

Blends in *Gravity Falls* TV Series

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the blending process used in *Gravity Falls* TV series seasons I and 2. It aims to classify blends based on the classification of blends proposed by Mattiello (2013) and interpret the meaning of blends. From the data source, there are fifty-four data considered as blends. The data are categorised in three perspectives, namely: morphotactic, morphonological and graphical, and morphosemantic. The result shows that morphotactically, the most frequently used pattern is partial blend particularly the blends consist of full word followed by splinter with 49 percent data. Then, morphonologically and graphically, non-overlapping type in which neither the graphs nor the sounds of source words are overlapped each other is commonly used in the series with 57 percent of overall data. Finally, morphosemantically, the most used structure with percentage of 63 percent is right headed blend in which the head is the second source word.

Keywords: *blending; source word; splinter; word-formation.*

INTRODUCTION

Language, as an important tool of communication, always evolves and changes. People use it to communicate their ideas, thought, and feeling to others. People continually invent new words and expressions to describe new objects and situations because the words in dictionary could not fully convey the meaning of the speaker (Yule, 2006, p. 14).

Word formation is a way to make new words from the existing words or from completely new words. Blending is a word formation process which is productive and creative in its creation. Although the blending process is applied from a long time ago in the past, it is still used to create new words. In fact, it is considered as the most productive among the other word-formations. Besides, their structures are quite unpredictable since they do not follow only one formation and tend to have various structures (Mattiello, 2013, p. 111). For that reason, it is little bit challenging to analyse blends without context.

Alex Hirsch, an American actor and producer, applied word formation process in one of his TV series entitled *Gravity Falls*. This TV series is a story about two siblings Mabel and Dipper who spent their summer vacation in their uncle's house in Gravity Falls. Furthermore, it has two seasons in which the first season consists of 20 episodes and the second season consists of 21 episodes. The first season was aired in 2012, meanwhile the second season was aired in 2016.

Besides having a good story, this TV series is quite fascinating in inventing new words. Hirsch also used word play, such as "we put fun in no refund" and created new words to make this program more entertaining and outstanding to the audience. One remarkable example of blends first created through this TV series is *summerween*. The blend, which was formed from *summer* and *Halloween*, means Halloween that is celebrated during the summer season. Seeing the high number and uniqueness of blends in this TV series, it is necessary to analyse their patterns. The variety of

blends' formation in this TV series could help other creators to make attention-grabbing blends.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Word formation processes in English, especially blending, have attracted a lot of attention from scholars. Hosseinzadeh (2014), for example, investigated new blends that have entered the English language. She found that most of the structure of new blends is made by clipping that consist of the first part of the first source word and the last part of the second source word. Then, the second most common structure of blends is clipping and overlapping type.

Another research by Setyowati (2015) examined the structure of blends and the relevancy of size of blend to each structural formation of blend by measuring the number of syllables of the source words. It was found that the most frequently used structural formation from 25 blends taken from brands of snacks and beverages found in several supermarkets in Yogyakarta is by coining each beginning of two source words. Further, the structural formation that is mostly relevant to the size of blends is AD formation in which the initial splinter of first source word combined with terminal splinter of the second source word with 83,33% of accuracy.

Next, Maulana (2016) studied the prosodic structure of application names available on Google Play Store, the size of blends measured by the number of syllables of the source words and presents the most frequently used pattern of the blends in the application names. The most common types of blends from his data is combination of syllable + syllable and syllables + syllable. The combination of syllable + syllable consist of one syllable from each source words, such as *robird* (*robot* + *bird*) and *pinterest* (*pin* + *interest*). Then, in combination of syllables + syllable, the creator took some syllables from the first source word and combine them with one syllable from the second source word for instance, *studioverb* (*studio* + *verb*) and *acupoint* (*acupuncture* + *point*).

Moehkardi (2016) examined the patterns and meanings of English acronyming, Clipping, compounding and blending in Internet-based media. She found that out of 17 blends, six were categorized as phonemic overlaps, seven were formed from shortening the two source words then combine them, and the last four data are classified as phonemic overlaps and clipping.

