

COMPOUND NOUNS IN MODERN ENGLISH

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*The article presents the main means of creating compound words of the English language, which are currently the most important and most common ways. The work considers compounding as one of the most productive ways of word formation. The paper presents the interpretation of some lexical characteristics on identification of compound nouns and correlation of a compound nouns and a free phrase. It gives the description of a compound noun and highlights its main characteristics and criteria that can be concentrated in its definition, particularly: structural cohesion, phonetic, orthographic, morphological criteria and the character of combining. Also it contains the description of various classifications of compound nouns based on idiomatic features, syntactic characteristics, the presence of linking element, the structure of immediate constituents of a compound word, functionality, and the work presents the classification of compound nouns of the English language.*

**Keywords:** *word-formation, compounding, compound nouns, of a compound noun, classification.*

The investigation of the language vocabulary is one of the important problems in linguistics. Its replenishment is a constant process that is why it is so important to study the models of words and see how it works.

Modern English possesses a large number of means of creating new words, such as word-formation, compounding, conversion, shortening, substantivization, back-formation and others. Word-formation and compounding create the main quantity of new words.

The process of creating new words, its peculiarities, conditions under which it takes place, extralinguistic and intralinguistic reasons, causing the word-formation process — all these problems are not investigated sufficiently in English. Many of these problems have been touched in the works dedicated to the problems of German, English, Spanish word-formation as well as to the problems of general theory of word-formation.

English word-formation was interpreted in the works by linguists A. Smirnitsky, I. Arnold, R. Ginsburg and others [1–3]. Many articles and works are dedicated to separate problems of English word-formation. A great contribution to the development of English word-formation was made by O. Meshkov, P. Tsarev in particular. O. Meshkov investigated word-formation, especially compounding as the way of enlarging the language vocabulary. He tried to give the definition of a compound word [4]. P. Tsarev investigated compound words in English, the productivity of word-formation trying to clear up the differences between a compound word and a free phrase [5]. Regularities and peculiarities of the process of creating English words through affixation and conversion were investigated as well.

Works of foreign linguists H. Marchand and B. Warren are of special value in linguistics [6].

Ukrainian lexicologists have made their contribution to studying the English word-formation. M. Mostovy, for instance, pointed out that word-formation is a branch of the science of language which studies the patterns on which a language forms lexical units, i.e. words [7].

Our task is to investigate and present the interpretation of some lexic characteristics of the compounds concerning the identification of a compound noun, the correlation of a compound noun and a free phrase, some of its combining elements and others.

Nowadays, in linguistics great attention is paid to thorough studying of the problem connected with the understanding of the English word-formation system, especially of compounding. Compounding takes an significant part in the modern English system. The main problems of compounding, its productivity and pragmatics, innovation compounding processes have been researched by many scientists. L. Omelchenko writes that in nominal word-formation of Germanic languages typology has been traced, as a big number of compound words are formed according to the common model — a *determinanta determinantum*. The scholar investigates the productive models of compound words in modern English. She pointed out the compounding as a very important means of enlarging the language vocabulary. [8:50].

Compounding is the main trend of the language vocabulary development, because you can see the action of the laws of the language development especially vividly. Compound words characterize general tendency of the language evolution and its lexical store; they show flexibility and functioning of English lexical system in the most complete way, its desire for conciseness and expressiveness, as well as boundless opportunities of the whole analytical system of English. The peculiarities of the English lexico-grammatical structure contribute to creating new words through compounding very much.

Compound words make a great part of the English vocabulary, but compounding as a means of creating new words is one of the most important and widespread. The peculiarities of lexico-grammatical structure of the English language, i.e. a wide usage of word-order as a means of expressing lexico-grammatical relations, promote considerably the creation of new words through combining stems.

There are productive, low-productive and non-productive within different types of compound words. Productivity of a word-forming model is not constant; it varies all the time during the historical development of the language, some models lose their productivity, some obtain and become rather productive. Many new words by their semantic structure are the formations, general meaning of which can be taken out of their parts, out of the meanings of the components. There are a great number of compound words that are the result of word-formation of a particular author, occasional words created by the author with a stylistic aim for more precise or clearer expression of a thought. In most cases, compound words in English have parallels as syntactical free phrases from the point of view of their structure. Structural relations of their components — stems of the words — are close to lexical-grammatical relations of the words that make a free phrase.

