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COMBINATORIAL POSSIBILITIES AND MEANINGS OF THE SPLINTER *-stagram* (← *Instagram*) IN NEW ENGLISH LEXICAL BLENDS**

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The paper aims at investigating the combinatorial possibilities (and preferences, if any) of the final splinter *-stagram* (extracted from *Instagram*) as well as its meanings in new English lexical blends, as it is not unusual for this type of formative to develop new senses due to repeated blending with various other (parts of) words. To achieve these aims, a collection of 194 two-member blends whose right-hand element is the splinter *-stagram* was qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. The formal analysis has shown that *-stagram* can be added both to full words and other splinters, with the former being strongly preferred to the latter. It has also been shown that *-stagram* has a strong preference for being blended with simplex instead of complex words, which mostly belong to the morphosyntactic class of nouns. The semantic analysis of the collected blends, most of which denote the names of (popular) Instagram hashtags or accounts, has indicated that *-stagram* retains the meaning of its etymon in the vast majority of the blends, though there is some residue of blends in which it shows a slight semantic variation from the original word.

Keywords: lexical blend(ing), final splinter, *Instagram*, form, meaning, contemporary English

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the 20th century, one of the most dominant trends in English word formation (and beyond, most probably under the overwhelming influence of English on other languages[1]) has been the extraction of non-morphemic elements from existing words as the result of their resegmentation (or clipping) and later use in the creation of new words, namely lexical blends (Callies, 2016; Lehrer,

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[1] See, for example, Tomić (2019) for a number of such word-forming elements in contemporary Serbian.

2007: 120–121; Miller, 2014: 207; cf. Szymanek, 2005: 435–436).[2] The term most commonly used in the morphological literature to refer to these word-forming elements (or fragments) is *splinter*.[3] Some of the earliest and (probably) best-known instances of such formatives include: *-burger* (extracted from *Hamburger*), *-gate* (from *Watergate*), -(*a*)/(*o*)*holic* (from *alcoholic*), *-scape* (from *landscape*), -(*a*)*thon* (from *marathon*), *docu-* (split from *document*), *eco-* (from *ecology* or *ecological*) etc. According to Adams (1973: 142, 151), splinters are "usually […] irregular in form, that is, they are parts of morphs, though in some cases there is no formal irregularity, but a special relationship of meaning between the splinter and some 'regular' word in which it occurs". Similarly, for Fandrych (2008: 111–112), they represent "random parts of existing lexemes". As they (originally) form part of lexical blends, splinters belong to extra-grammatical morphology, the component of morphology which refers to "a set of heterogeneous formations (of an analogical or rule-like nature) which do not belong to morphological grammar, in that the processes through which they are obtained [e.g. clipping, blending etc.] are not clearly identifiable and their input does not allow a prediction of a regular output" (Mattiello, 2013: 1).[4]

With regard to their semantics, splinters "represent the words for which they stand [not only formally, but also] semantically [as they] contribute the entire meaning of their source words to the new lexeme mixtures, the blends" (Fandrych, 2008: 113; cf. also Bauer et al., 2013: 19; Mattiello, 2018: 13). That is, splinters generally provide the meaning of their etymon (or etyma, as is the case with *eco-* above) to the blend. However, through repeated blending with other words or their fragments, these modern extractions may, over the course of time, become quite frequent and productive (or *profitable*, following Mattiello's (2018) terminology), thus evolving into bound morphemes (i.e. (secreted) combining forms and (secreted)

[2] Although there is no precise definition as to what the term *lexical blend* includes, most researchers (e.g. Beliaeva, 2014: 47; Gries, 2004: 201; Kelly, 1998: 579; Lehrer, 2007: 116; Mattiello, 2013: 111) agree that blends are new words (mostly of transient nature) consciously and intentionally formed by variously combining (segments of) two (or sporadically more) existing words (i.e. source words), which may overlap (e.g. *crum(-)believable* ← **crumb**le × un**believable** (The Sun)), or one full word and a segment of another one, which may overlap (e.g. *pest-minster* ← **pest** × W**est**minster (The Sun), *toastspiration* 'name of an Instagram account' ← **toast** × in**spiration** (Instagram)). For an in-depth overview of lexical blending and its products – lexical blends in English, see, for example, Bauer (2012), Bauer, Lieber, & Plag (2013), Beliaeva (2019), Fradin (2015), Lehrer (2007). The segments of the blend's source words which overlap are herein indicated by underlining. Words or their parts which are blended are given in boldface.

[3] The term *splinter* was introduced by Berman (1961, as cited in Adams, 1973: 147). For a number of its definitions, as well as the lists of some of the frequent and productive splinters in English, see, for example, Bauer et al. (2013: 19; 525–530), Barrena Jurado (2019: 6–9), Callies (2016), Lalić-Krstin (2010; 2016), Lehrer (2007: 116; 120–125), López Rúa (2006), or Miller (2014: Chapter 13).