Finally, Sangsthita (2017) focused on blending in advertisements of events in Yogyakarta from the year 2014 - 2017. She found that from 50 blend, five blending words do not belong to anywhere in type of blends by Hosseinzadeh's classification.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Blending

Blending is a process of creating new words by combining at least two existing words to make new meaning of which either one of the source word is shortened or the two words are overlap each other as in *brunch* ← *breakfast* + *lunch*, *motel* ← *motor* + *hotel*, *foolosopher* ← *fool* + *philosopher* (Algeo, 1977, p. 48; Danks, 2003, p. 21; O'Grady, Dobrovolsky & Aronoff, 1997, p. 133; Yule, 2006, p. 55).

The shortened form of the source word (SW) in blending is called splinter. Blends consist of either a combination of two or more splinters or word combined with splinter (s). For instance, the blend *banoffee* is composed of an initial splinter *ban* from the SW *banana* and a terminal splinter *offee* from the SW *toffee* or *coffee*. Meanwhile the blend *Breathalyzer* consist of full word of SW *breath* combined with terminal splinter *alyzer* of SW *analyser* (Danks, 2003, p. 8).

In addition, when a splinter is made in a blend, then it is overly reused in other blends, it can be considered as morpheme in its own right. The examples of these are splinters -holic, -licious, -scape. Then, those splinters could be used as affixes. Thus, when they are used, the result might not be blends, but derivation.

Examining SWs is necessary to analyse blends. The high morphotactic opacity or the difficulty in identifying the SWs, as Mattiello states, are typically found in the blends which are formed from two splinters such as *beaulicious* ← *beautiful* + *delicious*, *entreporneur* ← *entrepreneur* + *pornography*, and *enshocklopedia* ← *encyclopedia* + *shock* (24). In contrast, the blends that consist of full word and splinter are more transparent. For instance, *Amerindian* ← *American* + *Indian*, *wintertainment* ← *winter* + *entertainment*.

Structural Blends

Morphotactic Blends

1. Total blends

These blends are those in which all SWs are reduced into splinters (Mattiello, 2013, pp. 118-120).

- i. Initial splinter is followed by terminal splinter, e.g. *ballute* ← *balloon* /bə'lu:n/ + *parachute* /'pærə'ʃu:t/
- ii. Both splinters are the beginning of words or initial splinters, e.g. *chloral* /kɔr'æl/ ← *chorine* /'kɔr,i:n/ + *alcohol* /'ælkə'hɔ:l/.
- iii. Both splinters are the end of words or terminal splinters. Although this type is rare, there is an example that could illustrate it, e.g. *Kongfrontation* /'kɔŋfrən'teɪʃən/ ← *King Kong* /kɪŋ'kɔŋ/ + *confrontation* /,kɔnfrən'teɪʃən/.
- iv. Either the initial or terminal splinter is embedded in a discontinuous splinter, e.g. *askility* /ə'skɪlɪti:/ ← *ability* /ə'bɪlɪti:/ + *skill* /skɪl/.

2. Partial blends

In this type, the blends consist of only one of the SW is reduced into splinter and the other being left in its full form (Mattiello, 2013, pp. 120-1).

- i. The full word is followed by a splinter, e.g. *blogerrific* /blɒgə'rɪfɪk/ ← *blog* /blɒg/ + *terrific* /tə'rɪfɪk/.
- ii. The full word is preceded by a splinter, e.g. *amajor* /ə'meɪdʒər/ ← *amazing* /ə'meɪzɪŋ/ + *major* /'meɪdʒər/.

- iii. The full word is intercalated within a discontinuous splinter, e.g. *adorkable* /ə'dɔrkəbəl/ ← *adorable* /ə'dɔrəbəl/ + *dork* /dɔrk/.

Morphological and graphic Blends

This type, which is analysed based on whether or not the two SWs share sounds or letters, is separated into overlapping and non-overlapping blends (Mattiello, 2013, pp. 121-3).

