

COMPOUND NOUNS DENOTING HOUSEHOLD GOODS IN THE INTERNET ADVERTISEMENTS

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Compoziția ca mijloc de formare a cuvintelor în limba engleză este destul de productivă, fiindcă cuvintele tind să se contopească în structuri compuse, pentru a exprima idei, acțiuni, evenimente și calități într-un mod mai laconic și mai exact. Cuvintele compuse care devin mai stabile în folosirea lor sunt specificate în dicționare. Cu toate acestea, există cuvinte compuse ce presupun utilizare temporară. Astfel de unități lingvistice reflectă dezvoltarea și progresul tehnic al omenirii, iar numărul acestora în limba engleză este extrem de mare. Asemenea unități adesea apar în denumiri moderne ale mărfurilor de uz casnic. Articolul de față își propune să ofere unele perspective asupra acestui fenomen, prin evidențierea structurii, semnificației și a motivării substantivelor compuse ce desemnează mărfuri de uz casnic, în discursul anunțurilor plasate pe Internet.

Compounding in English is rather productive, as the words regularly tend to merge into compound structures in order to express ideas, actions, events and qualities in a more laconic way and more accurately. The compound words that become more stable in their usage are listed in the dictionaries. However, there are the compounds coined for temporary usage. Such language units reflect the technical progress of the mankind. Their number in English is extremely great. Such compounds often occur in the modern names of the household goods. The present article aims at giving some insight on phenomenon through highlighting the structure, meaning and motivation of the compound nouns denoting household goods in the discourse of the Internet advertisements.

Compounds have been treated from the structural-morphologic (Bauer, Harris, Marchand), phonetical (Bloomfield), grammatical and lexical (Dressler), semantic-structural (Ginzburg) and combined (Arnold) points of view in the linguistic literature. Thus, Ginzburg declared that “compounds are made up of two immediate constituents which are both derivational bases. Compound words are inseparable vocabulary units. They are formally and semantically dependent on the constituent bases and the semantic relations between them which mirror the relations between the motivating units” [3, p.140]. The same idea is pronounced by Laurie Bauer who called the compounds “compound lexemes” and defined them as lexemes “containing two or more potential stems” and consequently “at least two roots” [1, p.28]. In this respect H. Marchand while studying the coining of new words asserts that “when two or more words are combined into a morphological unit on the basis of a determinant/determinatum relationship, we speak of a compound” [4, p.11].

The relation of the members to each other was also studied by R.S. Ginzburg from the point of view of degree of semantic independence. R.S. Ginzburg differentiates between two types of relationship between the immediate constituents of compound words: the relations of coordination and subordination, and accordingly compound words fall into two classes: *coordinative compounds* (often termed *copulative* or *additive*) and *subordinative* (often termed *determinative*) [3, p.146].

The notion of head is crucial to determine one main distinction within the generic category of “compound”, namely that between endocentric and exocentric compounds. L.Bauer points out that the relationship between the constituents follows a modifier-head pattern, in which the compound functions as a hyponym of the grammatical head [1, p.30]. Compounds without a head are called *exocentric compounds*. From a semantic point of view, according to S.Conti, these compounds specify a property or a characteristic possessed by an unexpressed head-noun that is mostly a person [2, p.9]. In coordinative compounds the two immediate constituents are semantically equally important.

The structural cohesion of a compound, according to Arnold, may depend upon unity of stress, solid or hyphenated spelling, semantic unity, unity of morphological and syntactic functioning, or, more often, upon the combined effect of several of these or similar phonetic, graphic, semantic, morphological or syntactic factors [5, p.108].

As coordinative compounds are mostly restricted to the colloquial layer and possess a very small degree of productivity, but subordinative ones make the bulk of Modern English compound words [3, p.146], we

decided to concentrate on the analyses of such compounds selected from modern internet advertisements of the household goods. The compounds studied referred to nouns denoting the kitchenware, furniture and furnishings, bathroom-and-lavatory equipment, tools and outdoor utensils.

According to the research fulfilled we have singled out two structural types of compounds denoting household goods: the nominal and verbal-nominal compounds. The former constitute approximately 42% out of the total number of compound nouns denoting the household goods and the latter have had a higher frequency of occurrence in the Internet advertisements which made up 58% out of the total number respectively.