[4] For a detailed study of this as well as two other components of morphology, namely marginal morphology and prototypical grammatical morphology, see Dressler (2000) or Mattiello (2013).

affixes) (e.g. *-(a)/(o)holic*, *-gate*) or, far less commonly, into free morphemes (e.g. *-burger*) (Lehrer, 2007: 121; Mattiello, 2018; cf. also Beliaeva, 2014).[5] In Mattiello's (2018: 15) words, "only when a splinter becomes frequently used and allows for abstraction, it can be considered an established combining form" or an affix (cf. also Lehrer, 1998: 4).[6] For instance, even though *-burger* began its life as a splinter, it is now a well-established free morpheme, with the meaning 'patty served on a bun' (Bauer et al., 2013: 528).[7] The splinter *-(a)/(o)holic* (Mattiello, 2018: 10–11), on the other hand, has acquired the status of a bound morpheme and is currently treated (depending on the source consulted) either as a final combining form used in the creation of nominal compounds or as a suffix creating nominal derivatives. For instance, in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* *-(a)/(o)holic* is described as a combining form with the sense 'a person who has an addiction to or obsession with some object or activity', whereas the *Oxford English Dictiionary* (3rd edition) (as cited in Mattiello, 2018: 10) describes it as a suffix, "denoting a person who appears to be addicted to the thing, activity, etc., expressed by the first element". Notwithstanding its different morpheme status in the two sources, the semantic "ingredient" *alcohol* is removed from the meaning of *-(a)/(o)holic*, thus allowing for its abstraction, as in *smokaholic*, *wordaholic*, *waste-aholic*, *helpaholic*, *holidayholic* (Lehrer 2007). What is more, there are attested examples of *-holic* as a free morpheme (Callies, 2016: 509; cf. Mattiello, 2018: 10). To illustrate the fact that splinters are an open and ever-increasing category in modern English word formation (Böhmerová, 2010: 85), which gave rise to a multitude of lexical blends, here are some of the more recent examples of this type of formative: *-tainment* (← *entertainment*), *-preneur* (← *entrepreneur*) (Lalić-Krstin, 2010); *-mageddon* (← *armageddon*), *-pocalypse* (← *apocalypse*), *-zilla* (← *Godzilla*), *-nado* (← *tornado*), *-tastrophe* (← *catastrophe*), *-cane* (← *hurricane*) (Lalić-Krstin, 2014; 2016); *-gasm* (split off from *orgasm*) (Barrena Jurado, 2019).

In particular, the present paper investigates the formal and semantic patterns of yet another fairly recent, frequent and productive word-forming element in

[5] It is important to note, however, that the evolution of a splinter from a typically non-morphemic element to a bound or, rather infrequently, free morpheme is viewed as a diachronic process by most authors (e.g. Lehrer, 2007: 121; Mattiello, 2018: 17). The process of morphemization normally entails a semantic generalization or specification of the splinter's meaning (Mattiello, 2018: 17). It is also noteworthy that, despite few splinters which have eventually become free morphemes, splinters show a tendency for remaining bound morphemes (Lehrer, 2007: 125).

[6] "Whether and when a splinter becomes productive appears to depend on nonlinguistic, mostly chance factors" (Lehrer, 1998: 5). There have been attempts at establishing the criteria for distinguishing splinters from (secreted) combining forms and secreted affixes, as well as automatically identifying blend splinters which are good morpheme candidates (see, e.g., Fischer, 1998; Mattiello, 2018; Saavedra, 2014).

[7] A comprehensive study of the development and use of the morpheme *burger* in American English was carried out by Soudek (1971).

present-day English – the splinter *-stagram*. Similarly to the vast majority of English splinters (cf. Bauer et al., 2013: 530), the splinter *-stagram* originates from a noun, namely the proper noun *Instagram*, which refers to 'the name of a social media service for taking, changing, and sharing photographs and video' (Cambridge Dictionary Online).[8] It is interesting to observe that the word *Instagram* itself is an amalgam of the fragments *insta-* (from *instant camera*) and *-gram* (from *telegram*) (Wikipedia). As is obvious from the etymology of *Instagram*, the splinter under analysis has emerged as the result of the morphological reanalysis of the word into *in-* and *-stagram*. The brand itself is, however, often colloquially clipped to *Insta* and *Gram* (Cambridge Dictionary Online). The clipping *Insta* has participated in the formation of various other complex words, mostly compounds such as *Insta-ham*, *Insta-ban*, *Insta-sham* (The Sun), or *Instayam* (Oxford Mail). However, compared to *-stagram*, it seems that neither *Insta* nor *Gram* is "idiosyncratic" enough to evoke the word *Instagram* specifically, since the former may refer to a prefix 'instant, happening immediately, without delay' (e.g. *insta-news*, *insta-polls*) (Cambridge Dictionary Online), combining form 'indicating instant or quickly produced' (e.g. *insta-thriller*) (Dictionary), or a splinter from *instant* (e.g. *Insta-View*, *Insta-lith*, *Instamatic*) (Bryant 1974: 173, 178–179), and the latter may refer to "a secreted affix (or a secreted combining form) denoting 'a message delivered by a representative of a commercial greetings company, as in *kissogram*" (Mattiello, 2018: 8) or *culturegram*, *prophecy-gram* (Dictionary).[9] In other words, both these clipped forms may be seriously misleading in the interpretation of the words they constitute.[10] Considering the fact that other popular social media services or networks such as *Twitter* (see, e.g., Klymenko, 2019) have generated a great deal of

