

## **Morphosyntax in German and Italian: a contrastive case study of products of word formation in internet-based communication in the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia**

This article analyses and compares morphosyntactic phenomena in German and Italian in the Wikipedia corpora created by the Leibniz Institute for the German Language. More specifically, the case study focuses on confixes of Latin or Greek origin which were initially borrowed primarily in the field of medical terminology. Now they are used to form new words, albeit with a change in meaning, in general contexts as well. For example, *-phob-* (G) and *-fob-* (IT) as well as *-man-* (G) and *-man-* (IT) are found in general word formation products, illustrating both formal and functional equivalents in German and Italian. This article concentrates on the confix derivatives *-phobie* (G)/*-fobia* (IT) and *-manie* (G)/*-mania* (IT) as a determinatum in (nominal) determinative compounds. Wikipedia authors use terms like *Lösch(o)manie* or *cancellomania* [deletomania], which can be interpreted as metaphors of sickness, on the talk pages of the online encyclopaedia in order to normalize the behaviour of other authors in the collaborative production of texts in Wikipedia on a metadiscursive level. An innovative feature of this study in comparison to previous studies is that internet-based communication is used as data for the investigation instead of newspaper articles, or to be more precise the (user) talk pages of the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, the texts on which can be seen as products of interaction-oriented writing.

One of the oldest and most successful platforms in the social web, Wikipedia was selected as the object of investigation primarily because its talk pages are characterized by interaction-oriented writing while newspaper texts are rather text-oriented forms of writing. This paper explores the effect this has on word formation in the field of confix derivatives on Wikipedia's talk pages as outlined above. The analysis focuses on the following research questions:

- a) The extent of use of the word formation products under analysis: Do general combinations using *-manie/-phobie* in German and *-mania/-fobia* in Italian appear in internet-based communication in Wikipedia? How frequently do such combinations occur?
- b) Their functional potential (textual-pragmatic perspective): Out of the general combinations used on Wikipedia's talk pages are there combinations which metacommunicatively address the collaborative construction of texts and knowledge in Wikipedia? Are there combinations which are unique to Wikipedia?
- c) Combinational options (morphological-structural perspective): Which structure and form do the compounds with confix derivatives have?
- d) The semantic perspective: Which semantic characteristics are common to word formation products with confix derivatives?

The article concludes with a contrastive perspective, comparing the chosen word formation products in German and Italian.

An analysis of the corpus revealed that medical and general combinations appear for both confix derivatives in internet-based communication in the German and Italian versions of Wikipedia. The number of general combinations is higher than the number of medical combinations for both confix derivatives.

From a morphological-structural perspective, the number of potential combinations using the confix derivatives was higher in German than in Italian. This could be due to the fact that neoclassical compounds are not a common word-formation strategy in Italian. In German, in contrast, structural diversity is particularly high for the general compounds using *-manie*, which appear in combinations with up to 20 elements. This reflects the contexts, some ironic, in which word play is found. These very complex ad hoc formations can be seen as a peculiarity of interaction-oriented writing.

From a semantic perspective, combinations with *-phobie/ -fobia* represent a shift in meaning onto the semes 'sick', 'exaggerated tendency' and 'abnormal passion'. Wikipedia includes examples of metadiscursive and metalinguistic expressions in both languages. The characteristics of 'fear' and 'reluctance' are present in the examples of *-phobie/ -fobia* taken from Wikipedia.

In many cases, the general products of word formation as well as those which are specific to Wikipedia serve the meta-communicative and metalinguistic normalization of acts in the collaborative production of texts.

It became clear that the confixes, or "Europeanisms", in internet-based communication in Wikipedia are highly productive and well suited to the normalization of collaborative text production in the multilingual context of Wikipedia. One reason for this could be their high productivity in other communicative domains in German and Italian, which leads to their assured use in international communication in Wikipedia. From a morphological-structural perspective, it is striking that the motivation to adopt such terms is so strong that even in Italian, which makes little use of neoclassical compounds, this word formation strategy has been embraced.