

General principles of poetic license in word formation ¹

WOLFGANG U. DRESSLER
(Wien)

1.1 COSERIU (1971) has reestablished the concept of poetic language as the only full and complete usage of the means of language, so that rather «normal» everyday language represents a deviation from poetic language than the reverse (cp. SEIDLER 1978). Or, in order to use COSERIU'S (1968: 151-7) distinction between *parole*, *norme*, *langue*, and *langage*: According to COSERIU (if I understand him correctly), the poet or literary writer, both in his *parole* and his internal *norme*, can fulfill possibilities and tendencies of his *langue*, which are not fixed in the *norme* of either everyday language or of the external *norme* of the contemporary or traditional style of the respective genre.

Due to his profession to concentrate on the poetic function (in the sense of R. JAKOBSON) and on *langage* itself, the poet (always including the literary writer) can fulfill the possibilities of *langue* (and *langage*) better than other language users.

1.2 However, since many poets are looking for innovations (SEIDLER, to appear II 3.2), these innovations can be seen both by the writer and by the observer as deviations from either everyday language or internal/external norms. Such innovations in the realm of word-formation can be called neologisms due to poetic license. Many scholars (MUKAŘOVSKÝ 1976: 42 ff.; HANPIR 1966; LEECH 1969:42; AKHMANOVA 1973) make a distinction between accepted neologisms and poetic nonce-formations or occasionalisms. This distinction, however, refers to the spread, not to the origin of

¹ For references and arguments on my polycentristic approach see DRESSLER (1977 a,b, to appear a), on theory of style cp. DRESSLER (to appear b), on agent word formation see DRESSLER (to appear c,d), all of these contributions with many references that I omit here. I have to express my deep gratitude to my Russian, English and Polish informants.

innovation (See FAINBERG 1977) and obscures the fundamental insight that poets in coining new words adhere to the principles of their *langue* and of *langage*.

2.1 The concepts of style as deviation (and of style as choice) can be subordinated to COSERIU's concept of style as true fulfillment of the possibilities of language within a polycentristic approach to language (DRESSLER 1977 a,b, to appear a-d).

This approach takes the format of an item-and-process grammar which contains several semi-autonomous components, such as derivational morphology (word formation), syntax, lexicon. Each component has its own «natural», universal tendencies. The respective «naturalness» of processes and other phenomena of a given component in a given language crucially depends on the degree to which such universal tendencies are fulfilled. Since the functions of different components of language are different, their universal tendencies are liable to conflict, with the result that universal tendencies generally can be fulfilled only partially, i.e. greater «naturalness» within one component or subcomponent may result in less «naturalness» within another (sub)component.

2.2 Universal tendencies are on the one hand e.g. tendencies of word-formation towards productive and transparent word-formation processes and the lexical tendency towards denotatively and connotatively individualized, i.e. lexicalized words, which results in the classical conflict between word formation and the lexicon. Here, nearly in all styles of language, lexicalization wins out, since the lexicon is more important for the communicative functions of these styles.

2.3 Another type of universal tendencies are universal processes of e.g. word formation, such as agent formation (5, DRESSLER to appear c,d, PANAGL 1977). Each language restricts such a universal process in a language specific way (DRESSLER to appear c,d), various styles add their proper restrictions (i.e. norms). Universal processes are based in semantics (cp. COSERIU 1977:52), the language specific word formation rules predict the general meaning of a complex word, whereas its concrete individualized meaning is stored in the lexicon (cp. LJUNG 1977, HANPIR 1966:160-163).

3. The poet may not feel bound by the norms of how a conflict between various tendencies is usually solved. Thus he may shift the balance between the tasks of different components of language. For word formation vs. syntax cp. the late poem by P. Celan ²:

Harnischstriemen, Faltenachsen, /Durchstich-/punkte:/ dein Gelände.//
An beiden Polen/ der Kluftröse, lesbar:/ dein geächtetes Wort/ Nordwahr.
Südhell.

² /means a new line, // a new stanza.

