NUMERICAL TAUTONYMS

DARRYL FRANCIS
Hounslow, Middlesex, England

A tautonym is a word, name or term which consists of two or more identical parts. Examples are DODO, PAPA, TARTAR, WOGGA WOGGA, CHA-CHA-CHA and KUKUKUKU.

To define a numerical tautonym we first assign to each letter a value equal to its numerical position in the alphabet (A = 1, B = 2, ..., Z = 26). We can define a numerical tautonym as follows: a numerical tautonym is a word, name or term which, when split into two or more parts (each part possessing the same number of letters) and the letter values of each part are added, has a common total for each part. A simple example will serve to illustrate this. The word MOTH can be split into two halves: the letters M and O add to give a group total of 13 + 15 = 28, and the letters T and H add to give a group total of 20 + 8 = 28. The two parts have a common total; therefore, MOTH is a numerical tautonym.

All ordinarily tautonymic words (such as DODO, PAPA, etc.) and palindromic words of an even number of letters (such as DEED, SEES, etc.) are obviously numerical tautonyms, and, as such, are just trivial examples. We shall have no further dealings with them in this article.

An extensive list of 4-letter numerical tautonyms is given below:

AVER BOLE BRAS BULK BURE CHEF CHIB CLAN COME COND CUES CULL DIAL DONE DORA DROG DUET EXIT EXON FABE FLEM FOBS FOIL FONG GILD GLEN GNAT GRIP HEADE EXON FBE HEID HODS HOER HUMP JEAN KELD GNAT LING LOIR LOVE HEAL MACK MEND MIJL MOTH MAND SAKI SELL SLOP SPOT STUR TABS TAIL TAPE TOPS UNTO VAIN WALL WILT WORT
or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or

or
AMMONIFICATION MALAPPLICATION SUPERABUNDANCY
ETHERIFICATION PITUITOTROPISM BIOBIBLIOGRAPHICAL

DOPANT can be found in the addenda section of Webster’s Third New International Dictionary. BAN NAM HI is a place in Laos, and is listed in the Times Index-Gazetteer of the World. PITUITOTROPISM is a medical term denoting an abnormal influence of the pituitary gland. We took this from the 24th edition of Dorland’s Illustrated Medical Dictionary, but it can probably be found in other medical dictionaries also. All of the other words can be found in the second and third editions of Webster’s New International Dictionary.

All of the numerical tautonyms so far mentioned have split into two groups of from 2 to 9 letters apiece. But what about the possibility that numerical tautonyms may exist as words which can be split into three, four or more groups of letters, each group having 2, 3 or more letters?

We have set to work on this problem looking for words which when split into three groups of 2 letters give numerical tautonyms. Up to now we have found just ten such words, given in the list below. The reader is urged to uncover more of these rare words:

BULKER GLENDO NOTION SHRIVE TALING
FROISE ILLING REAVER STRUTS VAINER

GLENDO is the name of a town in Platte County, Wyoming.

As for numerical tautonyms formed when words split into three groups of 3 letters we can offer but a single example: TRANSFUND. This is an obsolete word meaning to pour liquid from one vessel into another. However, we are convinced that other specimens exist and ask the reader to prove us right.

Moving on to really advanced numerical tautonyms, we began the search for four-part examples. Our patient efforts were eventually rewarded with seven examples. The seven words are:

CONDEMN GNA RING RIVERISH OVERSECURELY
GLENDO PERCEPTA TANGLING

CONDEMN, by the way, is a reformed spelling of CONDEMNED, and is listed in the second edition of Webster’s New International Dictionary. GLENDO is the name of towns in Los Angeles County, California, Berrien County, Michigan, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi and Camden County, New Jersey. GLENDO obviously has much to recommend it.

The reader is urged to uncover still more of these rare words.

Having found numerical tautonyms for words which have been split into two groups of from 2 to 9 letters apiece, and for words which have been split into three groups of 2 letters apiece, we are asking the reader to uncover still more of these rare words.

The remainder of the numerical tautonyms for words which have been split into three groups of 3 letters and for words which have been split into four groups of 2 letters apiece, and for words which have been split into four groups of 3 letters apiece, is left to the reader to discover.

By its nature, the numerical tautonyms for words which have been split into four or more groups of letters each group having 2 or 3 or more letters, is most likely to have been unearthed by the reader. However, we are convinced that other specimens exist and ask the reader to prove us right.

Moving on to really advanced numerical tautonyms, we began the search for four-part examples. Our patient efforts were eventually rewarded with seven examples. The seven words are:

CONDEMN GNA RING RIVERISH OVERSECURELY
GLENDO PERCEPTA TANGLING

CONDEMN, by the way, is a reformed spelling of CONDEMNED, and is listed in the second edition of Webster’s New International Dictionary. GLENDO is the name of towns in Los Angeles County, California, Berrien County, Michigan, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi and Camden County, New Jersey. GLENDO obviously has much to recommend it.
The seven words given above contain one word which splits into four groups of 3 letters, OVERSECURELY. We can create one more similar word if we accept MONOLOGIZER as a valid alternative to the regular dictionary word MONOLOGIST. Then we can see that MONOLOGIZERS is a numerical tautonym splitting into four groups with 3 letters per group. We hope the reader will accept this as a valid, even necessary, word.

Having progressed through two, three and four-part numerical tautonyms we now come to five-part examples. Or, to be more precise, the five-part example. You see, our researches have only unearthed one five-part example. This apparently unique word splits into five groups of 2 letters and is GLENDORADO. This is the name of a locality in the southeasternmost corner of Benton County, Minnesota. We plucked this from a recent edition of the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide -- the 98th edition, published in 1967, to be exact.

Is this five-part numerical tautonym unique? There is no way of proving that the answer is yes. But there is a way of proving that the answer is no. That way is to find further examples. This, as the text books have it, is left as an exercise for the reader.

The reader will notice that we have made no mention of numerical tautonyms formed by words splitting into three or more groups of 4 or more letters. The simple reason for this is that we have not been able to find any. Can the reader beat us at our own game?

By its very nature a numerical tautonym has the same total for each group of letters. While searching for numerical tautonyms, we came across words such as BULLET which has group totals 23, 24 and 25. These ascending totals endow BULLET, and similar words, with a certain aesthetic quality. Such words we have decided to call numerical near-tautonyms. Further examples are HOMING, RAKING and SCREES. The first of these words has descending group totals, and the last two have ascending group totals. A four-part example of a numerical near-tautonym is CRIMINES, exclamations such as CRIM-INE. Let us know what you come up with.

Another field of investigation that we tentatively suggest to the reader is that of multiplicative numerical tautonyms. Take the word AIRBUS: this splits into three groups having totals of 10, 20 and 40, the totals doubling up each time. Are there others? We want the reader to tell us.