[8] A few examples of splinters originating from adjectives include: *-(a)delic* (from *psychedelic*), *-licious* (from *delicious)*, and *-tastic* (from *fantastic*), some of which are now classified as combining forms (e.g. *-tastic*) (Dictionary). The immense popularity of the *Instagram* application since it was launched in 2010 has had considerable repercussions on most of the world's societies and, consequently, on many of its languages, in particular English and its lexis. For instance, apart from the noun *Instagram* itself and the converted verb *instagram* (also *insta*), meaning 'to take and share an image of something using Instagram' (Cambridge Dictionary Online), some of the first Instagram-based compounds and derivatives that entered the English language were *Instagram husband* 'a person who helps a partner manage their Instagram social media channel, especially by taking photos' (Dictionary), *Instagrammable* 'attractive or interesting enough to be suitable for photographing and posting on the social media service Instagram' (Cambridge Dictionary Online), and *Instagrammer* 'someone who regularly shares images, or other things such as video or text, on the social media service Instagram' (Cambridge Dictionary Online).

[9] There is also a neo-classical combining form *-gram* 'indicating a drawing or something written or recorded', as in neo-classical compounds *hexagram*, *telegram* etc. (Dictionary).

[10] Though there are certain domains in which lack of transparency of new words is a desirable quality (e.g. brand naming (cf. Ronneberger-Sibold, 2006: 166)), most such deliberately created novel words are intended to be relatively morpho-semantically transparent (Lalić-Krstin, 2010: 38; cf. also Barrena Jurado, 2019: 16).

neologisms (or "twittologisms"), as well as a highly productive initial splinter *tw-*, producing a multitude of lexical blends such as *twapp*, *twam*, *twemment*, *twewbie*, *twocal*, *Twellow*, *twaffic* (Klymenko, 2019), it was only a matter of time before Instagram-based neologisms (e.g. *binstagram* (The Sun), *Thinstagram*, *Princestagram*, *Printstagram* (Sketch Engine)) or splinters emerged.[11] After all, "the emergence of a new area of Internet activity always generates a great deal of enthusiastic neologizing" (Crystal, 2011: 59; cf. also Lehrer, 2007: 131).

As already mentioned, this paper aims at investigating the combinatorial possibilities (and preferences (if any)) as well as the meanings of the final splinter *-stagram* in new English lexical blends. Specifically, by analyzing the formal aspects of the blends whose right-hand element is the splinter *-stagram*, I intend to determine what type of bases (in terms of their form and morphosyntactic characteristics) the splinter (predominantly) attaches to. Additionally, considering the splinter's frequency of use in the formation of new blends, the paper aims to determine whether there are any changes in its semantics, when compared to its source word *Instagram*. That is, it aims at investigating whether *-stagram* has acquired any new senses as a result of its recurrent blending with other words or their parts. Related to this is its aim to determine the (most common) contexts and functions of the *-stagram* blends.

The introduction is followed by the section on data collection and research methodology, where the methods of collecting the blends and the nature of the analyses performed are explained. Section 3 provides the analysis and discussion of the obtained results. Finally, in Section 4, the conclusions reached herein are presented. All blends (supplemented by their source words) used for the purposes of the present research are listed (in alphabetical order) in the Appendix.

[11] According to Crystal (2011: 59), most such formations "are the result of people exploiting the wordplay possibilities of the name". Though *Twitter* has probably produced more neologisms than any other social media service or network, *Facebook*, *Tinder*, *WhatsApp* and *Snapchat* have also been exploited in the creative formation of new words. Here are some examples that demonstrate their use in the creation of lexical blends: *Tinderella* 'an attractive person on Tinder, particularly one who's accidentally gotten away' (Dictionary) ← **T**i**nder** × C**inderella**, *Tindstagram* ← **T**i**nd**er × **I**n**stagram** (Sketch Engine), *Facecrook* ← **Face**b**ook** × **cr**o**ok** (The Sun), Facebookemon ← **Faceb**o**ok** × p**okemon**, facehack ← **Face**book × **hack**, falk ← **Fa**cebook × st**a**l**k** (Beliaeva, 2014: 204), *Whatsnap* ← **What**s**S**App × **Snap**chat (Barrena Jurado, 2019: 4), *Whexit* ← **Wh**atsApp × **exit** (Cambridge Dictionary Blog). Even though *Facebook* is still popular, it is somewhat surprising that neither *face* nor *book* has become a common splinter. One possible reason for this is the blocking phenomenon, i.e. "the nonoccurrence of one form due to the simple existence of another" (Aronoff, 1976: 43), as both *face* and *book* exist as independent morphemes.

2. DATA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of the present research, several large electronic corpora of contemporary English available in the software *Sketch Engine* were used. These are: *The English Web Corpus 2020* (enTenTen20) (38 billion words), *The English Web Corpus 2018* (enTenTen18) (21.9 billion words), *The English Web Corpus 2015* (enTenTen15) (13 billion words), *The English Web Corpus 2013* (enTenTen13) (19 billion words), *The English Web Corpus 2012* (enTenTen12) (11 billion words), as well as *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–2022, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2014–2021, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2014–2016, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–04, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–03, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–02, and *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–01.[12] Unlike the *English Web* corpora which are static and include different types of texts collected from the Internet, *Timestamped JSI web* corpora are "English monitor corp[ora] made up of news articles gained from their RSS feeds" (Sketch Engine).[13] There are two main reasons why these specific corpora were chosen – their currency and the types of texts they contain. Namely, as the subject of this paper is new English lexical blends whose right-hand element is the splinter *-stagram* (split from *Instagram*), that is, fairly recent creations, it was important to choose corpora that are representative enough, i.e. those compiled subsequent to the launching of the application in 2010. Equally important for selecting these corpora was the fact that they are compiled of the texts from the Internet (rather than books or similar sources), as it abounds in neologisms, especially those where two words are combined to make a new one (cf. Crystal, 2001: 82).[14] One other reason for choosing these corpora was their size. Large electronic corpora such as *The English Web Corpus* or *Timestamped JSI web corpus* are essential for obtaining valid results and determining preferences, especially in the case of blends, many of which represent nonce-formations or nonce-usages.