This poem shows an impoverished syntax (e.g. no finite verb). In compensation (cp. WEINRICH 1968:36 ff., SZONDI 1972:92) predication is often expressed by compounds (in this poem, all 6 compounds are neologisms). This poem is a rather extreme example of late hermetic poetry where the preference for compounding results in growing poetic ambiguity since word formations are semantically vaguer than synonymous syntactic constructions. This vagueness is at least partially abolished by lexical norms (Lexicalization in this case), which hold for existing words. Thus neologisms help to preserve poetic ambiguity (cp. 5 and e.g. PILHAK 1975:115).

4.1 Another way to enhance the role of word-formation and its inherent tendencies is to shift the balance between word-formation and the lexicon by means of «delexicalization», which comprises—in our context—all sorts of JAKOBSON'S poetic etymologization (cp. HANSEN-LÖVE 1979).

4.2 A first type is remotivation (cp. WEINRICH 1968:33-34; LEBCH 1969:52; PANAGL 1977:11), i.e. restoration of the transparent meaning of a complex word as predicted by the respective language specific word formation rule. E.g. R. P. GRUBER in his story *Aus dem Leben Hödlmosers* says about a specific type of Styrian suit: «richtig ist vielmehr, daß alles, was ein Steirer anzieht, ein Steireranzug ist», cp. H. v. DODERER (*Die Wasserfälle von Slunj*): «und folgten der Straßenbahn, die sich in's Grüne fortsetzte, auf einem selbständigen Bahnkörper, und also keine Straßenbahn mehr war». For another device cp. MUKAŘOVSKÝ (1976:38).

4.3 However, remotivation can be seen as one step within what I have called (DRESSLER 1977 b: 22) «disverbation», the reversal of the (otherwise irreversible) diachronic process of univerbation. Univerbation can be split into the following idealized stages:

2 words > multilexical item > juxtaposition > transparent compound > opaque compound > derivation with a semi-affix > derivation with a transparent affix > d.w. an opaque affix > simple word.

This diachronic process can be reversed (rolled back) in poetic disverbation:

4.4 A compound is treated as a juxtaposition, e.g. in a poem by P. Hammerschlag «Die Five Goldbergs.../Diebten Tasch» (where from *Taschendieb* «pickpocket» a verb is derived). Cp. LUCRETIVS (4, 28) «ordia prima» instead of *primordia* 'beginning' and APULIUS (Met. 9, 23) «crurum eius fragium» from *crurifragium* 'bone-fracture'. In all these cases the reconstructed juxtaposition is dissolved into two words. Here one can compare the treatment of inseparable German verbal prefixes as separable ones, e.g. in J. RINGELNATZ'S *Turnermarsch*: «Faltet die Fahnen ent!».

A very mild way is the remotivating use of hyphens e.g. in A. P. GÜTERSLOH (*Die tanzende Törin*) «Natur-Gesetzliches», or in R. MUSIL'S diaries (cp. HAHN 1976:213 n. 28) «Welt-an-schauung».

4.5 An opaque compound is treated as a transparent one in the German animal names *Windspiel*, *Nachtigall* by C. MORGENSTERN, as models for his analogous neologisms «Sturmspiel, Tagtigall». A. SCHMIDT'S «Nächstbarin» (*Schwänze*) presupposes a disverbation of *Nachbarin* 'neighbor', where the first element is treated as a form of *nahe* 'near'.

4.6 A pair of poetically reconstructed transparent compounds can be put on the same footing and be subjected to gapping: e.g. original derivations: «püunkt- & reichlich, das Uni- sive Perversum» (A. SCHMIDT, *Orpheus*), «das exklusive -Periment» (A. OKOPENKO, *Der Akazienfresser*, where *Experiment* does not fulfill the syntactic preconditions for gapping); original names: «Das Schnee- und Hagelwittchen» (the latter being an analogous neologism to Snow White: H. ARP, *Schneethlehem* 3); original simple words: «Lo- & Pokal, Lo- & Pokuß³» and with a neologism «des... <zwei>-sondern Drei-fels» (A. SCHMIDT, *Orpheus*).