A compound word can be considered in two aspects of its creation, how it is created, what components make it; and in the aspect of its structure: what parts it

consists of. In many cases, the aspect of creation of a compound word and the aspect of its structure coincide, but there are compound words in English, which are compound according to their structure, but they are not compound according to their creation and are created not with the help of compounding, but with the help of conversion: e.g. to water-ski, to sick-list.

It is rather difficult to give the definition of a compound word, first of all because of the difficulties of the defining objects, then because of the existence of numerous similar objects, then because of different linguistic world outlooks and approaches to a compound word. Criteria of a compound word must be concentrated in its definition. There are a lot of definitions of a compound word in English linguistic literature.

I. Arnold gives the following definition of a compound word: «Compound words are words consisting of at least two stems which occur in the language as free forms. In a compound word the immediate constituents obtain integrity and structural cohesion that make them function in a sentence as a separate lexical unit» [2:108].

H. Marchand under the term «compound» understands the coining of new words proceeds by way of combining linguistic elements on the basis of a determinant/determinatum relationship called syntagma. When two or more words are combined into a morphological unit on the basis just stated we speak of a compound. O. Jespersen defines compound words this way: «A compound may perhaps be provisionally defined as a combination of two or more words so as to function as one word, as a unit» [4:175]. According to O. Meshkov for word-building theory and practice a compound word is a lexical unit, that was formed of two or more stems through compounding and that is singled out in the speech flow on the basis of its structural cohesion [4:176].

According to our analysis and theoretical understanding of the problem compound words are words consisting of at least two stems and they possess structural cohesion and entire semantic meaning unlike free phrases.

Such scholars as O. Meshkov, I. Ivanova, R. Ginzburg suggested their criteria of compound word. [4, 3]. To sum up the above mentioned we have tried to suggest our own criteria of compound words. They are:

1. Structural cohesion. The term «structural cohesion» was introduced by A. Smirnitsky. In the dictionary of linguistic terms «structural cohesion» is explained as «indivisibility, integrity, impossibility of division into parts and insertion between them other elements (units) of language...» A. Smirnitsky understands structural cohesion in the way that even the least balanced according to its structure word is closer in its design to a simple monolithic word than any free phrase. [1:33]. Structural cohesion of the word is revealed in specific peculiarities of a word inner structure in comparison with a free phrase structure, in peculiarities that are defined by less completeness and design of the parts of a word in comparison with the parts of a free phrase, i.e. with separate words. This can be explained by the following example. If one compares such formations as: shipwreck and (the) wreck of (a) ship

that include the same root elements, it is easy to find out that though they mean one and the same phenomenon of the reality and they do not differ essentially in their meaning, they differ in principle in their relation to the grammatical structure. In other words, the formation «shipwreck» possesses structural cohesion, and the formation (the) wreck of (a) ship does not [1:34].

2. The phonetic criterion. It implies the existence of a combining stress in a compound word in comparison with a free phrase where the elements have an equal stress. The disadvantage of this criterion is in the facts that alongside with a great number of examples where there is one stress, there are a lot of formations causing different questions and bewilderments. The phonetic criterion should be referred only to compound words that have been already put in lexicographic sources that give the information about the character of the stress in this or that word. But modern language is constantly replenishing by lexical units. So, quite identical lexical units get different stresses depending on speech – feeling that depends in its turn on the way how the native speaker perceives the meanings of two combining lexical units — as a concretized semantic unity or as a succession of two independent units in semantic relation. There is a marked tendency in English to give a compound word a heavy stress on the first element. Many scholars consider this unity of stress to be of the primary importance.

3. The orthographic criterion. It is well known what an inconsistency is in spelling some lexical units. One and the same units sometimes in the same newspaper or magazine can be written differently: separately, with a hyphen or solid writing. Thus, solid writing reflects the language consciousness, according to which the given lexical unit has a close semantic integrity. Writing a word separately cannot serve as a criterion of a free phrase (unlike a compound word); at the same time solid writing can serve as a criterion of a compound word (unlike a free phrase). In other words, it is improbable that a free phrase can be written together.

4. Morphologic criterion sets morphologic integrity of a compound word unlike a free phrase. It states that in compound words morphologically not arranged stems are combined. But morphologic arrangement of an English word is rather poor and this criterion, though it is very reliable, can be used only for a small number of compound word types. The most vivid usage of this criterion is the establishment of structural cohesion of the word of «book-shelves» types, where the first component is a stem, not a word (otherwise the first component would have plural as well). Consequently, morphological criterion can testify structural cohesion of a given word; it refers to a limited number of types.