Structurally the majority of the nominal compounds consist of two elements with the tendency of prevailing of the so-called *open* or *spaced* compounds the constituents of which are written separately. Semantically most of nominal compounds analysed belong to the kitchenware semantic group. For example: *pasta set*, *pasta tongs*, *dip set*, *spice bottles*, *spice rack*, *dinner sets*, *salad/ soup/ fruit bowl*, *service tray*, *soup plate*, *coffee pot*, *home wares*, *espresso machine*.

The last noun is an instance of the use of the borrowed element as a constituent of a compound. “Espresso” is an Italian non-assimilated word denoting “strong coffee made by forcing steam or boiling water through ground coffee beans”. Another name for the *coffee machine*, which is more frequent in usage, is *espresso machine* – “an apparatus for making coffee by forcing steam or boiling water through ground coffee beans”. These two nouns come into the relationship of purpose (a *machine* for making *espresso*) in the following context:

e.g.: *Coffee addict? Then the Krups Xp 4050 Espresso Machine is the one for you.*

The same phenomenon may be illustrated by the compounds *pasta set*, and *pasta tongs*. The meaning of these nouns does not present any difficulty for understanding.

The two-member open compound nouns denoting the bathroom items are less frequent but still representative in their use. These are word like: *robe hook*, *towel ring*, *soap dish*, *toilet brush*, *towel bar*, *towel shell*, *shower head*, *towel rack*, *towel rail*, *towel ring*, *floor drain*, *shower stool*, *laundry trolley*, and *clothes rail*.

There also exist the two-member *solid*, or written as one word, compound nouns denoting household goods. For example, the kitchen-related solid compounds are: *tableware*, *dinnerware*, *worktops*, *bakeware*. The bedroom-related compound is *lampshade*. It is worth mentioning here that the number of such compounds among those belonging to the kitchenware field is bigger than of those ascribed to the field of bathroom items.

The solid spelling is an irrefutable feature of defining a compound. However, its spelling can be different in various sources. Let us compare the compound noun *home ware* written apart and the compounds *tableware* and *dinnerware* written together. *Home ware* is an open variant that occurs in the Internet advertising. The dictionaries give a solid variant spelling: *homeware* (like *tableware* and *dinnerware*). Thus, we see that the spelling of a compound simply depends on the source it occurs in. *Tableware* (“articles such as dishes, plates, knives, forks, etc., used at meals”) and *dinnerware* are the synonyms used in the following context:

e.g.: *We are a manufacturer and supplier specializing in melamine tableware and dinnerware.*

One of the constituent members of the nominal compounds can also be a compound stem. Thus, the words *thermometer*, *microwave*, *candlepower*, and *armchair* are compound elements in the following compounds: *forehead thermometer*, *microwave oven*, *candlepower torch*, *armchair caddies*.

Three- and four-member nominal compound nouns denoting household goods are also often used in Internet advertisements:

e.g.: *New Super bright led head strap flashlight gives 14-times longer battery life*

e.g.: *Microwave plate covers are designed to protect and stop food splattering in your microwave.*

The *head strap flashlight* is “a small portable electric lamp powered by one or more dry batteries and fastened to the head by means of a strap”. The *microwave plate cover* is “the cover for a plate for microwave”. These compound nouns have a compound stem as a constituent element (solid compound nouns – *flashlight* and *microwave* respectfully). The compound *head strap flashlight* is of “*noun + noun + noun + noun*” pattern, whereas the compound *microwave plate covers* has the pattern of “*adjective + noun + noun + noun*”.

Five-component nominal compounds are less frequent constructions the elements of which are usually hyphenated as in: *four-in-one-garden-tool* (“*noun + preposition + numeral + noun + noun*” pattern).

In the whole the investigation has shown that the most productive are the following structural patterns of the nominal compounds: two-member (*noun + noun*), three-member (*noun + noun + noun*; *shortened adjective + noun + noun*; *noun + shortened adjective + noun*) and four-member compounds (*noun + noun + noun + noun*, *adjective + noun + noun + noun*).