4.7 One of the reconstructed parts can be isolated as single word standing alone: N. POGODIN (*Jantarnoe ožerel'e*) has the dialogue *Nel'zja! – L'zja!* «Impossible (a simple word) -Possible!» (where *ne* is detached, as if it would be the homophonous negative prefix). M. CVETAeva (see WYTRZENS 1978:116) contrasts *U nas: Brot, u nich: prod* «With us: bread (German) with them (sc. the rats as revolutionaries) food» («(derived from the abbreviation of the adjective *prodovol'stvennyj* 'food-' in *prodmag* «food-store», *prodkomissija* «food-committee» etc.). A milder form is the omission of affixes, such as in the neosemantisms of LUCRETIUS (*con*)*temno*, (*ob*)*tempero*, (*ex*)*stinguo* (cp. LEUMANN 1977:562) and PLAUTUS' neologism *mūnis* (from *immūnis*).

4.8 Another artificial device is the so-called *tmesis*, the separation of morphemes: Relatively mild cases are (See LEUMANN 1977:271) VERGIL'S *septem subiecta trioni* (juxtaposition *septemtrio* «Great Bear»), LUCILIUS' *de-que-petigo* «and scab» (-*que* could be inserted only after prepositions and verbal prefixes, cp. LEUMANN 1947:129); for Greek parallels cp. ZETZEL (1974). A name and its possessive suffix are separated in A. SCHMIDT (*Schwänze*) «der *Benda*' (1775-1832; <Goethejahr>, leicht zu merken) *schen* Übersetzung». However, ENNIUS separates a suffix in *Massili...-tanus* 'Massili-ans' and pretends the existence of the homophonous suffix -*brum* in *cere...-brum* 'brain', cp. G. M. HOPKINS «brim, in a flash, full» (semisuffix -*ful*), E. E. CUMMINGS «(stepp) this (ing)», but with no respect for morpheme

³ This may be (*Hokus*) *Pokus* and/or the neologism «kiss on the fundament».

boundaries: whee (...)ling, l(a leaf falls)oneliness» and with inversion «mortals)...(im.», J. RINGELNATZ «kängt ein Guruh», where *kangaroo* is treated as a compound.

Names are treated as two words in A. SCHMIDT (*Orpheus*) «wie das As bacht» (*Asbach*) and in K. SCHWITTERS' poem on Renaissance painters: «Dort lint es Böck/ Dort beint es Hol/ Es walidet grün und witzt.»

4.9 Whereas in the examples mentioned above the relative audacity can be measured in the distance of disverbation between the lexical fixation and the manipulated interpretation (including changes of category), another type of remotivation is much less audacious and a frequent diachronic one: backformation, e.g. LYKOPHRON *latreús* «servant» (hapax) from the verb *latreúein* «to serve», HOMER *aristeús* «chief» from *aristeúein*.

5.1 Deviations of word formation (§ 1.2, DRESSLER to appear b) can be classified into the following degrees, if we elaborate on HJELMSLEV's and COSERIU's distinction of *parole*, *norme*, *langue*, *langage*: A deviation from external and internal norms can be seen in the statistical preponderance of certain word formation rules, e.g. in CVETAJEVA's predilection for the verbal prefix *pere-* (WYTRZENS 1978:117). The other types consist of poetic neologisms (for their poetic function cp. § 3, DRESSLER, to appear b, LEECH 1969: 42 ff.; HUMESKY 1964). I will give examples of agent formations (cp. DRESSLER, to appear c,d).

5.2 A special type of deviation is the violation of perceptually based restrictions on recurrence. Besides recursiveness (DRESSLER, to appear b) one can cite the avoidance or haplogy of — *er + er* sequences (cp. DRESSLER 1977 c). However, J. NESTROY (*Lady und Schneider*) forms diplological *Hautevoleerer*⁴ 'member of the haute volée' and T. BERNHARD *Fasadenkletterererer* 'cat-burglar-ar-ar' (cp. DRESSLER 1977:47 n. 17).