1. Overlapping blends

- i. The constituents may overlap both graphically and phonologically, with no other shortening. The hind part of the first constituent overlaps with the fore part of the second one, e.g. *anecdoteage* /'ænɪk,dɔʊtɪdʒ/ ← *anecdote* /'ænɪk,dɔʊt/ + *dotage* /'dɔʊtɪdʒ/.
- ii. The constituents overlap both graphically and phonologically, with the shortening of (at least) one of them, e.g. *compfusion* /kɔmp'fju:ʒən/ ← *computer* /kəm'pjʊ:tər/ + *confusion* /kɔn'fju:ʒən/.
- iii. The constituents overlap phonologically but not orthographically. These blends are marked as blends only by their spelling, e.g. *buyography* ← *buy* /baɪ/ + *biography* /baɪ'ɒgrəfi:/.
- iv. The SWs overlap orthographically but not phonologically. It means that the two SWs share same letters but different sounds. For instance, *smog* which consist of *smoke* /smʊk/ and *fog* /fɔ:g/, they share the same letter o but are different in pronunciation. The letter o in *smoke* is pronounced /əʊ/, meanwhile it is pronounced /ɒ/ in *fog*.

2. Non-overlapping blends

The two SWs do not share neither phonological nor graphic overlap. For instance, in *Calexico* /,kæleksɪ,kou:/ the two constituents (*California* /,kælə'fɔrni:ə/ and *Mexico* /'meksɪ,kou/) do not share any letter or sound at their boundary.

Morphosemantics

1. Attributive blends

The relationship between the SWs in some way syntactically related in which one act as a semantic head while the other ones as modifier. Similar to endocentric compounds, blends could be either right-headed or left-headed. For instance, a *dogbella* is 'an umbrella for a dog' (*umbrella* as the head and *dog* as the modifier). Moreover, the head of the blends could be from the outside of the SWs. This type is called exocentric blends which is similar to the exocentric compounds. For instance, in *Frutopia* ← *fruit* + *utopia*, the semantic head 'a beverage' is outside of the SWs (Mattiello, 2013, pp. 123-4).

2. Coordinative blends

These blends consist of two SWs which are related both syntactically and semantically. Syntactically, they are paradigmatically equivalent, i.e. belong to the same syntactic category and both share their syntactic class with the final blend (*windowall* ← *window* + *wall* is both 'a window' and 'a wall'). Semantically, according to Gries (2012), the SWs are generally co-hyponyms of a superordinate term, as *lion* and *tiger* in *liger/tigon*, which are both animals and serve as head. In some cases, the two SWs are synonymous such as *needcessity* ← *need* + *necessity*. Sometimes the constituents are near-antonymically related as in *frenemies* ← *friends* + *enemies*. In other cases, they have frame relation as for *riverscape* ← *river* + *landscape*. Within coordinate blends, exocentric cases also exist as in *helilift* which is neither 'a helicopter' nor 'a lift', but 'a group transported by helicopter' (Mattiello, 2013, pp. 124-5).

METHODS

The data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitatively, the researcher investigated the SWs of blends, and analysed them by Mattiello's (2013) formula. First, in terms of morphotactic, the blends would be analysed based on their structure, whether they were formed of splinters or word and splinters. Next, in terms of morphonological and graphical, the blends were studied on whether the two SWs share phones and/or graphs or not. Last, in terms of morphosemantics, the two SWs were predicted to have some semantic and/or syntactic

relation. Following this, the meanings of the blends were interpreted based on the SWs and the contexts. Then quantitatively, the data would be classified based on their types. Next, the research would count them and make the percentage of the data. Last, from this, the structure that was commonly used in this TV series could be determined.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that morphotactically, there are 27 percent with 15 data that can be categorized into total blend, and 40 data with percentage of 73 percent that can be classified into partial blend. Meanwhile, morphonologically and graphically, the overlapping blend, with 23 data is 43 percent and non-overlapping blend has 31 data or 57 percent of overall data. Last, morphosemantically, there are 42 data with percentage of 78 percent that can be included into attributive blend and 22 percent with 12 data that can be named as coordinative blend. The findings are discussed in More detail below.

Morphotactical Blends

Total Blends

In this type, each SW is separated into two parts, initial splinter and terminal splinter. The blends are categorised into four subtypes based on which splinter is used to create the blend.

