

## ONOMASIOLOGICAL CYCLE: UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE

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**1. Introduction.** In his slender book on speech and style, Mathesius (1966, pp. 15–16), in connection with the form of naming units, makes this remark: “Pojmenování popisná, především ovšem slova odvozená a složená, měnívají se postupem času trvale v pojmenování značková. Děje se to tím, že z té nebo oné příčiny zaniká možnost, aby si příslušníci jazykového společenství jen z pouhé praktické znalosti svého jazyka rozkládali taková jména v složky se zřetelným významem.”\* Ullmann (1962, pp. 93–94) – and no doubt many others – makes a similar observation: “Two opposite tendencies are at work all the time in the development of language: many words lose their motivation while others which were, or had grown, opaque become transparent in the course of their history.”

We believe that this observation offers a useful starting point and accordingly we try to follow the idea through in order to make sense of some aspects of the dynamics of lexical development. The present outline does not aspire to be exhaustive and all-explaining, it merely aims to suggest how these aspects might be reinterpreted and tied up.

**2. Key terms and concepts.** The crucial concepts we shall be referring to are ‘transparent or descriptive’ versus ‘opaque’ on the one hand and ‘motivated’ versus ‘unmotivated or demotivated’ on the other. By transparent, motivated or descriptive (‘popisný’) we mean morphologically complex, analysable (cf. Ullmann, 1962, p. 81: “A word ... is transparent because it can be analyzed into component morphemes which have themselves meaning.”). In contrast, opaque or unmotivated (‘značkový’) is used here for lexemes or morphemes morphologically simple and unanalysable.

When new naming units (neologisms) are needed, there are basically three ways in which they can be supplied, two internal – onomasiological (morphological and morpho-semantic) and (purely) semantic processes – and an external one, borrowing (importation). Motivation is easiest to illustrate by morphological complexity, though

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\* [Descriptive naming units, particularly derived and compound words, in the course of time gradually turn into unmotivated naming units. This happens on account of the fact that mere practical knowledge of the mother tongue no longer allows members of a given speech community to decompose such naming units into components with distinct meanings.]

it is not the only kind of motivation, as Ullmann (*ibid.*) points out. In addition, he distinguishes phonetic motivation, with onomatopoeic words, and semantic, in the case of semantic shifts. Although semantic neologism and borrowing are an integral part of lexical innovation, it is useful to separate them from onomasiological processes which are different in that they create new forms. We are concerned here primarily with the latter processes and with morphological motivation. Also, following Tournier's (1988) lexicogenic matrixes, we regard onomasiological processes as falling into two types of word-formation: constructive (expansion of 'signifiant') and reductive (reduction of 'signifiant').

Just as naming units are predominantly formed in a motivated way, they may – by a subsequent process – become demotivated (and so unmotivated). Demotivation is usually subsumed under the term lexicalization (and regarded as its aspect). Bauer (1983) envisaged the latter diachronically in three stages, starting with nonce formations (complex words coined on the spur of the moment to cover some immediate need) through their institutionalisation (acceptance of the still transparent lexeme by other speakers as a known lexical item) to lexicalization proper (the lexeme assumes a form “which it could not have if it had arisen by the application of productive rules”), with the change of form potentially occurring at every level of linguistic analysis. Later (Bauer – Huddleston, 2002, p. 1629), he appears to have disposed of the first two stages: “The converse of productivity is lexicalisation: words that are or were earlier morphologically analysable but which could not be formed with their present meaning by the current rules of word-formation are said to be lexicalised.” Plag (2005, p. 91) says that such words “have become permanently incorporated into the mental lexicons of speakers, thereby often adopting idiosyncratic meanings”.

Lipka, who wrote on lexicalisation on several occasions, describes it as “the process by which complex lexemes tend to become a single unit, with specific content, through frequent use. In this process, they lose their nature as a syntagma, or combination, to a greater or lesser extent. ... this is a gradual process, which can only be explained diachronically, and which results in degrees of ‘lexicalizedness’, a synchronic state of lexemes” (1994, p. 2165), and subsequently as “the phenomenon that a complex lexeme once coined tends to become a single complete lexical unit, a simple lexeme” and “a gradual, historical process, involving phonological and semantic changes and the loss of motivation. These changes may combine in a single word” (2002, pp. 111, 113). Dokulil (1986) views lexicalisation as a split between the structural (word-formational) meaning and the lexical meaning, with the former being suppressed and the latter becoming dominant; lexicalisation then is the establishment of a new, direct relationship between the lexical meaning and the form.

