Aviating among the hapax legomena: Morphological grammaticalisation in current British newspaper English

Antoinette Renouf and R. Harald Baayen

University of Liverpool
Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen

This paper describes three adjectivizing affixes in British newspaper text, *-type, mock-,* and *-shape,* which are widely used but have thus far escaped detailed documentation in the literature. This study is part of a larger project on lexical innovation in which we combine the methodology followed by the first author in the earlier AVIATOR project, in which successive chunks of news data were analyzed, with the approach to morphological productivity taken by the second author. In Baayen and Renouf (1996), we discuss the productivity of five wellestablished derivational affixes in The Times: *-ness, -ity, un-, in-,* and *-Ly.* The present study focuses on three 'vogue' affixes and their use in The Independent, a newspaper for which a corpus has been compiled of roughly 280 million word tokens covering the years 1988-1997. We present our findings for the prefix *mock-* in Section 1. In Section 2, we turn to *-type,* a suffix which is very productive in our data. Finally, Section 3 deals with the suffix *-shape,* which appears to be becoming available as a new alternative to *-shaped.*

1. mock-

The use of *mock* as an adjectival noun modifier is well known. The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (Sinclair 1995, hereafter 'Cobuild') gives examples of phrases such as

mock horror
mock Tudor

and the Collins English Dictionary (Makins 1995, henceforth 'CED') records similar combinations:

> *mock battle*
> *mock finals*

The Collins English Dictionary (Makins 1995, hereafter 'CED') also accords a separate entry to *mock-* as a hyphenated de-adjectival prefix, giving as example *mock-heroic.* The entry in the Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Summers 1993, henceforth 'Longman') mentions the use of *mock* with nouns, and also its use as a prefix in hyphenated forms:

> *mock battle*
> *mock-serious*

These examples suggest that the hyphenated, prefixal form is restricted to adjectives, and that it is an adjectival modifier before nouns.

Our data reveal a far more extensive use of *mock-.* We have counted 290 different formations with *mock-* (of which 224 are hapax legomena), but only 51 instances where *mock* is used as an independent modifying form, contrary to what the dictionaries seem to suggest. By itself, this already suggests that *mock-* is felt to be a prefix by English journalists.

The affixal status of *mock-* is further supported by the following observations. Firstly, it no longer attaches only to adjectives and nouns. It is also found prefixed to verbs and adverbs, as in the following examples:

> *You know a writer is in trouble when he has to mock-apologise for his tedious bleating...*
> *with the odd, ripe medieval word mock-casually tossed in*

Although compound verbs in English are rather rare (Bauer 1983: 208), it might be objected that *mock-apologise* is a compound rather than a derived word. And although, admittedly, noun-verb compounds such as *carbon-copy* are unproductive and generally formed through back-formation, adjective-verb compounds such as *fine-tune* enjoy some productivity (Bauer 1983: 208). Hence *mock* in *mock-apologise* could in principle be an adjective. However, this possibility can be ruled out, as *mock* and *fine* have different distributional properties. In contrast *tofine, mock* does not occur in complement position:

> **the battle is mock*
> *that example is fine*

Similarly, it does not occur as an adverb after suffixation with *-ly* :

> *he apologized mockly he*
> *pitched the offer finely*

This shows that *fine* is an adjective and *mock* a prefix. We conclude that *mock*emerges from our data as a fully-fledged non-category-changing prefix that attaches to all four major word categories.

Secondly, it might be argued for a phrase such as

> *the heavy breathing flights of mock-literary dialogue*

that the hyphen is induced by the general use of hyphens in complex premodifiers. However, we have clear examples of mock being written with a hyphen in other syntactic constructions as well:

> *Joker looked mock-astonished at the suggestion that Arkan's Tigers had made life difficult for civilians*
> *I'm sorry to disturb you, I said, mock-humble*

Examples such as these also show that *mock+A* formations have the full distributional potential of adjectives.

Above, we mentioned in passing that *mock* also occurs preceding adjectives without a hyphen, albeit rarely, as in

> *after the mock prizegiving ceremony*

The common factor in these un-hyphenated cases seems to be that *mock-* has scope over the adjectival phrase *(prizegiving ceremony)* rather than over the adjective *(prizegiving)* itself. We suspect that *mock-* is not attached to the adjective because this would visually obscure its intended scope. When its scope is restricted to the immediately following adjective, as in

> *mock-Egyptian headstones, tombs, and catacombs*

mock is happily prefixed.

Since *mock-* is not mentioned at all in the older morphological monographs by Marchand (1969) and Bauer (1983), and since its full present scope is not adequately captured by recent dictionaries, our conclusion is that its productive use is a fairly recent development. Some quantitative support for this hypothesis is provided by the frequencies of formations with *mock-* in our data. There are relatively few high-frequency words with *mock-,* while the number of hapax legomena (224) comprises 77.2 of all types (290). A frequency distribution with

only a handful of well-entrenched formations and a very large series of hapax legomena ‑ the prime candidates for being neologisms (Baayen and Renouf 1996) - is typical for affixes that have only become productive recently. Note that among the fifteen highest-frequency types,

mock- Tudor	96	*mock-epic*	8
mock-heroic	31	*mock-Classical*	7
mock-Georgian	25	*mock-Elizabethan*	7
mock-lunatic	18	*mock-innocence*	4
mock-croc	14	*mock-leather*	4
mock-Medieval	10	*mock-Edwardian*	3
mock- Victorian	10	*mock-serious*	3
mock-Gothic	8		

we typically find those formations that are also mentioned in the dictionaries.