1. Initial splinter is followed by terminal splinter

12 blends belong to this subtype. The number of the letters that the creators take from the SWs varies. They could take the first syllable of the words such as *bro* from *brother*, just left out one letter like *necronomico* from *Necronomicon*, just one letter like *e* from *picture*, or incomplete syllable as *gr* from *great*. In short, there are no specific rules about this since the formation of blends is sometimes unpredictable.

Three blends are formed from a combination of two characters' names as in *Bipper*, which consist of *bi* from *Bill* and *ipper* from *Dipper*. Meanwhile, the blends *Gidiabile* and *Mabidion* are formed from

the same SWs, i.e. *Mabel* and *Gideon*. In fact, from these two SWs, one more blend is created, i.e. *magidbelion*. The formation of this blend will be discussed below under the last subtype of total blends.

These blends are formed when a character tried to make a name for a couple. From the same SWs, three blends are possible to create. The order of the SWs made the final blends are different to each other, such as *Mabidion*, *Gidiable*, *Magidbelion*. From the same SWs, one can actually make more than three blends, such as *Magideonbel*, *Gimabelion*, and other possible patterns. These three blends verify the creativity of blending process that only from two SWs, one can make more than one blend.

2. Both splinters are the beginning of the word

From the finding, there are only one datum which belong to this category, the data is *Stanvac* (n). The blend, *Stanvac*, 'a name of vacuum cleaner product that is sold by Stanley,' is used for the first time through this series. The blend is formed of *Stan*, a hypocoristic name of *Stanley* (n), and initial splinter *vac* from *vacuum* (n) which also makes this blend also be considered as clipping compounds.

3. Both splinters are the end of the word

Although this type is rarely found in the result of blends, there is one datum that can be categorized in this type. Dipper, the main character, bumps into a half human and half minotaur creature living in the forest. These creatures name themselves as manotaur. *Manotaur* (n) is the blend that consists of initial splinter *man* of SWs *human* (n) combined with *notaur* of SWs *minotaur* (n). Minotaur is Greek mythology creature, a monster shaped half like a man and half like a bull (Minotaur, n.d.).

4. Either the beginning or the end of a splinter is embedded in a discontinuous splinter

The SWs of these blends are usually hard to predict since they are separated into some splinters, besides they do not follow the order of the original SWs and are formed as the need of the creator. There is only one blend that fits in this category, it is *Magidbelion* which consists of *Mabel* and *Gideon*. As discussed in beforehand in the first subcategory of total blend, the two SWs are the name of the

characters. First, each of SW is split into two splinter, *Mabel* into *ma* and *bel*, and *Gideon* into *gid* and *eon*. Then, creator combines the two initial splinters and add the two terminal splinters. Furthermore, the graph of terminal splinter *eon* is changed according to the phones. For the final blend, although the graph is different the pronunciation is still the same, it is pronounced as /meɪɡɪdbəli:ən/.

Partial Blends

1. The full word is followed by a splinter

There are 27 data that can be classified to this category. The high possibility of blending process is also found in *mabeland*. It can be categorised into two patterns, full word + splinter and splinter + full word. The pattern can be either *Mabel* + *and* or *Mabe* + *land*. This is because there is no obvious explanation which type is used by the creator to form the blend. Therefore, the two structures are possible for the datum.

Multiple process is also found in the data as in *de-pants-ipation*, *smarticle accelerator*, *upside-downington* and *upsidedowningtontastic*. In *de-pants-ipation*, prefix *de-* is added to blend *pants-ipation* to negate the meaning of the base. For that reason, this datum is included to this paper. The blend is created for the first time through this series. The SW *pants* is used as its full form and then it is combined with terminal splinter *ipation* from *anticipation*. Similar to this, one of the SWs of *upsidedownington* is also a result of compounding process. The compound *upside down*, in which the space is erased, is joined with terminal splinter *nington* of *Bennington*. The SW2 of this blend comes from the name of American singer or more known as vocalist of Linkin Park named Chester Bennington. This is not said directly in the series, but it is shown in the episode 7 in season II when Mabel, who loves singing, tried to defeat Pacifica in karaoke competition. She sang a parody of Linkin Park's "Don't Stop Believing" with title "Don't Start Un-believing". Therefore, it is assumed that the word comes from this name.