**3. Onomasiological cycle.** While Ullmann seems to view the fact that words become opaque and transparent as two opposing tendencies and Bauer sees lexicalisation as the converse of productivity, we believe that motivated production of complex lexemes and their demotivation (lexicalisation) are two complementary and inseparable phases of a single natural process. The constant renewal and expansion of the word stock of a language does not rely on the formation of brand new morphemes (so-called root

creation accounts for a negligible amount of new words), but is vitally dependent on the recycling of existing morphemes. This recycling does not involve only recombining the same set of existing morphemes indefinitely, but inevitably requires that new (root) morphemes be introduced all the time. As root creation cannot meet this demand, we postulate that new (simplex) morphemes are formed in the process we termed onomasiological cycle.

**4. Assumptions and outline.** It should be stressed that the following is a tentative, idealised and simplified model. The actual process is a matter of tendencies, various stages, resulting from crosscurrents, countervailing factors, specific circumstances, etc., rather than following a straightforward and predictable course. The basic assumption is that the core vocabulary consists of (synchronically) unmotivated words and that the unmotivatedness (opacity) or sign character of lexemes is their essential property (in fact, the fundamental mode of the lexicon).

The onomasiological cycle is envisaged to take off from this unmotivated state, i.e. it begins with unanalysable naming units which are then used, combined (or 'recycled') in the constructive phase to form new, transparent (descriptive) complex lexemes. After the phase of motivated creation of a neologism, there comes the subsequent phase of demotivation (lexicalisation) following which the demotivated (opaque) lexeme becomes once again available for a new round of the cycle. In brief, the onomasiological cycle is seen as a constant transition from opaque to transparent and from transparent to opaque, or from unmotivated to motivated and from motivated to demotivated (unmotivated).

We maintain that the cycle has its inherent logic and dynamic which makes it worth considering despite the fact that in actual reality the process is far from clear-cut. First of all, from a cognitive point of view, the creation of new naming units by using complex forms is a natural and almost inevitable step. An expression explicitly listing the relevant semantic components of the new entity to be described is bound to be more readable and comprehensible to the other members of a speech community than an unanalysable, opaque word (such as root creation). This may be one reason for the overwhelming prevalence of derived and composite neologisms over root creations. In fact, the descriptive principle (of cumulating morphemes/lexemes) is so natural and potent that it can and does produce new naming units even outside the sphere of word-formation, as Bauer (1983, p. 240) points out, referring to Aronoff (1976, p. 35). The cline between compounds and complex phrases is well-known.

However, the advantages of complex naming units, transparency and comprehensibility, are bought at a price: the cumulation of morphemes translates into the greater length of these units which can make them less economic, i.e. unwieldy for frequent use. Also, it is not unreasonable to assume that there is a preference to form new lexemes from simple, rather than complex, words as the latter would result in longer still naming units (long words being generally disliked by languages such as English).

Once the new complex naming unit succeeds in promoting the (cognitive) assimilation of a novel phenomenon, entity, within the speech community, the original

transparency becomes unnecessary and the next phase of the cycle may begin: the descriptive naming unit enters on the process of demotivation and, at the same time, even its linguistically uneconomic length tends to be trimmed. The result is a demotivated, lexicalised and, as likely as not, formally reduced morpheme (stem) or lexeme (for the present purposes the existence of both word- and stem-based word-formation in English is assumed; cf. Adams, 2001, p. 114). The pivotal claim of the onomasiological cycle idea is that the demotivation (lexicalisation) of a former complex lexeme actually prepares it for a new round of lexical reuse by making it semantically more open and potent and, morphologically, handier to use, and so keeps the cycle going.

As regards the semantic aspect of demotivation, if it is true that "... each new naming unit is coined with one specific meaning in the 'coiner's' mind" (Štekauer, 2005, p. 265), then the specific meaning and the distinct descriptive character of the neologism could function as a restrictive factor with regard to the range of semantic operations it can enter. This could provide an added impulse for the neologism to move in a direction that would broaden its potential and so its lexicogenic scope.

