# Analogical Creation: Analogy with the Structure in Morphological Level
## A Case Study of (Blue)-Collar Worker

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**Abstract.** Memetics has strong interpretive power for analogical creation because the formation of analogical creation is the process of imitation, creation and transmission, which just corresponds with the definition of meme. From memetic transmission mechanism, analogical creation is the structural meme on morphological level since the creation of new words is based on the imitation of the old pattern of word or phrases by keeping part of it the same and changing part of it into something new. From features of successful meme, analogical creation also shares the features of copying-fidelity, fecundity and longevity. From transmission power, in the case of "blue + collar workers", this existing pattern is simple, short and vivid in form and concise, practical and authoritative in content, thus this pattern is a stable strong meme, accepted and used frequently. Based on the imitation of this pattern, many similar expressions are created and used in people's life, such as white-collar workers, pink-collar workers, gold-collar workers, grey-collar workers, black-collar workers, green-collar workers, frayed-collar workers, steel-collar workers, dog-collar workers, and the recently popular purple-color workers, yellow-collar workers and orange-color worker.

**Keywords:** Memetics · Analogical creation · "(Blue)-collar workers"

## 1 Introduction

Memetics is a new theory in Pragmatics, explaining language development and cultural evolution based on Darwin's biological evolution. The core concept in memetics is meme, which could refer to anything formed through the process of imitation and transmission. Analogical creation is an important word formation method in morphology, by which new words or phrases are created through analogy with the already existing language patterns. There is strong resemblance between meme and analogical creation, thus, this paper tries to use memetics as the theoretical framework and analyses analogical creation from its definition, features of successful memes, transmission mechanism and transmission power so as to deepen the understanding of word formation rule.

## 2   Analogical Creation

### 2.1   The Definition of Analogical Creation

According to Hu Zhuanglin, "the principle of analogical creation can account for the co-existence of two forms, regular and irregular, in the combination of some English verbs. For instance, people are rather familiar that the past tense suffix for English verb should be -*ed*, and they tend to apply it to all verbs. As a result, there are both the old forms and the new forms for many English verbs" [1][68] as below:

| word | old | new |
| --- | --- | --- |
| work | wrought | worked |
| slay | slew | slayed |

To put it simply, analogical creation means new words or phrases are created or re-formed according to the existing patterns in the language. About it, three points should be paid attention to: first, analogical creation mainly happens on the level of words or phrases. Second, the newly created words or phrases resemble the existing words or phrases in structure. Third, the newly formed words or phrases are related to the old ones in meaning, usually either close or opposite.

For example, from the word *Marathon*, people, by keeping part of the word "-thon", meaning "something lasts very long", and changing part of the word "mara", make some new words like *telethon*, *talkathon* and *kissthon,* which mean "a very long television show, broadcast", "a long and boring talk or talk show" and "a very long-lasting kiss" respectively. By imitating the structure of noun phrase *environmental pollution,* people create many similar noun phrases, such as *noise pollution*, *visual* or *eye pollution,* and *graffiti pollution*, which mean "the noise is very annoying and potentially harmful", "something is impolite or unhealthy for people to witness", and "to write or inscribe something rude on a rock or wall which is not allowed".

One point should be noted that analogical creation is different from over-generalization because over-generalization is regarded as a mistake in the use of language [1][68], as in "doed (do-did), sayed (say-said), thinked (think-thought), etc.".

### 2.2   Types of Analogical Creation

Generally speaking, there are two main types of analogical creation. One is analogical creation for similar meaning in similar situations, and the other is analogical creation for opposite meaning.

Analogical creation for similar meaning is that a part of a word or phrase is kept unchanged and the rest of the word or phrase is replaced with something different in similar situations, for example, by imitating the word formation of *earthquake*, which means that the earth quakes, *moonquake* is formed, meaning that the moon quakes, which is confirmed by scientists. Here, the meaning of *quake* remains the same, but the object which quakes is changed from the earth to the moon, thus, the meaning of moonquake is

derived. In the same way, from *landscape*, *moonscape* and *marscape* are reformed, the meaning is still about the view or scenery, but of different objects, in which *moonscape* refers to a view of the surface of the moon and *marscape* is a view of the surface of the mars.