Within each corpus, the tool *Concordance: examples in context* was first selected. It enables the analyst to gain a valuable insight into the contexts in which a particular word is used – the so-called *concordances*, which were particularly useful in determining the meaning(s) of the blends as well as the splinter under analysis.

[12] All corpora are available at https://www.sketchengine.eu/.
[13] This is why, in addition to *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–2022 and *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2014–2021, I had to search *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–04, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–03, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–02, and *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–01 as well.
[14] Here, mention must also be made of the fact that the technology the *Sketch Engine* software uses collects "only linguistically valuable web content" (Sketch Engine).

Advanced search was further used within the *Concordance* tool. To be specific, the corpora were searched using the string .+*stagram*, query type – *word* (*any part of speech*), and frequency of – *word forms* (instead of, for example, *lemmas*).[15] The search was case insensitive and included all text types available in the given corpus, as well as multiple domains (i.e. source countries including the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand).

The search described in the previous paragraph yielded 907 items in the enTenTen20, 961 items in enTenTen18, 401 items in enTenTen15, 367 items in enTenTen13, and 77 items in enTenTen12. The search of the *Timestamped JSI web corpora* returned the following results: 798 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–2022, 1,000 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2014–2021, 1,000 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2014–2016, 69 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–04, 82 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–03, 28 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–02, and 76 items in the *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–01.[16] However, not all of these items were relevant to the aims of my research, as the search returned results which contained, *inter alia*, word forms containing the full source word *Instagram* (owing to its graphemic and/or phonemic overlap with the left-hand element). For example, *Timestamped JSI web corpus* 2021–2022 returned such items as *Finstagram* 'a fake Instagram account', which is a combination of the splinter from *fake* and the full word *Instagram*.[17] As one of the aims of this paper is to determine the combinatorial possibilities of the splinter *-stagram*, and not those of the whole word *Instagram*, the blends containing phonemically and/or graphemically full word *Instagram* as in *Finstagram*, *Rinstagram*, *Freenstagram*, *Pinstagram* etc. were eliminated from the obtained list. In addition, eliminated were the words which represent typos (e.g. *hispstagram* (enTenTen20) instead of *hipstagram*). The words in which more than two other words were combined were also excluded from the final list of blends. Finally, words such as *Listagram* (enTenTen20) were not included either, for it was obvious from the relevant concordance(s) that the item was not related to the word *Instagram*, but was coined from the word *list*, the linking vowel *-a-*, and the combining form *-gram*, to name 'a list building tool that aims to provide participants with a game to play in exchange for opting in' (Sketch Engine). Excluded from the

[15] I opted for *word forms* instead of *lemmas* as word forms provide invaluable information about the behavior of a particular blend (e.g. its quality of being (un)countable etc.).
[16] It must be noted that I was allowed to see only 1,000 items per corpus.
[17] The same blend *finstagram* ← **fin** × **Instagram** was coined in relation to the rare photos of Britain's basking sharks taken using 'SharkCam' sea drone (The Sun).

final list of blends were also those items in which it was not possible to unambiguously determine the left-hand element. As regards the first source words of the collected blends, it must be noted that the established clipped forms were treated as whole source words in the formal analysis. For example, *vid* (short for *video*) in *Vid-stagram* (also styled as *Vidstagram*) or *ad* in *AdStagram* were treated as the left-hand source words of the respective blends.

By applying these criteria, I collected 194 examples of blends consisting of two elements, of which the right-hand one is the splinter *-stagram*. This final list of blends was then qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed in terms of the way the two elements are combined in the blend, that is, whether the first source word was fully preserved in the blend or not, whether the two elements overlap, whether the overlap is complete (i.e. both phonemic and graphemic) or incomplete (i.e. phonemic or graphemic), as well as the (most frequent) morphosyntactic class of the left-hand element. To shed more light on the type of bases the word-final element *-stagram* (predominantly) attaches to, I also analyzed whether the first source words were (mainly) simplex or complex ones. As already mentioned, one of the problems of this particular aspect of formal analysis was determining the exact form of the blend's left-hand element. For example, in cases such as *Kidstagram*, it was not clear whether *-s* belongs to both source words or only to *Instagram*, i.e. whether the first source word was singular or plural in form. In such cases, I resorted to the corresponding concordances (e.g. </s><s> Students came up with everything from an app for kids to complement their friends' artwork ("Kidstagram") to […]. </s><s>) and paraphrase (e.g. Kidstagram is 'an app for kids'), thereby determining that the first source word of this particular blend is *kids*.