From a social and psychological point of view, one can hypothesise that there will be certain sections of a speech community in which the process of conceptual production and exchange will be particularly active and brisk, such as the scientific and professional communities (specialist and professional styles) and various interest groups thriving on fashionable trends (slang). In these, the proliferation of new concepts and corresponding naming units, their rapid spread and high frequency with descriptiveness becoming redundant (sometimes even consciously obscured) and reduction of form desirable to ease the efficiency of expression (both frequently resulting in stylistic markedness) will be especially fast and in evidence.

Presumably a clear signal of the onomasiological cycle being completed is when the former neologism, having wound up as an unmotivated (or rather demotivated) morpheme, is in turn used to produce a new, motivated complex lexeme. In a specific, although limited, way, the pressure for the on-going motivation-demotivation fluctuation is documented by the occasional remotivation of words that have lost their motivation, which Dokulil (1986, p. 226) illustrates by examples from Czech (*čest-ný*, honourable, formed from *čest*, honour, replacing the opaque *ctný*, or *obuv-ník*, shoemaker, formed from *obuv*, shoes, replacing the opaque *švec*).

On the other hand, the cycle may not be completed, i.e. demotivation may not be carried through, or only partially, or skipped altogether in the process. The factors that may stall or prevent it can be numerous, starting with the nature of the new naming unit, its specific form (phonological structure), frequency of use, function and importance, position in the vocabulary, down to specific extralinguistic determinants, such as social conditions and historical circumstances, that may affect the perception of its motivatedness, etc.

**5. Motivated formation.** In order to capture the constant lexical flux we have postulated an onomasiological cycle involving two interrelated phases: the phase of motivated morphological construction producing complex naming units and the phase

of demotivation (lexicalisation). The traditional view, represented by Marchand in his classic study of English word-formation (1969, p. 2: "Word-formation can only be concerned with composites which are analysable both formally and semantically..."), holds that the principal area of word-formation consists of what we described as the first phase: productive morphological processes which form neologisms as grammatical syntagmas whose constituent morphemes are related in a motivated way. These processes primarily include compounding and derivation (prefixation and suffixation), while the status of two other processes subsumed by Marchand under syntagmatic formation, zero derivation (conversion) and back-derivation (back-formation), is a matter of debate and opinion.

Whereas the motivation in compounding and derivation is not difficult to see, in order to preserve the idea of compositeness of the naming units resulting from the latter two processes, authors resort to various abstract operations, such as the zero morpheme construct in conversion, and time deletion or reversal in back-derivation (cf. Marchand, 1969, p. 391). In purely formal terms, these motivated neologisms, although presumably syntagmatic in one way or another, can be seen as forming a gradient from expanded lexemes, i.e. larger than the constituents of which they are the sum (compounds, derivatives), to lexemes isomorphic with their constituents (conversion) and reduced neologisms, i.e. shorter than the initial lexeme(s). Even the expanded neologisms form an interesting cline. Leaving aside the fuzzy boundary between composite naming units not produced by word-formation (e.g., complex noun phrases) and compounds proper, there is a gradual transition between compounds and derivatives. Halfway between compounding and derivation are stem-based (or combining-form) formations (also called neoclassical compounds, or we could speak of confixation, using the term 'confix' employed by Fleischer – Barz, 1992).

**6. Neologisms without morphological motivation.** As far as the idea of an onomasiological cycle is concerned, it is important that "... new words often do not represent syntagmas, or combinations of full signs, ie do not arise from grammatical word-formation, as Marchand called it ... Metaphor and metonymy, which he had excluded from word-formation, are a clear case in point. ... In our modern world, many new lexemes are not produced by combining existing elements, but by what Tournier called reductive word-formation, the reduction of the *signifiant* by clipping or acronymy, or better acronyming ..." (Lipka, 2002, pp. 145–146).