2. The full word is preceded by a splinter

There are nine data that can be categorised into this type. As mentioned in the previous

subtype, it is possible that *mabeland* is categorised into this subcategory. The splinter *Mabe* from *Mabel* is followed by full word *land*. Even though the structure of blends is different to each other, it does not change the meaning of the blends. The meaning of the blend is identical each other on the assumption that the SWs are the same.

3. The full word is intercalated within a discontinuous splinter

The attractiveness of these blends is because the two SWs are similar in their phones. Sometimes, the phones are rather similar but the graphs are usually different. These blends usually hard to recognize if it is said orally. It would be easier if one sees the written form as well. From the findings, there are four data that can be classified into this subtype.

When in the two previous subtypes full word of one SW is placed in beginning or the end of the blend, in this classification, the full form of one SW is added in the middle of not-mid splinter. As in *ext-roar-dinary*, the full word *roar* replaces *raor* from *extraordinary*. While in *matri-gnome-y* *gnome* is inserted into *matrimony* replaces the splinter *mon*. The four data have similarity to each other. The full word that is inserted in the discontinuous splinter usually share some similar sounds with the replaced splinter.

Morphonological and Graphical Blends

Overlapping

1. The constituents overlap both graphically and phonologically with no other shortening

When the SWs are overlapped each other, the coiner intentionally created these words to make it shorter. Unfortunately, from the findings, only one of datum that fits in this category, i.e., *Mabeland*.

The blend is a name for a place in the series made by Bill (antagonist in the story) based on the imaginary world of Mabel in which everything is perfect and provided as the citizen wanted. The blend consists of Mabe**l** /meɪbəl/ and **l**and /lænd/. Even though the blend looks like missing one letter l, in this section, the SWs are not said to be shortened, besides, it covers the similar letter or the letter and sound are used together. The bold

underlined letter are the letter and the sound that are overlapped each other. As expected, the overlapped parts are share the same spelling and pronunciation.

2. The constituents overlap both graphically and phonologically with the shortening of (at least) one of them.

There are 11 blends that can be grouped into this pattern. Mostly, the data use pattern in which the full word is combined with the terminal splinter of the SW2. There are eight data use this patter, for example, *cornicorn*, use the whole part of the SW *corn* and terminal splinter *nicorn* from *unicorn*. Thus, the letter *n* from the last of SW1 and the first letter of SW2 are overlapped each other.

Another structure that is used in the data is initial splinter compounded with terminal splinter as in data *Bipper* and *Stancakes*. For *Bipper*, initial splinter *bi* is combined with terminal splinter *ipper* and the letter *i* from both splinter is overlapped and pronounced in the same way, i.e. /ɪ/. The same case with *Stancakes*, the initial splinter *stan* is chained with terminal splinter *ancakes* from SW *pancakes*. The two letters *an* from last part of SW1 and SW2 is pronounced similarly as /æn/ and is used together in the blend.

3. The constituents overlap phonologically but not graphically

From the finding, there are seven data that fit in this classification. The structure of *a-paw-logize* is the full word *paw* replace the splinter *po* in the SW2. Even though the pronunciation of *po* from *apologize* and *paw* are not exactly identical, they are quite similar. The splinter *po* is pronounced /pʊ/ meanwhile *paw* /pɔː/. Another sample nearly similar pronounced is shown in the blend consists of *lepre* from *leprechaun* and *corn* from *unicorn*. the letters *chau* and *co* each is pronounced as /kɔ/ and /kɔ/. The key difference between the two overlapping sounds is the vowel. In place of articulation, both vowels, /ɒ/ and /ɔ/, are placed in low, back position (Fromkin et al. 248). For that reason, people may find it hard to distinguish them. Hence, the graphs are different but the phones are the same.

4. The constituents overlap graphically but not phonologically

Some letters in English are articulated differently. Their pronunciations are influenced by letter beside them. In blending, some parts of the SW are overlapped but the overlapping letters are pronounced in different way. There are four data that can be categorised into this type.

One should listen the oral form of these blends in order to get which sounds used in the blend since some letters are overlapped, but they are not articulated in the same way. As in *infinitentary*, the part that overlapped is splinter *nit* in both SWs. In the SW1, it is pronounced /nɪt/ and for SW2 is /nə't/. However, for the result, the graphs are changed into *net* for the necessary of pronunciation.

