

THE CATEGORIAL CONTINUUM OF ENGLISH BLENDS

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the extension of the morphological category of blends in English. A multidimensional description based on the principles of prototype theory was applied to a corpus of 1,084 items, and allowed the identification of central, peripheral and borderline cases of blends, as well as cases of difficult ascription lying between blends, clippings, abbreviations and initialisms (acronyms – *laser* – and alphabetisms – *BBC*). The existence of those items, which are often neglected in linguistic description due to their troublesome features, legitimizes the approach adopted in these pages, namely, an approach based on the notions of typicality and continuity, which can provide at least a tentative answer to the doubtful status of those items.