However, some authors express reservations about the status of non-syntagmatic word-formation. Marchand (1966, p. 441), comparing the relation between *book* and *booklet* and between *mag* and *magazine*, concludes that while in the first case the semantic element 'small' is added, the second involves only stylistic differentiation (shift in linguistic value), thanks to which "the two words are not interchangeable in the same type of speech". He goes even further in excluding clipping from word-formation processes (ibid.): "... the clipped part is not a morpheme in the linguistic system (nor is the clipped result, for that matter), but an arbitrary part of the word form. It can at all times be supplied by the speaker. The process of clipping, therefore, has not the grammatical status that compounding, prefixing, suffixing, and zero-

derivation have, and is not relevant to the linguistic system (*la langue*) itself but to speech (*la parole*). The moment a clipping loses its connection with the longer word of which it is a shortening, it ceases to belong to word-formation, as it has then become an unrelated lexical unit. ... The study of such words has become a lexicological matter." It seems, however, that *mag*, without losing connection with the base word, functions very much like an (opaque) morpheme on its own and freely participates in word-formation (cf. attested formations as *rag-mag*, *glossy mag-reading*, or *glossy-mag rules*).

Unlike Marchand, Bauer and Adams, who confine themselves to word-formation as productive processes (see the distinction between rule-governed productivity and non-rule-governed creativity introduced by Lyons, 1977, p. 549), Tournier calls not only for the incorporation of both semantic neologism and external (loan) processes in the total of lexicogenic processes of English, but regards even form reductions as word-formation proper, together with affixation and composition (Lipka, pp. 108–109).

**7. Synchronic demotivation.** Having dealt with the first phase of the presumed onomasiological cycle, i.e. motivated morphological construction, producing complex naming units, we come to what we consider the second phase of the cycle: demotivation, or transition from a (morphologically) transparent lexeme to an opaque lexeme/morpheme. The mechanisms of transition may be roughly divided into synchronic and diachronic. We regard as synchronic those cases when both forms of the naming unit, motivated and demotivated, still coexist and are perceived as associated. An example of this is provided by reduced formations which may arise almost simultaneously with the corresponding unreduced naming units (in fact, the names of some institutions, etc., are purposely chosen so as to form a suitable acronym). One feature which follows from such coexistence of the source lexeme and the corresponding synchronically demotivated formation is the stylistic markedness of the latter (the reduction being felt as a colloquial departure). The function of the time factor is illustrated by pairs such as *omnibus-bus*, in which the phasing out of the former changed the markedness situation (*bus* becoming stylistically neutral, *omnibus* a formal term).

Among the synchronic processes of demotivation we place all non-syntagmatic reductive processes: clipping, acronyming, blending, and even word ellipsis (reduction of multiple-word expressions by one or more words, resulting in the change of meaning and, possibly conversion, of the remaining word(s): *Wellington boots* > *wellingtons*). Unlike Adams (2001, p. 113), who says that "subtraction is a rare process in word formation because it reduces analysability", we believe that reductive processes are a counterweight to constructive processes, that reduction of analysability is an important source of increasing the stock of new, unmotivated morphemes available for recycling. Bauer (1983) describes the first three processes as unpredictable formations (tentatively assigning to them even back-formation) inasmuch as from the generative point of view it is difficult to give the rules of their formation and thus predict the resulting form. From the point of view of the onomasiological cycle, on the other hand, unpredictability makes good sense: if there

is demand for opaque, unanalysable morphemes in the system, then unpredictable procedures which produce them are definitely useful, inasmuch as rule-governed formation results, by definition, in transparent (at least from the viewpoint of analogy), morphologically motivated forms.

A special case is so-called word-manufacture (root creation, coining, etc.), i.e. creation of new, opaque words (morphemes, lexemes) without reference to existing words. In terms of the onomasiological cycle it can be interpreted as the direct formation of an unmotivated naming unit without the previous phase of motivated formation. An explanation of the markedly small incidence of this type of neologism has been mentioned above: the omission of the motivation phase means that the lexeme is opaque from the very beginning, which makes the establishment and 'promotion' of such a word more difficult.

While the above reduction patterns are, despite various objections and reservations, usually counted among word-formation processes, there are other form-changing processes which are not. Their common denominator is some kind of phonological modification of the original lexeme without this constituting a distinct lexicogenic act. Unlike phonological changes accompanying some word-formation processes such as derivation, these alterations are once again unpredictable and word-specific. Many of these are, for lack of a better term, called corruptions (Klégr, 1999). Corruption is, technically speaking, the assimilation of (typically) a loanword according to the phonological system of the receiving language. The result is a formally opaque word for speakers of both languages.

