Witsuwit’en blends

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“Blend”

• Two (or more) words which are combined into one word by leaving out some of the sounds in one or both words.

• English blending strategy: onset + ~onset
  – brunch (1895) < breakfast + lunch
  – Brangelina () < Brad + Angelina
  – Brexit (2012) < British + exit

• A historical process of word formation
Blending in Dene languages

• Created many disjunct prefixes/preverbs
• Witsuwit’en final C deletion
  – tsëk ‘open fire, camp fire’ (ē = [ɛ], ī = [i])
    • tsëk lidi ‘campfire tea’
  – tsē#d- (0,e) ‘in, into fire’
    • Tsëdísle. ‘I put them in the fire.’
    • Kwilet winiże tsèydn’ay. ‘He/she contributed 60 (dollars).’ (lit. ‘put 60 in the fire’
One vs. two stresses

• **Bi”ni”** ‘his/her mind’
• **Mi” ni”** ‘he/she is observing a taboo’
More Witsuwit’en free and bound forms

• hah topic/focus
  – din dinï hah ’indzin. ‘This person is a man.’

• ha#
  – din dinï ha’indzin. ‘This person is a man.’

• nts’ë ‘where’
  – Nts’ë honye? ‘Where did he/she go?’

• nts’oo#  where?
  – < nts’i ‘where’ + ho# ‘forth, out’
  – Nts’oonye ‘Where did he/she go?’
Witsuwit’en blends

• Not just verbs
• ‘fox’ PA *nɑx-\(\text{-}\)Gə̉̌ts’-eː (Leer 2005:308)
  \sim *nɑ:\(-\)Gə̉̌ts’-eː (lit. ‘eye-twisted’)
  – Witsuwit’en neggizgi < ne- ‘eye’ + -ggiz ‘crossed’ + gi ‘?’
  – c’inegh ‘an eye, eye of something’
Blending via final C deletion

• -kak ‘surface’
  – yin kak ‘on earth, over (the) land’
  – yin kak widinï’ ‘human being’ (lit. ‘earth's person’)
  – Yinkadiniï’ ‘First Nations, Native American person’
  – -kak’ët ‘wound’ (lit. ‘surface cavity’)
    • bikak’ët ‘his/her wound’
• Nu’ts’ini” < nu’ ‘upriver’ + ts’ah ‘towards’ + ni” pl.
• ...pn  Dik'az Tl'e"nli"
• dial  W
• gl  *Parrot L.
• com  [Gisdewe] territory
• sp  AG
• genxr  dik'az
• genxr  li"$2
• src  AJ/JK 86-2:20 [n)dek'aaz] "crotch" [n)tl'enli"] "flows toward", AM, CA/JK 86:24 [n)dek'aa{y,z} tl'enlii] "flows from rough area" "upper Parrot Lake"
• com  "crotch" refers to [n)tl'e-] not [n)dek'aaz]
• etym  dik'ay zi"] "trout species" + [tl'e"nli"]
• Khiyt < khiy tah
• Unusual iy in closed syllable
Delete final C, cont.

- **dzut’ikw** ‘vest’
  - dzut  t’ikw
  - coat  short
- **c’iyebe’** ‘dried strip of fish meat’
  - -yet ‘flesh’ + be’ ‘dry fish’
Delete final C, cont.

- **tah** ‘among, on’
  - yin tah ‘on the land, traditional territory’

- **yin timï’** ‘low-bush blueberry’ (lit. ‘berry on land’)

- **yin tidilk’in’** ‘strawberry’ (lit. ‘that which is red on the land’)

![Image of berries](image-url)
Delete final C, cont.

• -tl’ëghe ‘pubic hair’ (-tl’ët ‘crotch’ + -ghe ‘hair’)
  – bitl’ët ‘his/her crotch’
  – bitl’ëghe ‘his/her pubic hair’

• -nebeghe ‘eyelash’ (-negh ‘eye’ + -begh ‘edge, around’ + ghe ‘hair’)
  • binebeghe ‘his/her eyelash’
  • binebegh ‘around his/her eye’
  • bibegh ‘its edge, around it’
Delete final C, cont.

• **Scinlebes** ‘September’
  – *scinlegh* ‘timberline’ + -bes ‘round (full moon)’ (PN)

• **Bïwiniï** ‘Owen L.’
  – < *bït* ‘char’ winï ‘there is’ (AJ)
Delete initial consonant

- K’udini” ‘Carrier people of Ft. St. James area’
- [n)k'uu denii] CA, MA/JK 86:1 "different people"
- Cf. lhk'u] "smart; different"
Syncope

- word-internal unstressed vowel deletion
  - *favorite* [ˈfeɪvərɪt] vs. *Everett* [ˈɛvɪrɪt]
  - *family* [ˈfæmlɪ] vs. *Emily* [ˈɛmɪli]
  - *interest* vs. *interim*
• C’olilh ‘spring time’
• C’olhde’ ‘last spring’

• Kwis co wini”, Whis co wini” Hudson Bay Ranch
• Kwiscawni”, Whiscawni”
Witsuwit’en blending via syncope

• bïtnïdlï ‘clothing’
  –  < bï dinï nlï
   in it person 3sg is
• ~ bï dinïdlï

• A passivized deverbal noun
• -e dinï -lï ‘wear’
  • Liblet yi dinï nlï. ‘The priest is wearing it.’
Syncope, cont.

• Minges ‘June’
• $\sim$ Binin c’itges
  – $<\ binin$ ‘its month’ $+$ c’itges ‘things are spawning’
  – $bn > m$
Syncope, cont.

• ’awtoka ‘just anything, whatever, wrong thing’
  – < ’awet ‘then’ wika ‘on account of’
• ~ ’atoka
• ~toka

• ’Awtoka yelhdic. ‘He/she says just anything.’ ‘He/she is talking out of turn.’
Syncope, cont.

• Lho Nîts’ay ‘boundary line, southwest side, Kw’îs territory’
  – < lho ‘glacier’ + ni’ ‘in back’ + si’ay ‘it is’
  – (‘ ‘ay > ts’ay)

• C’itsewh Dzilh Ts’ay ‘peak north of Goosely L.’
  – < c’itsewh ‘downhill’ + dzilh ‘mountain’ + si’ay ‘it is’
  – (s’ay > ts’ay)
Syncope, cont.

• k’indzigil ‘perfume’
  – LM: “it sounds like short word for”
    k’inizdilgït (lit. ‘that which we spray on
    (ourselves)’)

• -ggilcelics ‘thread on bolt’
  – Biggilcelics c’itsiy’ sïlï’. ‘It (bolt) is stripped.’
  – etymoloogy?
Summary

• Witsuwit’en blending creates new words and/or reshapes existing words
  – Delete final C
  – Syncope
  – Sometimes with other sound changes
Misiyh!

Moricetown L.