5.3 The most common type of deviation are neologisms formed with productive word formation rules, which results in a deviation from lexical norms. Lexical norms can mean, e.g. 1) All complex words stored in the memories of all native speakers; this norm (as well as all the other norms) is violated by an absolute neologism. 2) Passive lexical competence of the average intended reader, which is violated by any unusual word. 3) His active lexical competence. 4) The stereotyped lexicons typical for given styles (including traditional poetic language). It is clear that any poetical use of language must violate at least one of these norms. Thus, deviation from lexical norms becomes the more important the more norms are violated at the same time, particularly in the case of absolute neologisms (be it hapax legomena or first attestations).

⁴ PANAGL, O. (Salzburg) thinks of a possible pun with *leerer* «(an) empty one».

Among Greek agent nouns, KALLIMAKHOS forms neologisms with the productive suffix *-tēs*, but not with the semiproductive *-tēr*, and the unproductive *-tōr*, the same holds for LYKOPHRON who has also the neologisms *amoibeús*, *porkeús*, *siphneús* (plus a few divine epithets) with the productive suffix *-eús*, but has, for metrical reasons, two neologicistic hapax (*theristēr* «mower», *katarraktēr* «down-swooping») instead of the existing derivations in *-tēs*. Thus he can be said to be more audacious⁵ than KALLIMAKHOS (cp. 5.4). R. MUSIL (HAHN 1976: 17-20, 39) forms neologisms in *-er* only as true agents (very productive rule), but not as instruments (in German less productive), cp. E. CANETTI's collection *Der Ohrenzeuge*. Such neologisms can be used to fill an empty slot in a semantic field: E.g. A. BELYJ forms *poèm + nik* «writer of a *poèma*» (HINDLEY 1966: 28), thus completing the series *lirik* 'lyrical poet', *romanist* 'novel writer', *dramaturg* 'play-wright' etc.

5.4 More audacious are neologisms formed by means of unproductive rules, because they are not fit to freely generate new forms. Since (un)productivity is a characteristic of a word formation rule, such neologisms deviate both from lexical and morphological norms:

LYKOPHRON forms the hapax epithets (ethnics) *Lepsieús*, *Termieús*, from adjectives: This specific *-eús* formation rule is unproductive. B. LEŚMIAN has rare neologisms in *-ak*, *-acz* (PAPIERKOWSKI 1964: 128). Also Russian denominal *-ač* is unproductive: Still V. MAJAKOVSKIJ forms *stih + ač + i* «verse makers» (HUMESKY 1964: 34), A. BELYJ *bloh + ač* «flea-er», *zvezd + ač* «starer» (HINDLEY 1966: 28 f.) V. HLEBNIKOV *smeh + ač + i* «laughniks». Still clearer unproductive are *-ir'*, and particularly *-ar'*. However, KRUCĚNYH forms *smeh + ir + i* «laughniks», *meč + ar + i* «gladiators (sword-ers)» (SCHOLZ 1968 note 85). A rather unproductive compounding rule is used by G. M. HOPKINS for *dare-gale*, *daredeath*, by J. THURBER for *kissgranny*.

Poets may revive such rules in establishing an exclusively poetic tradition of productivity, e.g. adjectival *-tēr* formations with the value of a participle in Attic tragedies (most of them hapax legomena).

5.5 Still more audacious are deviations from *langue*, i.e. the violation of language specific restrictions imposed on universal word formation processes. With other processes it is usually input restrictions:

With agent rules I have found: HOMER's *ethelon + tēr* «volunteer», where the input is a participle, V. HLEBNIKOV's *grustit + stel'* «mourner» where the input is a 3rd person singular (SCHOLZ 1968: 493), H. ARP's *Überbergundtaler* where the input is an idiomatic conjunct «over hill and dale».

