent* (< egg + excellent), *egg-cited* (< egg + excited) and *panda-monium* (< panda + pandemonium), occurred in more than one episode title. Furthermore, several splinters, mostly final ones, were used repeatedly in the formation of blends. Their analysis will be presented in the following section.

#### 4.2. Productivity of splinters

Once a blend has been coined, its splinter can be used in the analogical creation of new words. Widespread usage can lead to the splinter acquiring a specific meaning which is semantically related to the original word, yet different. For instance, *-licious*, split off from *delicious*, means 'appealing' as in *bootielicious* or *goodielicious* (Bauer et al. 2015: 527). By developing into combining forms or (secreted) affixes, the splinters enrich the English word-formation system and contribute to the expansion of its lexical stock.

Our corpus of blends contains several recurring splinters. The most common is *-(e)rella* from *Cinderella*, which occurs in *Chickenrella*, *Finsterella*,

*Pink-a-rella* (Pink (Panther) + -a- + -rella), *Berryella*, *Snorkerella*, *Minnie-rella*, *Ziterella*, *Pigerella*, and *Scroogerello* (-rella + the suffix -o). The episodes bearing these titles humorously allude to the well-known fairy tale, with characters imagining themselves in it (Minnie Mouse, Miss Piggy, Scrooge, Chuckie Finster, Tom and Jerry in *Chickenrella*), staging a play based on it (Strawberry Shortcake in *Berryella and Prince Charming*), having to do chores like Cinderella (Casey in *Snorkerella*), behaving in the manner of the fairy godmother (*Pink Panther*), or wishing to look pretty (Pepper Ann in *Ziterella*). Therefore, in the majority of these blends the meaning of the splinter is ‘leading a life similar to Cinderella’s’. In most of them, the name/surname of the characters was merged with the splinter.

Two holidays, Halloween and Christmas, have been the inspiration for blends containing *hallo-/(o)ween* or *-mas*: *Hallowinx*, *Hallowocka*, *Druselsteinoween*, *Kuzcoween*, *Shalloween*, *Howl-oween*, *Hauntleyween*, *Summerween*, *Wheeloween*, *Krustmas*, *Giftmas*, *Wishmas*, *Moochmas*, *Witchmas*, *Yaksmas*. These episodes were mostly aired during the months of October and December, so their contents and titles honor the festive occasions by adding playful twists to the stories associated with them as can be observed in some of their titles (e.g. Santa Claus, wishes, gifts, A Christmas Carol, Halloween parties, trick or treating). Hence, the meaning of the splinters *hallo-/(o)ween* and *-mas* is the same as the meaning of the words they originated from. In a few of these blends, the name/surname of characters (Kuzco, Vampirina Hauntley, Krusty the Clown, Gary Mooch) or countries (Druselstein) are merged with the splinter. In others, references to Christmas and Halloween are made through a combination of a common feature of the animated series and the splinter, such as winx in *Winx Club*, wocka wocka in *Muppet Babies* (Fozzie’s catchphrase), a howl in *Puppy Dog Pals* (the characters are dogs), wheels in *Ricky Zoom* (the characters are motorcycles), a witch in *Sabrina* (the character is a half-witch half-mortal), or the shallows in *Snorks* (the characters live under the sea).

The word *musketees*, from the title of Alexandre Dumas’ novel *The Three Musketeers*, is the source of two splinters: the initial *musk(et)-* and the final *-teers*. They appear in *Mouseketeers*, *Smurfketeers*, *Mooseketeers*, *Musketurtles*, *Muska-Warners*, and *Musket-Tears*. In all of these episodes, the characters (mice Jerry and Nibbles, the Smurfs, Rocky and Bullwinkle, Ninja Turtles, the Warner siblings, Doggie Daddy) re-enact Dumas’ story of righteous swordsmen, heroic adventures, and noble deeds. Therefore, the meaning of the splinters *musk(et)-* and *-teers* is the same as the meaning of their source word. Moreover, in the majority of these titles, the splinters appear to have been merged with words that denote the main characters (i.e. the Smurfs, Ninja Turtles, the Warners). The only exception is *Musket-Tears* which is a homophonous pun on musketeers.