Words such as *mock-Tudor, mock-heroic* and *mock-serious* may well have served as the launching pad from which *mock-* has spread to broader semantic domains. Consider, for instance, the following hapax legomena:

mock-Byzantine	*mock-chivalric*
mock-Liverpudlian	*mock-posh mock-*
mock-Handel mock-	*grimace mock-*
Bach mock-Mahler	*incompetence*
mock-astonished	*mock-outrage mock-*
mock-fastidious	*snake*

The first two examples indicate that *mock-* still yields new forms in the domain of historical and geographical styles (cf. *mock-Tudor).* But *mock-* now also attaches to the names of composers (e.g., *mock-Bach)* to yield ironic terms for musical styles. Our data suggest that *mock-* has become particularly productive with respect to ironising personal attitudes and emotions *(mock-astonished, mockoutrage;* cf. *mock-serious,* the only formation mentioned in the Longman dictionary), but it has also extended to other abstract domains *(mock-celebrity, mock-quest).* Instances of *mock-* attaching to concrete nouns *(mock-snake)* are scarce in our data.

2. -type

A suffix that is even more productive in our database is *-type.* This suffix is not mentioned in Marchand (1969) or Bauer (1983), nor in the Cobuild or Longman

dictionaries. The CED mentions only combining forms with *type* (e.g., *archetype, collotype),* and noun compounds (e.g., *printing type).* In our database of journalistic prose, we count some 1,770 different formations with *-type* as an adjective-forming suffix, of which roughly 1,360 types occur once only. Examples of the 10 highest-frequency forms as well as of 10 hapax legomena are:

E-type	75	*wolf-type*	1
Chernobyl-type	53	*women-type*	1
D-type	45	*woodwind-chorale-type*	1
commodity-type	36	*work-type*	1
Soviet-type	33	*workshop-type*	1
equity-type	27	*world-type*	1
C-type	25	*wristwatch-type*	1
VAT-type	23	*yoga-type*	1
IBM-type	22	*yoghurt-type*	1
family-type	19	*zeppelin-type*	1

As in the case of *mock-,* we are dealing with a word frequency distribution with a relatively small number of high-frequency, well-entrenched words, and a long series of hapax legomena which together account for 76.8 of all types. Again, this distribution is typical for a vogue affix with a sudden burst of productivity.

Almost all our examples of formations in *-type* are denominal. Some examples of de-adjectival forms are attested, however, 14 in all:

British-type	2	*international-type*
cellular-type	2	*Lebanese-type*
western-type	2	*invincible-type*
Iranian-type	1	*papal-type*
institutional-type	1	*homosexual-type*
military-type	I	*ancient-type*
continental-type	1	*Danish-type*

Unlike *mock-* and *-shape, -type* seems to be restricted to prenominal use only, as exemplified by the following phrases:

afunky, regional blues-type version two
pieces of woven card-type material to
build mechanical-type toys
quick, exciting newsy-type pictures

....

Draft

The large numbers of hapax legomena, comprising more than 70% of the types for *mock-* and *-type,* 62% for *-shape,* and 55% for *-shaped,* are indicative of the ephemeral nature of most of the formations with these affixes. While the affixes themselves are clearly well-established in journalistic prose, their function seems to be more pragmatic in nature than lexical. The affixes *-type* and *-shaped* give writers and speakers the flexibility to express approximation of class membership in a dense morphological form instead of using syntactic periphrastic constructions. They are markers of more informal styles. *Mock-,* on the other hand, has the pragmatic function of indicating the intention of irony while at the same time expressing the non-genuine nature of the approximation involved. It often attaches to more rarified base words *(grimace, chivalric, fastidious,* etc.), which increases its ironic potential.

It is the semi-lexical, pragmatic nature of these affixes which may partly account for their absence in lexicographic and morphological discussion. Complex words with primarily syntactic and/or pragmatic functions are more likely to escape attention than words that require substantive semantic processing in the mental lexicon. In addition, the fact that the majority of such formations are hapax legomena may also have hindered their detection in corpus-based surveys, especially where on-line KWIC concordances are combined with frequency thresholds. Nevertheless, these vogue affixes currently still undergoing grammaticalization are at least as productive as a well-established adjectivizing suffix such as *-i.fh.* For instance, in the last quarter of 1995, we counted the following numbers of hapax legomena:

-ish	15	*mock-*	14
		-type	27
		-shaped	13
		-shape	1

Accepting counts of hapax legomena as reasonable indicators of degrees of productivity (Baayen and Renouf 1996), we can say that *mock-* and *-shape(d)* are roughly as productive as *-ish,* while *-type* emerges as being almost twice as productive.

Interestingly, *-type, mock-* and *-shape(d)* are not the only vogue affixes that are currently productive in British journalism. Other affixes for expressing various kinds of similarity that appear as productive in our database include *cod-, faux-, style, -like,* and *-effect.* We leave the description of these affixes to another occasion.

References

Baayen, Harald R. and Renouf, Antoinette (1996). 'Chronicling The Times: Productive Lexical Innovations in an English Newspaper'. *Language 72,* 69-96.

Bauer, Laurie (1983). *English Word Formation.* Cambridge: CUP.

Makins, Marian (ed.) (1995). *Collins English Dictionary.* Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Marchand, Hans (1969). *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word Formation. A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach.* Miinchen: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.

Sinclair, John McH. (ed.) (1995). *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary.* Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Summers, Della (ed.) (1993). *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture.* Harlow: Longman.