The universal possibility to form compounds is totally suppressed with Greek *-eús* and Latin *-bulum*: However, HOMER has, seemingly for metrical

⁵ Of course there is another factor in judging audacity: Whether a poet follows a poetical convention (genre norme, 'norme' of a given trend) which uses neologisms of a given 'degree of deviation'.

reasons, the compounds *patro + phon + eús* «parricide», *hēni + okh + eús* «charioteer», HESIODE *histo + bo + eús* «plow-tree», SAPPHO *mālo + drop + eús* «apple-gatherer», which looks like a semiproductive poetic rule (cp. PERPILLOU 1973:370). PLAUTUS forms *dentifrangibulum* «tooth-breaker» and *nucifrangibulum* «nut-cracker».

Violations of the structural change of a rule: J. SALINGER has *cheer + er + upp + er* with double suffixation. K. GÜNTHER gives a picture of 1927 the title *Der Radionist* «radio listener» where the suffix-ist enlarged by an -n.⁶

6.1 Often neologisms are said to be due to analogy. There is no space to discuss the distinction and cooccurrences of analogy as another term for rule application and various types of surface motivations (cp. DRESSLER 1977 b: 20 f., HANPIR 1966:158 f.) and to characterize the auxiliary function of linguistics in the interpretation of poetic texts.

Explanation by analogy is only correct if there is no rule at all and if there is a unique model, e.g. in A. VOZNESENSKIJ's new 'months': *zimar* «winter month» derived from *zima* «winter» in assonance to *janvar* «January», *osenebri* «fall months» from *osen* «fall» after *sentjabr*; *oktjabr*; *nojabr* with a thematic vowel -e which I cannot explain (maybe due to analogy to archaic *osene-s* «last fall», as suggested by O. Panagl).

6.2 An extreme case of surface motivation (and, at the same time, of 'thematization of language'⁷) is the usage of a derivational semantic relation as the leitmotiv of a poetic text. One example is T. BERNHARD's poem *Ahnenkult* (1977):

«Es steigt der Steiger/ bis er nicht mehr steigt/ es schweigt der Schweiger/ bis er nicht mehr schweigt// es lacht der Lacher...Macher... Kocher...Locher...Töter...Flöter...// es richtet der Richter/bis er nicht mehr richtet/ es dichtet der Dichter/ bis er nicht mehr dichtet»⁸.

7. When I was looking for poetic neologisms in the Romance languages French and Italian, in the Germanic languages German and English, and in the Slavic languages Russian and Polish, I found many more neologisms in these Germanic and Slavic languages than in French and Italian. Since

⁶ PANAGL O., rightly refers me to forms such as *Organist* 'organist', *Telephonist* 'telephonist'. Still, the incorrect separation of a suffix -nist would be limited to the painter.

⁷ For this basic concept of much of modern poetry, see WEISS (1972), POSNER (1975 thesis 2).

⁸ Existing and neologistic deverbal -er-derivations (in 15 stanzas) are mixed with one stanza for each of three other rules establishing the same semantic relation. According to WEISS, W. (Salzburg) this is one of BERNHARD's 'finger-exercises' where often his poetical procedures appear in a very transparent manner (which leads to extreme uniformity in this poem).

both the (poetic) texts and the scholarly literature I read were a large sample, this contrast is hardly due to chance. Moreover my Germanic and Slavic data contain much more audacious deviations than my Romance data. Thus there is a quantitative and a qualitative contrast.

The explanation I suggest is that this contrast corroborates E. Coseriu's concept that poetic language is the fullest and most complete use of a language (1.1). Since the role of word formation (especially compounding) is much greater in the above mentioned Germanic and Slavic languages than in the Romance ones, a «full and complete use» of the respective language means inevitably allows much more innovation in German, English, Russian and Polish word formation than in French and Italian. And this, I submit, has been recognized and utilized by poets and writers I have studied (It would be interesting to look at poets who wrote e.g. both in French and English).

Therefore, I suggest, it is not by chance that Italian futurists seem to present rather few (derivational) morphological innovations, whereas Russian futurists (though inspired by Italian futurists), were very innovative in word formation. As to French, one might object that the infrequency of morphological neologisms may be due to the French tradition of prescriptive purism. But is not this purism in the area of word formation or, at least, the acceptance of this purism by French writers and poets a partial consequence of the relatively smaller role of word formation in French, i.e. of its language type?

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