Some authors have commented on the productivity of the initial splinter *Franken-* from *Frankenstein* (cf. Lalić-Krstin 2010; Mattiello 2017) meaning ‘genetically modified’. In our corpus, a recurrent use of the final splinter

-(k)enstein can be noticed in *Wolfenstein*, *Krangenstein*, *Funkenstein*, *Fernkenstein*, and *Koopenstein*. The episodes bearing these blends as (part of) their titles center around a mad scientist (McWolfenstein, Koopenstein), a monstrous creation (Krangenstein, Fernkenstein), or simply make a reference to the title of a movie for the purpose of naming a musical band (*Brides of Funkenstein*). Therefore, the meaning of -(k)enstein cannot be said to have shifted. Once again, in most of the blends containing -(k)enstein we can identify the names of the characters (McWolf, Krang, Fern, King Koopa) as the first component.

The final splinter *-ula* from *Dracula* is present in *Catula*, *McWolfula*, *Koopula*, and *CatDogula* (as well as in character names *Bloodula*, *Duckula*, and *Bunnacula*). In these episodes, the storylines make an allusion to Count Dracula, his castle, or vampires in general. Chester, the cat, is afraid that it will turn into a vampire after getting bitten by *Bunnacula* (*Catula*) whereas the cat in *CatDogula* actually does turn into one after an incident involving ticks; *McWolfula* and *Count Koopula* are vampiric versions of the antagonists *McWolf* and *King Koopa* (in *Tom and Jerry Kids* and *Super Mario Bros. Super Show*, respectively), trying to outsmart the protagonists who found themselves in their castles. Obviously, the splinter *-ula* has also not undergone an expansion in terms of meaning. Like other splinters, *-ula* appears in blends which feature unabbreviated names of characters in the sinistral position.

Another word whose parts occur in several blends in the corpus is *abracadabra* (*abra(ca)-* and *-cadabra*). Analogical formations include *abracadaver*, *abracagenie*, *abra-catastrophe*, *abracanope*, *Abra-Ka-Pickle*, *bubble-cadabra*, and *dadbrcadabra*. Even though these episodes share the central theme – magic – they differ significantly in their content. Some focus on magicians and magic shows (*bubble-cadabra*, *Abra-Ka-Pickle*), others on wishes and their consequences (*abra-catastrophe*, *dadbrcadabra*), problems with magic tricks (*abracanope*, *abracagenie*), or a magician turning into a zombie (*abracadaver*). This diversity is reflected in the choice of source words as well; *Bubble* was taken from the title of the series (*Bubble Guppies*), *Pickle* is a character in *Blaze and the Monster Machines*, while other words are related to the storylines: *dad* as a magician (*dadbrcadabra*), a corpse with magic powers (*abracadaver*), *genies* losing magic powers (*abracanope*, *abracagenie*), and wishes resulting in unfavorable circumstances (*abra-catastrophe*).

To conclude, even though splinters have the potential to take on new meanings, their active use in the titles of episodes of animated television shows for children did not lead to such an outcome. The identified splinters, for the most part, expressed the same meaning as the source words they were clipped from. Notable exceptions are *-(e)rella* and *abra(ca)-/-cadabra* which encompassed a variety of meanings. What all the splinters did do was occur in creative nonce formations that humorously summarized the plot of the episodes, referring to the well-known characters (Cinderella, Frankenstein, Dracula, the musketeers), much-loved holidays (Halloween, Christmas), or the magic word *abracadabra*. Interestingly, some source words generated two splinters, both an initial and a final one. Lastly, there are indications that *-monium* (<