I made use of concordances as well as paraphrases in those cases where it was uncertain which part of speech the left-hand element of a blend belongs to.[18] For example, *vape* in *vapestagram* may be both a noun and a verb. However, if the relevant concordance(s) and the result of paraphrasing are taken into consideration, it usually becomes quite obvious which morphosyntactic class the first source word belongs to. Consider, for example, the blend *jumpstagram*. Its first source word may also be either a verb or a noun. But, if one takes into account the linguistic context in which it appears (</s><s> I've had lessons on jumpstagram (where you catch a person mid-jump)[…]</s><s>) and what it refers to – '(taking) a photo of a person in mid-jump', it becomes clear that the blend represents a combination of two nouns

[18] In some cases I searched for the item on the Internet.

– *jump* and *Instagram*, and not of the verb *jump* and the noun *Instagram*. Finally, the semantic analysis of the *-stagram* blends involved determining their (most common) meanings as well as the meaning(s) of the splinter under discussion.

3. ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Combinatorial possibilities of the splinter *-stagram*

The results of the analysis of the structural patterns or mechanisms employed in the formation of the collected English blends clearly indicate that the final splinter *-stagram* mostly combines with full source words, as evidenced by 171 blends (88%).[19] Some of the examples which combine an unclipped source word and the splinter *-stagram* are:

(a) *Frogstagram* ← **frog** × In**stagram**,
(b) *hairstagram* ← **hair** × In**stagram**,
(c) *Hipstagram* ← **hip** × In**stagram**,
(d) *legostagram* ← **Lego** × In**stagram**,
(e) *mathstagram* ← **math** × In**stagram**.

In regard to this specific result, it is interesting to observe that *-stagram* behaves similarly to most final splinters in English, as is convincingly demonstrated by several studies on a number of, more or less, frequent and productive splinters including: *-gasm* (← *orgasm*), as in *wordgasm*, *noisegasm*, *photogasm*, *tabloidgasm*, *Twittergasm* (Barrena Jurado, 2019), *-(e)rella* (← *Cinderella*), -(*o*)*ween* (← *Halloween*), *-mas* (← *Christmas*), -(*k*)*enstein* (*Frankenstein*), *-ula* (*Dracula*), as in *Chickenerella*, *Pigerella*, *Shalloween*, *Summer-ween*, *Giftmas*, *Witchmas*, *Wolfenstein*, *Funkenstein*, *Catula*, *McWolfula* (Danilović Jeremić, 2021), *-umentary*, as in *mock*(-)*umentary*, *rock*(-)*umentary*, *dogumentary*, *vlogumentary*, *shockumentary* (Mattiello, 2018).

In as few as 23 blends (12%), the first source word is clipped, either finally or, much less frequently, initially, as in *Cryptstagram* ← en**crypt** × In**stagram**. As a matter of fact, this is the only example of the first source word being front-clipped in our data. Again, this is not surprising if the results of other recent investigations of English blends and some recurring splinters are taken into account (cf., e.g. Barrena Jurado, 2019: 25–32; Danilović Jeremić, 2021: 60; Lalić-Krstin, 2010: 145–157).

[19] All figures are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

What is more, according to Lehrer (2007: 118), "if the splinter precedes a full word or another splinter, it must be the first part of a word", with *blog* ← we**b** × **log** being "a major exception". Examples (a)–(e) below illustrate some of the blends whose initial elements are back-clipped and as such combined with the splinter *-stagram*:

(a) *thankstagram* ← **Thanks**giving × In**stagram**,
(b) *Histagram* ← **his**tory × In**stagram**,
(c) *awkstagram* ← **awk**ward × In**stagram**,
(d) *illustagram* ← **illus**tration × In**stagram**,
(e) *Postagram* ← **pos**tcard × In**stagram**.

Interestingly enough, as can be concluded from examples (a), (c), and (e) above, the first source words are truncated in such a way as to produce the blends whose length (in terms of syllables), for the most part, equals that of the second source word, i.e. *Instagram*.

As far as the presence of overlap in the *-stagram* blends is concerned, the blends whose elements share certain segments (phonemes and/or graphemes), as in (a), (b), (d), and (e) above, make up as little as 17% of the data. When compared to the results of some recent investigations of the structural patterns of English blends (e.g. Danilović Jeremić, 2021: 60), the number of overlapping blends in my data is surprisingly small. Moreover, the overlaps in the blends from my data are minimal. That is, most elements have one to three phonemes and/or graphemes in common. Only one blend *Reduxstagram* ← **Redux** /ˈriː.dʌks/ × In**stagram** /ˈɪn.stə.græm/ exhibits incomplete overlap, in that its elements share only a phoneme, but not a grapheme. In all other cases, overlap is complete, i.e. a blend's elements overlap both phonemically and graphemically, as in *Twistagram* ← (plot) **twist** × In**stagram** or *Pastagram* ← **pasta** × In**stagram**.

Further formal analysis of the *-stagram* blends, that is, the analysis of the morphosyntactic make-up of the source words the splinter *-stagram* is blended with shows that it freely combines with a variety of morphosyntactic classes, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and even exclamations. By far the most common among them are nouns. Specifically, their percentage in the total number of the first source words is 90%. This may possibly be explained by the fact that almost all of the analyzed blends are also nouns (99%) and that the elements of blends more often than not belong to the same word class as the blends themselves

(Bauer et al., 2013: 459; Kubozono, 1990: 3; Pound, 1914: 23). Only one blend – *poolstagram* – is a verb, i.e. a combination of a noun and the verb *Instagram*, used as in the following example – "make sure no one forgets the party of a lifetime. poolstagram it!" (Sketch Engine).

