

Constraints on multiple coordinative compounding with denominal adjectives in Polish

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Abstract

The paper offers a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of multiple coordinate adjectival compounds culled from the National Corpus of Polish. In particular, we focus on compounds involving denominal adjectives. The empirical material points to the productivity and recursiveness of the pattern. As expected compounds involving 3 members far outnumber structures made up of 4 constituents. We also provide examples of compounds with a number of constituents exceeding 5. We identify the semantic, morphosyntactic and pragmatic constraints on their formation. It is demonstrated that in line with the general constraints on coordinative compounding the conjoined units are of the same category and are reversible (Olsen 2001; Renner 2008; Arcodia 2010). We elaborate on Kallas's (1999) semantic homogeneity requirement formulated with respect to AA compounds (cf. the concept of natural coordination in Wälchli 2005) and demonstrate that As in a multiple coordinate compound should belong not only to the same category but also subcategory, i.e. subsecutive relational adjectives or intersective qualitative adjectives. We also identify the semantic domains in which this pattern is particularly productive and tendencies in the morphological make-up of compound members.

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Compounding in the verbal domain: Two types of resultative suffixes in Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract

In the verbal domain, Chinese has a compound construction called Resultative Verb Compound (RVC) which telicizes the base verb with a resultative suffix that specifies the event outcome. Two types of RVCs have received attention in the recent literature: one suffixed with a so-called phase complement which comments on the entire event progress (e.g., *yóu-wán yǒng* (swim-finish swim) ‘finish swimming’); the other one suffixed with a resultative complement which specifies the resulting state of the patient (e.g., *cā-diào huīchén* (wipe-off dust) ‘wipe off the dust’). Recent studies start to notice that those constructions exhibit different grammatical behaviors, for example, they have different degrees of compatibility with the progressive form, impose or not impose definite interpretations on bare noun objects, and have different restrictions in allowing recursive compounding of resultative morphemes (Lu et al. 2019; Gu 2023; Tham 2023). Although Ph-RVCs and Res-RVCs show most grammatical and semantic contrasts, items within the two classes turn out to be grammatically inconsistent, making the generalizations difficult to establish. Moreover, some studies take a syntactic view (as opposed to a morphological one) of RVCs, which seems to be mistakenly influenced by semantic studies of event structure or event decomposition, and thus miss out a bigger picture of the distribution of RVCs.

This study conducts a thorough investigation of the grammatical behaviors of both types of RVCs with an attempt to reach clear generalizations over the data. Distinct structures are also adopted for the two types as assumed in prior studies. The approach to analyzing the RVC structures is based on the analytic perspective offered by studies of event structures; however, it takes a morphological or lexical rather than syntactic view of RVCs so that the syntactic representations of the two types of RVCs are the same.

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Same Compounds, Different Relations: A Preliminary Study of Japanese and English

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Abstract

This study investigates how native speakers of Japanese and English accept newly coined compound nouns involving different semantic relationships. Specifically, it examines whether the same noun–noun structure (N1 + N2) is interpreted differently depending on whether N1 denotes color, shape, or material.

Using Image Creator, 15 images (5 types × 3 relations) were generated, holding N1 and N2 constant while varying their semantic relation. A survey was conducted via Microsoft Forms, with 125 Japanese speakers and 13 English speakers rating each compound on a four-point Likert scale.

No significant differences were found for color- and shape-based compounds (shape: $\chi^2(1) = 0.0899$, $p = 0.764$; color: $\chi^2(1) = 1.271$, $p = 0.259$). However, a significant cross-linguistic difference emerged for material-based compounds ($\chi^2(1) = 18.38$, $p < 0.001$; Fisher's $p = 0.0000031$). The results suggest that the two groups differ in how they interpret lexical items, especially the material relationship between nouns, unlike shape- or color-based relations, which showed no difference.

These findings support the applicability of Generalized Modification (GM), as defined in (1), in both Japanese and English, as both groups showed similar acceptance of color- and shape-based compounds. However, the range of pragmatic relations permitted under GM appears to differ across languages: Japanese allows direct material interpretations in compounds, while English tends to restrict such usage.

Future research should investigate whether this variation holds in other GM-permitting languages, and include languages such as Spanish, where GM is not available, to better understand the cross-linguistic nature of compound formation.

