

It is well known that the use of the element -gate in the meaning 'scandal associated with---' (World Book Dictionary, 1979 ed.) has in American English come to be extended far beyond its original locus of Watergate: hence, forms such as Koreagate, Billygate, and most recently, Irangate, as well as synonymous -gate coinages for the same scandal such as Goobergate and Peanutgate (for an alleged scandal involving Jimmy Carter's peanut warehouse in 1979) or sewergate and waste-watergate (for a scandal involving the Environmental Protection Agency's failure to deal with the clean-up of hazardous wastes), to name just a very few of the numerous forms coined with this suffix that attest to its productivity.<sup>1</sup>

This new suffix has spread to languages other than English. Schumacher 1988, for instance, has provided an example from German (Waterkantgate, from waterkant 'seaside', for a scandal in a coastal area), and an example from Serbo-Croatian was reported on in the Atlantic edition of Time with regard to a financial scandal in Yugoslavia regarding the agricultural conglomerate known as Agrokomerc: "the scandal [was] dubbed 'Agrogate' by the Yugoslav press" (28 Sept. 1987, 19). In each of these cases, though, there is but a single example, making it hard to gauge the degree of productivity of this formation in these languages.

The use of -gate is also found in Modern Greek. In October 1987 news broke of a scandal involving a Mr. Tobras, the director of the

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national telephone system, appointed by the party currently in power, the Pan-Hellenic Socialist party, known as PASOK. Tobras was accused of bugging offices of political parties, and there were allegations as well of financial wrongdoings. This news led to newspaper headlines and public posters (displayed by the opposition party, the Greek Left) decrying Τομπραγκαιητ ([tobrageit]) and Πασοκγκαιητ ([pasokgeit]), i.e. "Tobragate" and "PASOKgate". A real productivity for the suffix is indicated by the creation in Greek of two forms for essentially the same referent (cf. English synonyms such as sewergate/waste-watergate or Goobergate/Peanutgate).

One should note that the American scandals have been reported on in the Greek press with their English labels, e.g. Ιρανγκαιητ ([irangeit]) for Irangate, so that these proper name loan words have provided the basis for the creation and adoption of this new suffix outside of English in much the same way as within English itself.

## NOTES

1. For a rather full, but not necessarily exhaustive, cataloguing of -gate words, see the several discussions in American Speech over the past 10 years: Russell and Porter (1978), Barnhart (1980), Algeo and Doyle (1981), Russell and Porter (1981), Tracey (1982), Porter and Russell (1984), and most recently McArthur (1987).

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