

# Folk goes along with semantic and phonetic reduction.

[Linguistics](#), [Language Acquisition](#)



Folk Etymology in Language Jessica Bhatia San Diego State University

Folk Etymology Miller (2014) acknowledges the role of folk etymology in development of languages in various parts of the world.

The author establishes the relationship between folk etymology and the word-forming process. According to Miller (2014), there are various factors that interact to cause changes in language and sound. However, he asserts that folk etymology is the core aspect that affects language and sound change. To expound on how folk etymology results in change in language and sound, he first recognizes the fact that change in language mostly goes along with semantic and phonetic reduction.

With respect to grammar, the process of grammaticalization indicates that reduction in complexities of semantic and phonetic are fundamental stages of raising the status of grammatical constructions. The article adds that in relation to lexicalization, semantic and phonetic reduction causes the formerly transparent, analytic, and motivated words to lose motivation and the end result is holistic formations as well as non-transparent developments (Miller, 2014). Theories are also used to explain the role of folk etymology on changes in language and sound. Gorrell (1994) applied the naturalness theory to explain the connection. According to Gorrell (1994), the semantic complexity ought to correspond to formal convolution. On the other hand, the formal intricacy must as well match to semantic complexity. Despite the fact that lexicalization and grammaticalization are capable of restoring constructional iconicity through giving function and form to semantics, Gorrell (1994) engages in trying to establish an explanation on how de-lexicalization

and de-grammaticalization can be applied to achieve similar outcomes. In reference to Gorrell's explanations, de-lexicalization goes along with restoration of motivation as well as segmentation of lexical units and opaque morphological.

According to Gorrell (1994), the process is prototypically and conventionally embodied in folk etymology (Gorrell, 1994). According to Rundblad and Kronenfeld (2003), acquisition of language plays a core role in folk etymology and the etymology can be considered as language acquisition. The authors rely on the language acquisition process in children to establish how acquiring new language is significant to folk etymology.

It can also take place among adults as they acquire new words or when they learn a second language. At some point, Miller (2014) also recognizes the role of first language attainment in folk etymology. Rundblad and Kronenfeld seem to have a similar line of thinking as Miller in relation to the association between acquisition of first language and folk etymology. In reference to the combined thinking of the authors, acquisition of first language is fundamental in regard to folk etymology because it mirrors the need of a speaker to create natural form meaning associations as well as demonstrating such perfect signs in chain structures that do not use marked sounds through selecting fragments that are easier to pronounce. Acquisition of new language acquisition stands a crucial proof for propensities of languages to re-establish constructional iconism. All the same, the general challenge of restricted power for children to initiate language change should as well be well thought-out as an obstructive force behind the establishment

of the particular folk etymologies (Rundblad & Kronenfeld, 2003).

Bauer (2006) narrates about certain aspects that cause misunderstandings in regard to folk etymology and its effects on sound and language change.

The author asserts that people might fail to clearly understand how folk etymology affects the change in language and sound because of the few facets that cause confusion. One of the things that Bauer (2006) points out is the difference between phonetic or else semantic change and word formation change. An understanding of the two factions is fundamental to understanding how folk etymology is responsible for language and sound transformation. Change in word formation is concerned with changes of patterns in meaning and form. On the other hand, semantic and phonetic change concentrates on meaning of words and forms. However, Bauer (2006) insists that the differences do not apply to the differentiation between semantic or phonetic and folk etymology change because there are many phonetic and semantic changes that are caused by process of folk etymology. As a way of clearly bringing out his explanation, the author says that there is a wide variation between changes in natural language for instance semantic or phonetic language and changes that go back to folk etymology. According to the author, the main difference is based on the domains on which the two sections operate.

Semantic and phonetic transformations operate in specific domains; semantic developments or the changes in the internal sounds of words. Folk etymology functions between two spheres; particular changes that occur as a result of word external annexation to varied fields of words. The analysis of the

process of language and sound changes by the author indicates that folk etymology causes transformation in languages and sounds by fashioning the essential isolation of the elements of words and leading to homonymy with words and phrases that are already in existence. Bauer (2006) says his position on the effects of folk etymology on language and sound changes is supported by the fact that the significance of analogy as a force that causes change in natural language is extremely borderline for folk etymology. Gorrell (1994) and Miller (2014) indicate similar views on how folk etymology is wrongfully applied to refer to other means that do not reflect its effects in language development and change. Gorrell (1994) points out how many linguists give folk etymology a same meaning as blending. Gorrell recognizes the role of blending in language and sound change but its effect is different from folk etymology. The author describes blending as mere contamination of words by mixing two words to form one word.

Blending comprises two words that fuse semantically and phonetically to form a single word for example formation of the word smog as a result of mixing the words smoke and fog. On the contrary, the words involved in folk etymology do not fuse semantically or phonetically. The author adds that unlike folk etymology, blending does not result in transparency to make archetypal blend simplexes (Gorrell 1994). The existing research studies focus majorly on general issues that are behind change in language and sounds. It is recommended that future research be more detailed and establish the exact mechanisms that cause language change and how the change occurs.

Most researchers concur with each other on the causes of language change but fail to give a clear description of how the aspects change language and sounds. Future research needs to find detailed answers on questions like; how does articulatory simplification cause change in language? Can spelling pronunciation change the meaning of a word, if yes, how? The studies must also establish how a combination of multiple factors known to change language and sounds affect the change in language and sounds.

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