5. The character of combining. The succession of lexical units that was singled out of the speech flow can be either a compound word or a free phrase. Each language possesses a set of free phrases, so if singled succession of lexical units is out of this set, then it is a compound word. The order of compound word components and the word-order in a free phrase have the essential role as the criteria of structural cohesion. For some types of compound words back order of the components can be the criterion of structural cohesion. It refers to the words with the second components

adjectives or participles: e.g. oil-rich, man-made. In synonymic free phrases the word-order would be: rich in oil, made by man.

One of the criteria of compound words is the absence of auxiliary elements in a compound word. But this criterion can be excluded while analyzing phrase formations: good-for-nothing, pie-in-the-sky.

There are different classifications of compound words.

There are non-idiomatic compounds with a perfectly clear motivation. Here the meanings of the constituents add up in creating the meaning of the whole and name the referent either directly or figuratively. Thus, when the combination «seaman» was first used it was not difficult to understand that it meant «a man professionally connected with the sea». The non-idiomatic compounds can be easily transformed into free phrases: e.g. night flight — flying at night.

On the other hand, a compound may be very different in meaning from the corresponding free phrase. These compounds are called idiomatic. Thus, «a blackboard» is very different from «a black board». A blackboard may be not a board at all but a piece of linoleum or some other suitable material. A compound may lose its motivation and become idiomatic because one of its elements is at present not used in the language in the same meaning. The word «blackmail» has nothing to do with mail «post». Its second element, now obsolete except in Scottish, was used in the sixteenth century meaning «payment» or «tax». «Blackmail» was the payment extracted by freebooting chiefs in return for immunity from plunder.

Compound words may be classified according to the type of composition and the linking element; according to the number of stems; according to the number of ultimate constituents; according to the parts of speech to which the compound belongs and within each part of speech; according to the structural pattern. It is also possible to subdivide compounds according to other characteristics, semantically, into motivated and idiomatic compounds.

Many compounds are intermediate between the syntactic and asyntactic extremes.

I. Arnold gave her own classification of compounds. The classification according to the type of composition permits to establish the following groups:

1) a mere juxtaposition without connecting elements; 2) composition with a vowel or a consonant as a linking element; 3) compounds with linking elements represented by preposition or conjunction stems; 4) compound-derivatives or derivational compounds in which the structural integrity of the two free stems is ensured by a suffix referring to the combination as a whole, not to one of its elements [2:123].

The classification of compounds according to the structure of immediate constituents distinguishes:

1) compounds consisting of a simple stem; 2) compounds where at least one of the constituents is a derived stem; 3) compounds where at least one of the constituents is a clipped stem; 4) compounds where at least one of the constituents is a compound stem.

R. Ginzburg gave another classification of compound words. They may be classified: a) from the functional point of view; b) from the point of view of the way

the components of the compound are linked together; c) from the point of view of different ways of composition [3:157].

In our work we single out the compound nouns with the second component — noun (N) that is why our classification of singled out compound nouns on the basis of suggested criteria contains the following differentiation:

- according to the parts of speech to which the first component belongs;
- according to the number of immediate constituents;
- according to the connection type;
- according to word-forming affixes;
- according to motivation of compound nouns.

Compounding is the process and rules of creating words by means of word-forming of two or more stems; on the other hand, it is the aspect of linguistics studying objectives laws of forming compound words. Compounding is the main trend of the development of language vocabulary, because here one can see the action of the laws of the language development especially vividly. Compound words characterize general tendency of the language evolution and its lexical store; they show flexibility and functioning of English lexical system in the most complete way, its desire for conciseness and expressiveness, as well as boundless opportunities of the whole analytical system of English. The peculiarities of the English lexico-grammatical structure contribute to creating new words through compounding very much.

According to our analysis and theoretical understanding of the problem compound words are words consisting of at least two stems and they possess structural cohesion and entire semantic meaning unlike free phrases. Compound words as inseparable vocabulary units are, on the one hand, clearly distinguished from free phrases by a combination of their specific stress pattern, spelling and their distributional formulas. On the other hand, compound words in modern English lie astride the border between words and word-groups and display many features common to phrases, thus revealing close ties and parallelism with the system of free phrases. In compounding both components taking part in a composite act belong to an open system. The unity of stems is determined mostly by logical-sense relationships between the notions which are transferred by the components of a compound. The meaning of a compound is determined by knowing its parts and their sense relationship which in its turn is determined by knowing relationships between the objects of reality.

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