pandemonium) and *polter-/geist* (< poltergeist) are gaining ground in the production of blends as well (e.g. *fundemonium*, *handemonium*, *ponymonium*, *poltergeeks*, *poltersmurf*, *pistolgeist*, *poultrygeist*). It remains to be seen whether these splinters will become popular in general language usage and possibly evolve into combining forms or affixes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As a highly creative and innovative word-formation process, blending continues to spread in various domains of everyday life. Its playful and unconventional nature enables the creation of witty, humorous, and catchy nonce words. The aim of this paper was to shed light on an under-researched issue of blending in the titles of episodes of animated television series for children. The development of this sort of entertainment gained momentum with the advent of television and the formation of a special Saturday morning slot for the youngest audience. Given that the corpus gathered for this study is limited in size, focusing merely on a fragment of all animated shows released within the time span of 70 years, blends cannot be said to have risen significantly in number. Nevertheless, it may well be argued that blending has become a vital resource in episode naming since approximately 50% of the selected animated series contain at least one blend in their episode titles. Some scriptwriters appear to be more fond of blending than others, surprising us with unexpected mixtures of source words, the orthographic form of blends, or jocular twists on well-known expressions, titles of movies, TV series, books, and the like (e.g. *The Simpsons*, *Inspector Gadget*, *Puppy Dog Pals*, *The Fairly OddParents!*). Accordingly, a broad spectrum of cultural and linguistic information is needed for the puns to be enjoyed.

Structurally speaking, blends in the titles of animated television series mostly exploit the phonological and/or orthographic similarity between the source words. Moreover, in both overlapping and non-overlapping blends, the predominant pattern involves a full word followed by a final splinter. These results lend support to the idea that the traditional view of a prototypical blend does not comply with (relatively) recent corpus-based research (cf. Lehrer 2007; Lalić-Krstin 2010; Danilović Jeremić, Josijević 2019; Renner 2019). In addition, hyphenated blends were found to be so frequent in the corpus that they could not be treated as a marginal phenomenon. In them, the use of a hyphen simplifies the processing challenge by providing a clue to the morphological segmentation and (more often than not) drawing attention to the initial full word. Such findings once more underscore the importance of the initial full word in blends. Also, they indicate that hyphenation is common in blends originating in the titles of animated television shows for children.

Last but not least, the research showed that animated television series have produced several genre-specific splinters; these are bound to occur in new episode titles because the fantasy world of children's animation draws on the sources commonly associated with children or their interests (e.g. monsters, supernatural beings, magic, fairy tales) and tailors the episodes to mark special

occasions (e.g. Halloween, Christmas). Future studies might broaden our horizons by examining the semantic aspects of these blends (e.g. allusions to characters, shared cultural knowledge, and the like) or their reception with children.

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**BLEND-O-RAMA: СЛИВАЊЕ У НАСЛОВИМА ЕПИЗОДА  
АНИМИРАНИХ СЕРИЈА ЗА ДЕЦУ**

Резиме

Лексичко сливање се често дефинише као маргиналан творбени процес око чијих се основних постулата лингвисти и даље споре иако се о њему доста писало из различитих перспектива током последњих педесетак година. Лексичке сливнице су, тако, описане као (махом) пролазне творенице, забавне и домишљате. Оне се углавном појављују у популарној штампи, рекламном дискурсу и називима производа (Bryant 1974; Lieber 2010). Премда данас можемо да разумемо основне семантичке, фонолошке и ортографске одлике сливеница, веома мали број корпусних студија посвећен је сливеницама које се јављају у одређеним врстама дискурса. То важи и за телевизијски дискурс. За њега се тврди да обилује сливеницама (Mattiello 2013; Sams 2016) али је само неколицина аутора до сада спровела њихову детаљну анализу (нпр. Andriani, Moehkardi 2019). Приметивши да се сливнице неретко појављују у називима епизода анимираних серија за децу (нпр. *Smeldorado* у *Инспектору Геџеџу*, *The Three Smurfketeers* у *Штурмифовима*, *Pinknic* у *Пинку Панџеру*), одлучили смо да истражимо њихове структурне одлике. У ту сврху прикупили смо корпус од 422 сливнице из назива епизода анимираних серија створених у периоду од 1950. до 2020. године. Анализа је показала да истакнуту улогу у стварању сливеница играју хапологија и хифенација, као и да се поједини сплентери у њима понављају.

**Кључне речи:** лексичко сливање, лексичке сливнице, анимирани серије за децу, наслови епизода, енглески

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