What is interesting to note about these nominal source words is that there is a relatively large number of proper nouns among them (16%) such as *(Ford) Fiesta* in *Fiestagram*, *Thanksgiving* in *Thankstagram*, *Brit* in *Britstagram*, *Croatia* in *Crostagram*, *Facebook* in *Facebookstagram* or *facestagram*, *Twitter* in *Twitterstagram*, *Twittstagram* or *Twitstagram*, *Mitt* in *Mittstagram*, to mention but a few. A possible explanation for this is the fact that many of the Instragram-based blends refer to the names of Instagram accounts, in the creation of which people tend to use proper names (e.g. their own (nick)names, names of countries or companies).[20] Furthermore, the trend of using at least one proper noun in the blending process has also been observed by other researchers, regardless of the language being discussed (see, e.g., Beliaeva, 2014: 9–10; Mattiello, 2013: 130; Pound, 1914: 21; Winters, 2017: 63, 65, 120).[21]

Adjectives, such as *real* in *Realstagram*, *fake* in *fakestagram* or *old* in *Oldstagram*, form the second most frequent morphosyntactic class among the first source words of the *-stagram* blends. They account for 6% of the total number of the first source words. Only 3% of the first source words belong to verbs. Examples include blends such as *eatstagram* (also *eat-stagram*) ← eat × In**stagram** or *Killstagram* ← **kill** × In**stagram**. In addition to nouns, adjectives, and verbs, there are also three blends in which an adverb (*fashionably*), a preposition (*up*) and an exclamation (*oops*) are amalgamated with the splinter *-stagram* to produce *Fash-stagram*, *Upstagram*, and *oopstagram*, respectively.

An analysis of a morphological make-up of the first source words shows that the substantial majority of these initial elements are simple, monomorphemic words, thus resulting in the blends which have the same number of syllables as the second source word. The result is not surprising at all as there is a general tendency for blends to be as long as its longer source word, in this case *Instagram* (see, e.g., Beliaeva, 2019: 12). Namely, 91% of the first source words in my data are simplexes, consisting of one morpheme or a free morpheme and an inflectional

[20] This will be discussed more extensively in subsection 3.2 below, in relation to the semantics of both the blends and the splinter *-stagram*.
[21] Consequently, there are many blends which are proper names themselves, especially in the area of commerical brand naming (see, e.g., Lalić-Krstin, 2010: 18, 128; cf. also Mattiello, 2019: 7).

suffix. Some of the examples are: *femstagram* ← **fem** (informal for *woman*) × In**stagram**, *memestagram* ← **meme** × In**stagram**, and *Plumestagram* ← **Plume** × In**stagram**. On the other hand, complex (usually bimorphemic) words (i.e. derivatives and compounds) functioning as the first source words are incomparably less frequent (9%). It is noteworthy that almost all of these complex words are clipped, as in *Fitstagram* ← **fit**ness × In**stagram** or *Bitstagram* ← **bit**coin × In**stagram**. As far as the clipping of the first source words is concerned, it must also be noted that there are no detectable preferences as to the final phoneme and/or grapheme of the clipped word the splinter *-stagram* is combined with, as is the case with some splinters such as *-(o)nomics*, which is mainly blended with the words ending in *-n* (cf., e.g., Algeo, 1991: 6; Mattiello, 2019: 21). It appears that the only "preference" or constraint at work here is the phonotactics of the English language, that is, the pronounceability (or spellability) of the resulting blend (cf. Bauer, 2003: 235). A case in point is *Flickstagram* ← **Flick**r × In**stagram**, where the first source word is shortened in such a way as to enable easier pronunciation of the output blend. Regarding the spelling of the analyzed blends, there are several hyphenated examples (e.g. *ART-stagram*, *Gronk-stagram*, *Pig-stagram*) as well as those where the grapheme *-s-* or even the whole left-hand element is capitalized (e.g. *AdStagram*, *TABstagram*, *VIMstagram*), so as to indicate the boundary between the two source words and, consequently, underline the fact that the word should be interpreted as a blend of two other words and (normally) their meanings.

3.2. Meanings of the splinter *-stagram*

An insight into the results of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the semantic aspects of the collected blends allows for several conclusions. Firstly, somewhat more than one-third of all blends (35%) denote '(popular) hashtags on Instagram dedicated to what is referred to by the first source word' such as:

(a) *Antstagram* 'a hashtag dedicated to Ant-Man, the American superhero film and its main character Ant-Man' ← **Ant**-Man × In**stagram**,
(b) *ART-stagram* (also *artstagram*) 'a hashtag on Instagram dedicated to works of art'← **ART** × In**stagram**,
(c) *bookstagram* 'a popular hashtag on Instagram dedicated to books' ← **book<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**,

(d) *brunchstagram* 'a hashtag on Instagram dedicated to having brunch' ← **brunch** × In**stagram**.