However, as borrowing is sometimes accompanied by etymologisation, mostly 'folk-etymology', the outcome need not be strictly speaking an opaque word. Folk etymology, or the modification of the form of a word according to its (wrongly) assumed etymology, may be seen as an effort to make opaque loan-words motivated (cognitively transparent) in keeping with the proposed onomasiological cycle, which typically assumes a new naming unit to be first transparent (i.e. understandable to facilitate its acceptance by the speech community), and only then expects it to be shifting towards unmotivatedness to make the word available for further recycling.

Unlike reductive word-formation processes in which the form of the original lexeme is purposely altered (with the unreduced and reduced lexemes coextensive in the speakers' mental lexicons), these purely form-changing processes which (with the exception of etymologisation) do not result from any conscious effort to modify the form to suit a specific purpose are more problematic to place on the synchrony-diachrony axis and in most cases are better to be seen as diachronic.

**8. Diachronic motivation and demotivation.** The onomasiological cycle is by its very nature a phenomenon of diachrony. When treated in a diachronic perspective, two of its aspects are particularly prominent. The first is but a commonplace of historical linguistics: whatever can be observed about the nature of this problem is drastically limited by the nature of available evidence, which begins *ex nihilo* and generally tends to be distributed fairly unevenly over time. Thus, when sifting the English material,

linguists are in an infinitely better position to make judgments on the development of the language from the Early Modern period onwards, with its dramatically growing volume of writing, increasing awareness of stylistic layering in the language by its users and, last but not least, incipient metalinguistic discourse that mirrors the language users' attitudes to language uses.

While this aspect is sociolinguistic, the other can be broadly labelled as structural. There is no doubt that constant lexical and word-formational flux whose one important dimension is manifested by what we have described above as the onomasiological cycle is most immediately apparent in everyday wear and tear of language material, reflected in dozens of its individual forms. They, in never-ceasing communication, shrink, merge and accrete (Lüdtke, 1990) just as language users labour to maintain the delicate balance of minimal formal representation (least effort) and maximal message (utmost expressiveness). However, valid diachronic observation must anchor this microscopic movement in the structural development of a language that often paves the way for a specific word-formation or lexical process at an uneven pace and over vast stretches of time. In this perspective, when considering the history of English, the evidence of onomasiological cycles, so readily available in the last few centuries, must be seen as a structural consequence of much older, concerted processes of phonetic reduction and morphological simplification that took a long time to gather momentum during which these processes seem to have taken relatively little part in onomasiological cycling.

In other words, word-formation patterns that participate in the onomasiological cycle present a gradient not only with regard to structural motivation (arguably, *steamboat* can be considered more strongly motivated than *steamer*) but also with regard to the measure of control users of language exercise over their output. This is readily apparent from the difference between demotivation based on the competition of word-formation patterns and demotivation founded phonologically: a clipped compound, to use Jespersen's term (Jespersen, 1942, p. 156), like *copper* (< *copper coin*) is a more deliberate creation than, say, an obscured compound like *lord* (< OE *hlāfweard*), based primarily on 'blind' phonological demotivation. Most importantly, the systemic status and varying pace of the onomasiological cycle is determined by structural tendencies that dominate the development of language at a given time and that manifest fundamental interdependence of the phonological, morphological and word-formational level in the history of English. Thus, obscuration processes in compounds that are due primarily to phonetic erosion at the morphemic juncture between the determinant and the determinatum, though well attested in the Old English period (Čermák, 2005) were producing more significant numbers of obscured compounds only from the Early Middle English period onwards (Sauer, 1992). This was a time when profound restructuring took place both in inflectional and derivational morphology and when compounding had temporarily lost some of its former productivity (Strang, 1970). To give another example, one reason why the above-mentioned *steamer* can be assessed as less strongly motivated than *steamboat* may be due to the fact that the suffix *-er* has in time taken over some functions of



several other suffixes that have not survived into Modern English (such as e.g. the Old English suffix group *-elel(a)/-ol*, see Kastovsky, 1992, p. 384) – a specific case illustrating a fairly general pattern in the history of English suffixes.

The status of both the constructive (motivating) and reductive (demotivating) word-formation processes in the history of English is thus determined by the structural-typological tenor of its evolution. The predominantly inflectional Old English period was characterised by marked prevalence of the major constructive word-formation modes – derivation and compounding. Demotivation, due primarily to phonetic factors (such as those active in the obscuration processes affecting compounds), was too marginal to upset the structure of the Old English word, regular both in terms of inflectional morphology and word-formation, and tightly-knit by allomorphic alternation, a typical inflectional means enhancing the immediacy of the bond between the affix and the stem or the stem and the ending (for this typological characteristic, see e.g. Skalička, 1935). The power of constructive word-formation processes in Old English is perhaps best illustrated by the naming strategies that used native material in semantic borrowings to render foreign concepts, vital for the planting and dissemination of Christian culture on the Anglo-Saxon soil (see Gneuss, 1955).