As it has been mentioned above the verbal-nominal compound nouns denoting household goods have a higher frequency of occurrence in the Internet advertisements than the compound nouns proper – approximately 58%. While analyzing this type we have noticed that their structural patterns may be composed of two, three, four, five and six constituents. The “*verb + noun*” pattern can be represented by the following minor two-member structures: *verb + noun*; *verb (+ -ing) + noun*; *verb (+ -er) + noun*, *verb (+ -y) + noun*, *verb (+-age) + noun*; *verb (+-ation) + noun*; *verb (+ -ery) + noun*; *verb (+ -ment) + noun*. It should be noted here that most of the determinant elements of such constructions are not verbs in the proper sense, but other parts of speech derived from a verbal stem.

In the advertising discourse, these words appear as the solid compound nouns (which are very little in number) and the open compounds. The attributive relationship of the components is typical for these compounds:

e.g.: Major products include various melamine bowl, [...] and any other household cookware.

Cookware is a solid compound, the meaning of which correlates with the word-combination *ware that cooks*. But the results of the research have shown that the two-member solid verbal-nominal compound nouns do not occur so frequently as the open two-member compounds. This fact can be explained by the temporary nature of the open compounds and more stable character of the solid ones.

The three-member compounds have the most frequent occurrence among the many-member verbal-nominal compound nouns in Internet advertisements. The absolute majority of the compounds of such type are open, for example: *bench drill stand*, *mixing bowl set*, *frying pan set*, *wine cooler fridge*, *sewing embroidery machine*, *radiator bleed valve*, *china storage set*, *carpet gripper tape*, *drink can lid*, *garage parking aid*.

As for the motivation of the compound nouns denoting household goods in the Internet advertisements, the study has shown that 98 % of them are completely motivated. The non-motivated compounds constitute 0.5 % out of the total number while 1.5 % of compounds studied are partly motivated.

For example, the meaning of the compound noun *weather glass* cannot be at once correctly deduced from its constituent members *weather* (“the day-to-day meteorological conditions, esp. temperature, cloudiness, and rainfall, affecting a specific place; (modifier) relating to the forecasting of weather”) and *glass* (“a hard brittle transparent or translucent non-crystalline solid”). However, we do not exclude a possibility of guessing the meaning of this compound which is “an instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure, usually to determine altitude or weather changes” from the analysis of the free phrase *glass for forecasting weather*.

Another compound noun defined by us as partly motivated is *lampshade*. *Lamp* is “any of a number of devices that produce illumination” and *shade* means “something used to provide a shield or protection from a direct source of light”. Thus, *lampshade* is *the shade for lamp* – “an object used to provide a shield or protection from a direct source of light”. Not at once and not everybody will come to the accurate meaning of this compound. It occurs in the following fragment of an Internet advertisement:

e.g.: Using micro-chip technology, the plant lamp lighting pole enables you to combine an attractive plant of your choice with a lampshade also of your choice to create a fascinating and stunning way to light up your rooms.

The compound *work horse* is a non-motivated compound. The meanings of the constituents of this compound transgress the literal meaning of it.

e.g.: Revolutionary things are often based on a simple concept - and that's certainly true of the work horse [5].

The free phrase *the horse that works* also does not help understand the real meaning of the word. In reality, this is a device for sawing the timber.

Summing up we may say that due to the prevailing majority of the temporary compounds over the permanent ones in the Internet advertisements both nominal and verbal-nominal compound tend to be transparent in their meaning and motivated, sometimes, however, partly. Non-motivated compounds occur very rarely in the field of the household goods. Some of the compound nouns denoting household goods are attested in the English dictionaries, but most of them are coined.

Compounds are not necessarily restricted to two constituents, although this is the most common case in English. The process of compounding can be reiterated. As a consequence, after the first compounding process, the subsequent will have a compound as input, instead of a single word. In other words, a compound can be enlarged to more than two constituents by adding new lexical elements. In relation to this, the notion of binary relationship emerges, which states that longer compounds can be divided and analyzed into binary structures. Here we should note that the compound nouns denoting household goods are regularly met in the

Internet advertising texts having three and more immediate constituents. Theoretically the process of compounding is unlimited; however, an excessively articulated compound is not preferred, since the longer the compound, the more difficult to produce and to process.

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