The splinter *-stagram* is further most commonly used to create blends representing 'the names of (imaginary) Instagram accounts (profiles) or pages which are in some way related to what is referred to by the first source word' (16%). Examples which illustrate this use or function of the blends are:

(a) *awkstagram* 'an Instagram account dedicated to awkward moments' ← **awk**ward × In**stagram**,
(b) *mumstagram* 'an Instagram account run by mums' ← **mum<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**.

The third largest group consists of the blends denoting 'web services, platforms, bots, online tools etc., most of which are aimed at reaching a wider audience and improving Instagram users' overall experience' (10%). They include examples such as:

(a) *botstagram* 'automated Instagram marketing software' ← **bot** × In**stagram**,
(b) *likestagram* 'a professional Instagram bot that helps attract attention to your profile through an automated liking process' ← **like<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**,
(c) *Leapstagram* 'a program which allows users to view location-tagged Instagram photos through the use of Leap Motion sensors' ← **leap** × In**stagram**,
(d) *Kickstagram* 'a tool which helps you free up from the focus of researching, targeting and reaching your audience on Instagram' ← **kick** × In**stagram**,
(e) *Flipstagram* 'an image browser, especially designed to use the extra pixels of your tablet or Kindle Fire to provide you with the best possible Instagram browsing experience' ← **flip** × In**stagram**.

17 blends (9%) refer to various applications, ranging from:

(a) *coordstagram* 'an app which collects and displays all public Instagrams taken within 600 meters of the Gowanus Canal in Brooklyn' ← **coord** × In**stagram**,

(b) *Eventstagram* 'a web app that gives event producers the ability to take Instagram images that are tagged with the event hashtag(s) and display them on big screen(s) at their event' ← **event** × In**stagram**,
(c) *Kidstagram* (also *kid-stagram*) 'an Instagram app for kids under 13' ← **kid** × In**stagram**,
(d) *Bitstagram* 'a mobile app that lets users upload their smartphone photos to a blockchain' ← **bit**coin × In**stagram** to
(e) *Shapestagram* 'an app which lets you crop and frame your picture into 311 custom shapes' ← **shape<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**.

What is unusual about the names of a number of these applications is that some of them have nothing to do with the Instagram application as defined above. They seem to be exploiting the popularity (or possibilities) of its name.

14 examples (7%) of *-stagram* blends represent 'alternative names for the Instagram application or (imaginary) part of it'. Some of the examples include:

(a) *AdStagram* 'Instagram that introduces ads into its users' experience' ←**ad** × In**stagram**,
(b) *Boastagram* 'Instagram viewed as a place for boasting' ← **boast** × In**stagram**,
(c) *Smellstagram* 'an imaginary name for a button on Instagram for sharing smells' ← **smell** × In**stagram** (e.g. </s><s> If only my camera had Smellstagram, you could smell the sweetness from the strawberries a mile away. </s><s>).

There are five blends (3%) which function as 'the names of the (fictional) websites'. Some of them are:

(a) *Westagram* 'a site that allows you to view Instagram photos, like and comment on them, follow or unfollow other users and even browse the popular photos section' ← **Web** × In**stagram**,
(b) *Hotstagram* 'a website that lets you choose who has the hottest picture amongst the Instagram users' ← **hot** × In**stagram**,
(c) *Boobstagram* 'a site that collects self-portraits of women with ample chests posted to Instagram' ← **boob** × In**stagram**.

In addition to these 6 groups, there is a set of blends (20%) denoting semantically rather miscellaneous entities, such as:

(a) *Capstagram* 'name of a fic, where chapters are short and written as video transcripts' ← **cap** (short for *capture*) × In**stagram**,
(b) *farmstagram* (also *farm-stagram*) ← **farm** × In**stagram** 'name of a primer intended to help growers get started with Instagram marketing platform' (e.g. </s><s> Farmer-author Kate McLean of Longest Acres Farm gave us a "farm-stagram" primer to help growers get started with this marketing platform. </s><s>),
(c) *Fiestagram* 'name of a competition in which fans of the Instagram app are asked to upload photos featuring the Ford Fiesta' (e.g. </s><s> "Instagram has grown from nothing to 150 million photos in just nine months and we are looking forward to the participants in the #Fiestagram Photo Competition contributing their creativity to the 1.3 million Instagram images uploaded per day." </s><s>) ← (Ford) **Fiesta** × In**stagram**,
(d) *Footstagram* 'a piece of writing which aims to mock Instagram influencers, using bare feet as models' ← **foot** × In**stagram**,
(e) *Pastagram* 'the name of a pasta restaurant designed for weekday lunch breaks, but also Instagram' ← **pa<u>sta</u>** × In**<u>sta</u>gram**,
(f) *Histagram* 'a student-taken photo that illustrates a course concept at work in the student's everyday environment' ← **hi<u>st</u>**ory × In**<u>st</u>agram**,
(g) *Heartstagram* 'Framebridge's famous photo frame with a heart-shaped mat' ← **heart** × In**stagram**,
(h) *Knickstagram* 'the New York Knicks' playoff campaign, which uses #KnicksTape to collect Instagram photos of fans for a microsite' ← **Knick<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**,
(i) *sadstagram* 'a sad Instagram post' ← **sad** × In**stagram**,
(j) *Trumpstagram* 'a Slate's pop-up blog that close-reads Instagram accounts in the Trump orbit' ← **Trump** × In**stagram**.

