

Abstract

This bachelor thesis is focused on the phenomenon of folk etymology. Folk etymology is the result of cognitive processes which can be observed in those unlearned in etymology or in lexicographers and etymologists with limited access to historical records and limited knowledge of linguistics. Folk etymology concerns itself with the intake and transformation of new words into one's mental lexicon on the basis of similarity between the items already present and the newly incoming ones. Folk etymologies are thus logical judgments based on the speakers' prior experience with language. The speakers create folk etymologies based on the word structures they have observed and analogically apply them onto the new words in their mental lexicon which they are trying to understand.

The core of this thesis is the analysis of the creation of individual folk etymologies. The sample examined in this thesis is made up of 5 words, the folk etymologies of which will be analysed and mutually compared. These words and folk etymology theories have been selected from A.S. Palmer's *Folk-etymology; a dictionary of verbal corruptions or words perverted in form or meaning by false derivation or mistaken analogy* in such a manner so as to be representative of the diverse word formation processes and origins of borrowing present in the English language. Palmer's theories of the folk etymologies for these five words are complemented by data from relevant dictionaries and corpora. The aim of the thesis is to identify pattern of formation among the examined folk etymologies.

keywords:

etymology, folk etymology, word formation, analogy, loanwords, lexicology, lexicon, misinterpretation, misidentification, mental lexicon, word formation