Non-overlapping

Blends that can be categorised as non-overlapping when the two SWs do not share neither the letter nor the sound. From the findings, there are 31 data that fit in this category.

As can be seen, there is no part that is overlapped neither graphically nor phonologically. For example, datum (29), *summerween* consists of full word of *summer* and terminal splinter *ween* from SW *Halloween*. SW1 ends with *er* and SW2 start with *we* which means there is no overlapping in neither the graphs nor the phones. This structure is also operated to the rest of the data.

Morphosemantic Blends

Attributive Blends

1. Right Headed Blend

The structure of this blends is that the SW2 is act as the head and SW1 modifies the head. There are 34 data that can be categorised into this type. Mostly, the data are combination of nouns, in which the head and the modifier are both nouns. Besides, there is also combination of adjective and noun. Another formation that is used in the data is blend of noun and verb as *meow-verruled*. This combination is rarely found in the result of blend.

The SW1 *meow* actually do not give any meaning to the blend. This is formed because the judge who utters the blend is a cat. The only word

that is known to human is only meow and it has many meanings which is depend on the situation. The word *meow* is inserted to the blend only to emphasise that the one that said the sentence is still a cat. Therefore, the meaning is not changed from the original word, i.e. *overruled*. Similar to this, *timetanium* is also formed because of the situation.

In the situation above, Mabel and Dipper are trapped on the cube prison that made of titanium which make it impossible to escape. This *timetanium* has same characteristic with titanium in the present time, that is solid. The word *time* is added to highlight the condition is in the future which is different from Dipper and Mabel's time and place. Further, the *titanium* that is only provided in that place in certain time in the future. When the head is already identified, it makes easier to predict the meaning of the blend. In short, all the data have the head on the SW2 and the modifier is on the SW1.

2. Left Headed Blend

There are only eight data that can be considered as the member of this category. Similar to the right headed blend, when one can recognize the head, the meaning of the blend would be easy to interpret.

The interesting is the formation of data (1), (2), and (3). The modifier of the data is placed in the middle of the blend. Meanwhile the head is separated in the beginning and the end of the blend. For instance, datum (1) *a-paw-logize*, the *paw* modifies the head *apologize* to make the meaning change into apologize in a cute way. Originally, the categorization of these blends is quite ambiguous. However, the formation is the mid splinter of SW1 is placed on the structure first, then the SW2 is added to the middle. The rule for left headed blend, indeed, is that the head is the SW1. For that reason, these blends are classified to the left headed blend. In short, all the data use the SW1 as the head of the blends.

Coordinative Blends

There are 12 data that belong to this category. All of the data are in noun classes except two adjectives that use the same SW to form them, *guilty* and *innocent*.

These data are produced from the same SW. The arrangement of the SW makes the result is different. The two SW are paradigmatically equivalent which belongs to the same syntactic category. Semantically, *guilty* and *innocent* are antonyms.

As the character in this scene was being interrogated, he answered the question stutteringly. He was in the situation who stole gallons of gas to run the portal of another dimension to save his twin, Stanford. Therefore, at that moment he thinks that he is guilty for stealing the gas, but also think that he is innocent because he did it to save his brother. For that reason, the two blends are formed as the result of the slip of the tongue or spontaneously. In short, the data from this type have two SWs that play important role in the same way toward the blends. There is no SW that being subordinate to others.

CONCLUSION

There are some characteristics of blends that can be concluded from the finding. First, there is no rule how much part of the SW should be used in the blend since there all many possible ways to create blend. Second, from the data can be seen the variety of blending structure from the simple blend like *Mabidion* or more complicated blend like *Magidbelion*, both of which are from the SWs *Mabel* and *Gideon*. Although the blends are seen as an irregular in their process, the consistency is started to be established. The structure can be analysed as in the finding, there is no data that cannot be grouped in the structure by Mattiello. Last, these blends can be an inspiration for people who want to impress their reader such as the advertiser or the author. It is because blends are not only creative in their creation but also catchy that make people easy to get interested in and remember at least part of the writing or the advertisement.

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