Last but not least, the verbal blend *poolstagram* is used to refer to the action of 'taking and sharing a photo of a VIP pool party'. Perhaps more interesting insights are obtained if the semantics of the blends' second source word *Instagram* is considered. Namely, in the great majority of the analyzed blends, the splinter -

stagram has retained the meaning of its etymon *Instagram* – 'a photo and video sharing application available on iPhone and Android', as in:

(a) *Brewstagram* 'a hashtag on Instagram dedicated to beer' ← **brew** × In**stagram** or *Tramstagram* 'name of an Instagram account dedicated to blogging about one's Tram experiences and sharing one's Tramness on Instagram' ← **tram** × In**stagram**, thus indicating the *location* where photos and videos are stored or the application the (imaginary) accounts belong to,

(b) *Gronk-stagram* 'another name for Meta-owned application (i.e. Instagram), seen as 'a bunch of gronks'' ← **gronk** × In**stagram** or *Bragstagram* 'another name for Instagram' ← **brag** × In**stagram**,

(c) *Assistagram* 'an Instagram marketing agency that can help Instagram users gain followers' ← **assi<u>sta</u>**nt × In**<u>sta</u>gram**, *Boostagram* 'a powerful platform built to boost the growth of Instagram accounts' ← **boo<u>st</u>** × In**<u>st</u>agram**, *Bosstagram* 'intelligent bot for Instagram accounts, which offers such functions as mass liking and mass following in order to attract new followers and to get more likes' ← **bos<u>s</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**, or *Webstagram* 'a Web-based interface for the socially-driven image-sharing service Instagram, giving users a way to access and repost Instagrams without the need to use their mobile devices' ← **web** × In**stagram**.

There is, however, some residue of the blends in which the splinter *-stagram* is used metonymically – '*Instagram* for a *photo* or *video*', i.e. as a metonym. In other words, through increasingly frequent blending of the word *Instagram* with numerous other source words or their parts, it has acquired a new meaning of 'a photo' or, much less commonly, 'a video'. Taking into consideration the meanings of the word *Instagram* in the examples of Instagram-based compounds and derivatives provided in the introduction, it is no wonder that the sense of a photo (image) has prevailed over that of a video. Here are some examples that illustrate the results of this metonymic process:

(a) *bedstagram* 'a morning selfie or a bed selfie posted on one's Instagram account' ← **bed** × In**stagram**,

(b) *Histagram* 'a student-taken photo that illustrates a course concept at work in the student's everyday environment' ← **hi<u>st</u>**ory × In**<u>st</u>agram**,

(c) *Shipstagram* 'a photo of people enjoying the cruise or preparing to enjoy it ← **ship** × In**stagram**,

(d) *fakestagram* 'an image cropped to square with a vintage or other filter that is made without use of the Instagram application' (Urban Dictionary) ← **fake** × In**stagram**,

(e) *Capstagram* 'name of a fic, where chapters are short and written as video transcripts' ← **cap** × In**stagram**,

(f) *Orangstagram* 'application which allows the orang-utans to take pictures of themselves and display them' ← **orang** × In**stagram**,

(g) *Reduxstagram* 'a photo application that will simplify the core ideas behind Redux' ← **Redu<u>x</u>** × In**<u>s</u>tagram**,

(h) *Shoestagram* 'an app which allows you to take pictures when your phone is mounted on your shoe' ← **shoe** × In**stagram**.

As can be deduced from this semantic analysis, in the vast majority of the analyzed blends, the splinter *-stagram* contributes the same meaning as its etymon *Instagram*, though it shows potential to take on new meanings. It remains to be seen, however, whether these new senses will establish themselves and whether this splinter, whose profitability in the creation of English lexical blends is undeniable, will eventually acquire the morpheme status.

4. CONCLUSION

My aim in this paper was to attempt to give as detailed as possible analysis of the combinatorial possibilities and meanings of the final splinter *-stagram* (from *Instagram*) in some contemporary English lexical blends. Notwithstanding the limitedness of the data, it is safe to say that the splinter *-stagram* shows a clear preference for being blended with unclipped first source words. That is, the preferred structural pattern in the analyzed collection of blends is that of a full source word followed by the splinter *-stagram*, with no overlap. One other formal preference of the splinter under discussion is that it predominantly attaches to morphologically simple words, in particular nouns, though it may be combined with words of diverse morphosyntactic make-up including not only content words but also function ones.

With regard to the semantics of the analyzed blends and the meanings of the splinter *-stagram* in particular, it may be concluded that they, for the most part, function as the names of (popular) hashtags on Instagram or Instagram accounts,

whereby Instagram users demonstrate their (everyday) creativity in the act of naming. This implies that the splinter *-stagram* normally participates in the formation of blends with the meaning of its etymon. In few other blends, however, the meaning of *-stagram* shows slight variations from what is primarily referred to by the word *Instagram*, being it a noun or a verb. Namely, through repeated blending with other elements and the process of metonymy, the splinter *-stagram* has come to be used in two new senses – 'a photo (image)' or, much less commonly, 'a video'. Finally, even though (new) words, and especially *ad hoc* formations, to which most of the *-stagram* blends belong to, rise and fall in popularity, I believe they are well worth recording and analyzing as they are obvious manifestations of people's (everyday) lexical creativity and the flexibility of words and languages.

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