From *intelligence quotient* (IQ), *emotional quotient* (EQ), *adversity quotient* (AQ) and even *health quotient* are created, the meaning is still about the quotient or the measurement, but in different aspects, in which *intelligence quotient* refers to the measurement of intelligence, *emotional quotient* is the measurement of interpersonal and communication skills, *adversity quotient* is the measurement of how people react in the face of adversity, and *health quotient* is the measurement of health awareness and health management.

Analogical creation for opposite meaning is that a part of a word or phrase still remains unchanged and the rest of the word or phrase is substituted with something opposite in meaning, examples are shown in following pairs:

| old words | new words |
|---|---|
| download | upload |
| housewife | househusband |
| nightmare | daymare |
| moonlight | daylight |
| hardware | software |

From the existing familiar words like *download, housewife, nightmare* and so on, new words like *upload, househusband, daymare* and so on, are created, by keeping a part of the word the same and changing the rest of the word for its antonyms.

## 3 Memetics

### 3.1 Definition of Memetics

Meme first appears in the pamphlet *The Selfish Gene* written by Richard Dawkins and published in 1976. Dawkins thought there was cultural evolution, similar to biological evolution, and he created the word *meme* base on *gene*, referring to the cultural replicator through imitation [3][173]. Meme transmits from one person's mind to another' mind, which is different from gene, the biological unit passed down from one body into another body. Any information, as long as it can be replicated through the general process of imitation, it can be called as meme [4][66].

### 3.2 Transmission Mechanism of Memetics

According to He Ziran, there are two ways to reproduce and transmit language memes. One is genotype referring to "the same content in different forms" and the other is phenotype meaning "the different contents in the same form" [5][59–60].

Genotype means that memes replicate and transmit with the method of repetition: direct quotation or synonymy in similar situations, including the same information in the same form and the same information in different forms, where the former means the information could be directly transmitted without changing its original meaning at all and the latter means although information is different from the original information in the process of replication, the core information of kinds of variants always remains the same.

Phenotype means to use the same language form to express different contents in different contexts for different needs, including the following three types: analogy with the same sound, which creates a variant with new meaning by imitating the pronunciation of words of some existing patterns, analogy with the same form, which creates a variant by imitating the known language form, evoking different associations in different situations, and analogy with the same structure, which creates a variant with new content by imitating the known language structure and changing part of the information.

### 3.3  Features of Successful Memes

In Dawkins' view, a successful reduplicated meme must have the following three characteristics [6][131–132]:

The first is copying fidelity, which means the more faithful a meme is to the original one in the process of replication, the more likely the original meme is to be kept and the higher the survival rate is. Copying fidelity is a matter of degree, which doesn't mean that there should be no change of the original meme, but that the core or essence of the original meme should remain the same.

The second is fecundity, which means the faster a meme is replicated, or the more popular the meme is, the more productive it is in number and the wider it is in the transmission range.

The third is longevity, which means the longer a meme stays in the brain, the more likely it is to be replicated and the more easily it is to be remembered.

### 3.4  Transmission Power of Memetics

Based on the features of successful memes, according to the transmission power, meme can be divided into strong meme and weak meme [7][23–29]. Strong meme can be further classified into stable strong language meme and changeable strong language meme, where the former refers to basic vocabulary, classical lines, mottos, aphorisms, proverbs, slangs and so on and the latter refers to temporary popular words, phrases, slogans, musical lines, ads, and passages with high copying-fidelity and fecundity only during some period of time. While weak meme has also two subtypes, one is weak language meme in content, because the information itself is not practical, rational, fashionable and authoritative, it is less likely to be replicated. The other is weak language meme in form, since the information is not accurate, concise and vivid in form, there is low rate of republication and transmission.