From the Early Middle English period onwards, processes of demotivation set in. These were by and large founded phonetically (aphesis, apocope, etc.) and their most significant phonological result – final vowel deletion – naturally had far-reaching consequences both for inflectional and derivational morphology. Apart from the specific developments in the unstressed syllables, the loss or lexicalisation of some of the Old/Middle English affixes was primarily due to their complex allomorphy and/or polysemy. The subsequent development in native words promoted a shorter, simpler and lighter word-structure (see the discussion concerning the transition from stem-based to word-based word-formation in Kastovsky, 1992), particularly by disposing of heavy consonant clusters, morphemes and many affixes that were inflectional rather than agglutinative by nature, i.e. typically non-syllabic affixes that triggered alternation in the stem and tended to obscure the stem-affix boundary.

Along with the external factors due to a dramatically changed sociolinguistic situation in England after the Norman Conquest, which resulted in a large-scale loss of Old English vocabulary and, conversely, in a massive borrowing of Romance roots and formatives, these structural changes, too, contributed to a systemic rebuilding of the English word-stock. By the Late Middle English times, it was no longer built on the classifying principle ('*zařadující princip*', Mathesius, 1939-40) or associative principle (Kastovsky, 1992) but rather on the isolating ('*izolující*') or dissociative principle. At this stage of the development, new unmotivated items were ready for a motivated expansion in the onomasiological cycle and, at the same time, the changed status of the word-structure made gradually way to non-syntagmatic reductive processes such as clipping. This highly productive word-formation mode of Modern English (both Early and Late) that satisfies the users' need for language economy is fundamentally linked to the essential nature of Modern English word-structure. It is associated with the tendency of Modern English towards short, monomorphemic

forms, with its preference to word combination (compounding, syntactic phrases) over derivation and with its word-stock largely organised by the isolating principle. In a typologically different language, the same communicative requirement is likely to be met by means of a different word-formation strategy, such as e.g. the colloquial mode of transprefixation (Dokulil, 1986, p. 200) in predominantly inflectional Czech (cf. e.g. the very recent colloquial *hod'ka < hodina*).

In a broader diachronic view, the idea of the onomasiological cycle has its loose but distinct grammatical parallel in the sphere of grammaticalisation. A well-established reinterpretation of, say, a noun into an adverb or a preposition, a transformation of an autosemantic word into an agglutinative case suffix (as in e.g. Hungarian) or a change of a stem formative into a case ending (as in, for example, Old English *n*-stems, cf. Modern English *oxen*) may be all viewed as parts of a cycle in which grammatical function is performed through movement from transparent to opaque and from constructive to reductive (and vice versa). Unfortunately, consistent theories of such a cycle, as was for example the idea of *Spirallauf der Sprachgeschichte* voiced by von der Gabelentz (1901), present a practical difficulty: the problem of unequivocal, unidirectional evidence is here compounded by the fact that this type of cyclical development seems to operate over much vaster stretches of time than historical record of any language allows to follow.

**9. Conclusion.** What are the merits of the proposed concept of 'onomasiological cycle', or the assumed constant oscillation of the lexis between the unmotivated, opaque lexemes (naming units), on the one hand, and the motivated, transparent ones on the other? It strives to join the 'two opposite tendencies' into one, functional mechanism. These tendencies are seen as complementary phases with their own specific tasks, but one common goal of constant lexical innovation. While rule-governed word-formation processes serve the cognitive need of continuously creating new motivated naming units (i.e. transparent, and so easy to understand and assimilate), the drift towards their subsequent demotivation (lexicalisation), whether by processes regarded as part of word-formation or not, is interpreted as a means of renewing the stock of available simple morphemes.

It is hypothesised that the motivatedness (descriptiveness) of a complex lexical item may semantically act as a limiting factor in the subsequent recycling of the word, by evoking specific reference, associations, etc. The composite nature of motivated lexemes makes for a greater length, which is also a potential disadvantage if they were to be recombined to form new complex units. Therefore, rather than militating against productivity, demotivation of complex items may be perceived as a prerequisite for it, as feeding the productive processes with simplex morphemes, the basic building blocks required by constructive word-formation processes.

In effect, the idea of an onomasiological cycle redefines the role of non-syntagmatic morphological word-formation processes and suggests their importance in the lexical flux of a language. It implies that these synchronic processes have a similar function as lexicalisation and other diachronic form-modifying mechanisms obscuring the transparency of naming units. Together they participate in the chain of lexical

recycling. In this sense the concept of onomasiological cycle closely interconnects synchronic and diachronic processes, and underlines their mutual dependence.

Diachronically, the onomasiological cycle is seen as operating at an uneven pace, with relative temporary dominance of one of the opposite tendencies determined by the structural-typological tenor of the language system at the time. In the history of English, demotivation appears to be primarily phonological: it functions as an internal, in-built systemic check against the proliferation of transparent complex forms.

In most general terms, the movement within the onomasiological cycle between the poles of morphological complexity/simplicity and transparency/opacity may be understood as a diachronic dynamic interplay between analogy and anomaly in linguistic modes of naming. Analogy, the 'seeing' factor which is the backbone of rule-governed word-formation, promotes iconicity. As such, it is constantly, but to a varying degree, checked by 'blind' anomaly with its symbolic nature.

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### Onomaziologický cyklus: Nahoru po schodišti dolů

#### Résumé

Myšlenka onomaziologického cyklu v lexikální morfologii – aplikovaná zde na angličtinu – vychází ze snahy skloubit v jeden celek dvě základní tendence objevující se při neustálém pohybu slovní zásoby jazyka: pravidelné, motivované (transparentní) tvoření nových komplexních pojmenování na jedné straně a nepředvídatelně probíhající proces přeměny těchto pojmenování na simplexní pojmenování značková, tj. anomální z hlediska formy a obsahu, na straně druhé (lexikalizace, demotivace ap.). Tyto tendence jsou zde chápány jako dvě komplementární fáze jednoho cyklu, z nichž každá má svou specifickou funkci a které se společně podílejí na neustálé inovaci lexika. Zatímco tvorba popisných komplexních pojmenování je důležitá z kognitivního hlediska (pojmy takto pojmenované jsou srozumitelné a snadno asimilovatelné), jejich nevýhodou z hlediska další „recyklovatelnosti“ je vedle délky také – díky popisnosti – jejich sémantická specifčnost. Tyto nevýhody odstraňuje v další fázi vývoje pojmenování proces jejich „zneprůhledňování“ formálního i obsahového (a to různými prostředky, od slovtvorných až po čistě fonologické), který ve svých důsledcích vede ke vzniku značkových pojmenování, a tedy fakticky k rozšíření repertoáru morfémů v jazyce. Ty jsou pak již snadno „recyklovatelné“ a mohou se tak opět zapojit do slovtvorné fáze cyklu. Tento model je samozřejmě pouze schematickým znázorněním faktického stavu v jazyce, navíc je cyklus třeba chápat ve dvou časových horizontech: (a) krátkodobě, synchronně, kdy komplexní slovo projde celým cyklem a rozšíří tak repertoár „nových“ morfémů jazyka v době, která nepřesahuje jazykové povědomí mluvčích (extrémním příkladem jsou v současné angličtině hojné mechanické zkratky – clippings –, které koexistují s výchozími pojmenováními a zároveň se podílejí na tvoření nových komplexních výrazů); (b) dlouhodobě, diachronně, kdy proces transformace pravidelně utvořeného výrazu v pojmenování „nepravidelné“ daleko přesahuje jazykové vědomí mluvčích, probíhá různou rychlostí a různým způsobem u jednotlivých slov, ba může být spojen s dalekosáhlou typologickou přestavbou daného jazyka. Idea onomaziologického cyklu staví do nového světla roli nesyntagmatického tvoření slov: naznačuje, že tyto synchronní procesy (kromě jiného) plní funkci analogickou té, kterou má lexikalizace a další diachronní procesy měnící formu pojmenování, a podtrhuje tak vzájemnou propojenost synchronního a diachronního dění v jazyce. Lze také spatřovat volnou paralelu s jiným důležitým procesem, gramatikalizací.