# 4 Memetic Interpretation of Analogical Creation

To take *blue-collar workers* as an example, for the convenience of analysis, there are following similar data created by analogical creation:

- Group 1

    A. white-collar workers, refer to those who "typically perform professional, managerial, or administrative work in an office environment" [8].

    B. pink-collar workers, refer to "secretaries and other clerical staff or the female engaged in service industry" [8].

    C. gold-collar workers, mean "professionals or those people with in-demand skills or employees over the age of 55" [8].

    D. gray-collar workers, mean "skilled technicians, or employees whose job descriptions combine some white- and some blue-collar duties" [8].

    E. black-collar workers, are "miners, especially coal miners and oil workers" [8].

    F. green-collar workers, are environmentalists who express concern about environmental protection and want to protect the natural environments.
- Group 2

    G. frayed-collar workers, refer to "workers having trouble making ends meet, or the working poor" [8].

    H. steel-collar workers, refer to robots.

    I. dog-collar workers, are priests.
- Group 3

    J. purple-color workers, refer to the popular stars who can perform both professional and manual work in their respective fields.

    K. yellow-collar workers, are staff working in creative industries, such as photographers, filmmakers, etc.

    L. orange-collar workers, are those who earn money through Taobao alliance, in particular the webmaster of Taobao alliance, Taobao customers, and all Taobao related practitioners because the main color of Taobao is orange.

    M. light green-collar workers, refer to "rural migrant workers", those who are farmers in identity and workers in occupation, they live in the countryside and work in the city.

## 4.1 Interpretation from Its Definition

To judge whether it is meme, the two key words are imitation and transmission.

From the pattern *blue-collar workers*, which mean "working-class people who perform skilled or unskilled manual labor in the United States" [8], people imitate the structure of this word formation, and change *blue* into other colors such as *white, pink, gold, grey, black and green* as is shown in group one, obviously this process is imitation. Now, the above mentioned expressions in group one, are accepted by people and used widely, which is transmission.

## 4.2   Interpretation from Transmission Mechanism

From the memetic transmission mechanism, analogical creation belongs to phenotype since the different contents are expressed through the same language form.

To be exact, it is analogy with the same structure, since all the phrases from group one to group three imitate the known language structures "blue-collar worker" and become different variants with new meanings in different situations for different communicative purposes.

## 4.3   Interpretation from Features of Successful Memes

From *blue-collar workers* to *white-collar workers, pink-collar workers, gold-collar workers, grey-collar workers, black-collar workers* and *green-collar workers*, to *frayed-collar workers, steel-collar workers, dog-collar workers, purple-color workers, yellow-collar workers, orange-color workers*, the original core information "*-collar workers*" in the process of replication remains exactly the same, which shows high copying-fidelity to the original, that's why it has higher survival rate. Moreover, *-collar workers* is popular and easy to be replicated and transmitted, that's why there are so many similar expressions in number and they are remembered by people clearly.

## 4.4   Interpretation from Transmission Power

In the case of *blue-collar worker*, all of them are strong meme, because the information itself is practical, rational, fashionable and authoritative in content, and accurate, concise and vivid in form, which is easy to be imitated, understood, accepted and remembered.

The first group and the second group belong to stable strong language meme, because these expressions have become the basic vocabulary in English. While the third group are changeable strong language meme, like *orange-collar workers* and *yellow-collar workers*, they are quite popular during a particular historical period and may go to the sleeping mode or become popular again after that period of time.

## 5   Conclusion

Memetics provides a strong theoretical basis for explaining analogical word formation, which helps to deepen our understanding of word formation in language and the law of language development.

After analysis of analogical creation from memetics, it is found that analogical creation is kind of meme since its formation corresponds with the process of meme. From memetic transmission mechanism, analogical creation belongs to analogy with the same structure because the creation of new expressions is based on the imitation of the old pattern of word or phrases by keeping part of it unchanged and replacing part of it with something new. In addition, analogical creation also shares the features of copying-fidelity, fecundity and longevity, and belongs to strong meme due to its simple, short and vivid form and concise, practical and authoritative content, that's why it is highly productive in number and transmits faster in speed.

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