(1) Generalized Modification (GM) (Snyder 2012)

If α and β are syntactic sisters under the node γ , where α is the head of γ , and if α denotes a kind, then interpret γ semantically as a subtype of α 's kind that stands in a pragmatically suitable relation to the denotation of β .

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Incorporation of Phrasal Names into VN Compounds in French

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Abstract

This study focuses on French VN compounds in which phrasal names appear in the N position. Through corpus-based analysis, we will investigate the formation mechanisms of this type of construction from a constructionist perspective.

In Romance languages, N+PP and N+A function as productive naming constructions. Since these units are based on syntactic rules, they are defined in previous studies as “phrasal names” (Booij 2009), “phrasal nouns” (Masini 2009) or “lexicalized syntactic constructions” (Villoing 2012a), and are distinguished from compounds.

However, as Booij (2009: 230-231) discusses, phrasal names can be reinterpreted as corresponding to monolexical elements. As a result, N+PP such as *manque de neige* ‘lack of snow’ or N+A such as *responsabilité civile* ‘civil liability’ may appear in the non-head position of NN compounds (e.g. *assurance manque de neige* ‘no-snow insurance’, *assurance responsabilité civile* ‘liability insurance’).

In contrast to NN compounds, the formation of VN compounds (e.g. *lave-vaisselle* ‘dishwasher’) is subject to phonological size constraints. Villoing (2012b: 1432) reports that 95.4% of the elements observed in the N slot of VN compounds consist of two syllables or fewer. This suggests that phrasal names, especially N+PP (inevitably consisting of more than two syllables in total), are less likely to appear in this position.

However, corpus data reveals instances where N+PP with three or more syllables appear in the N slot of VN compounds:

- (1) a. *sèche- chaussures de ski*
dry.3SG. shoe.F.PL. of ski.M.SG.
‘ski boot dryer’
- b. *porte- tasses à café*
carry.3SG. cup.F.PL. to coffee.M.SG.
‘coffee cup holder’

Previous studies do not sufficiently focus on the incorporation of N+PP in VN compounds. In this study, through a descriptive analysis of the formation of compounds such as *sèche-chaussures de ski*, we will discuss the referential role of the PP that is essential for naming artifacts that VN compounds of this type denote.

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Minimalist Analyses of Recursive Compounds

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Abstract

Recursive compounds such as *peanut butter sandwich* in English seem to offer the problem of labeling in Labeling Algorithm (Chomsky 2013, 2015), since the modifier (e.g., *peanut butter*) itself is a compositional compound, hence not a root but a noun and the grammar does not know which element can be the label. However, the grammar needs to know which element is the label, since for a Syntactic Object derived Merge to be interpreted, some information such as labeling is necessary. To solve this problem of labeling for recursive compounds, we adapt minimalist analyses of two-member compounds by Sugimura & Obata (2014) who claim that when both heads are equally eligible for labeling, the Labeling Algorithm picks out the morphologically simpler head by minimal search. Recursive compounds the final constituent (e.g. *sandwich*) merged with a categorizer is the morphologically simpler head than the modifier compound (*peanut butter*). In this presentation, we are going to compare the data from English with those from Swedish. The reason we explore Swedish is that this language has CASE merged with the modifier compound and which is said to make the whole interpretation left-branching, not right-branching. To propose an alternative structure of recursive compounds, we conducted experiments where we asked 20 native speakers of English and Swedish for their interpretations. During our talk, we are going to show the details of the results of the experiments which show that native speakers do interpret the target compounds as left-branching recursive compounds.

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On Doubly Compounded Synthetic Compounds

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Abstract

Compounds can be formed with more than two components, and in most cases they seem to establish a modifier/modifiee relationship or a coordinative relationship. For example, the tri-constituent compound *kitchen towel rack*, in a right-branching interpretation, *rack* is modified by *towel*, composing a compound *towel rack*, and *kitchen* functions as a modifier of that compound. In a left-branching interpretation, the compound *kitchen towel* modifies *rack*. On the other hand, in such a Japanese example as *to zai nan boku* “(lit.) east west south north,” consisting of four lexemes, a coordinative interpretation is obtained. Then there arises one question. How about synthetic compounds? Are synthetic compounds with more than two lexemes also possible?

Lieber (2004) calls synthetic compounds consisting of more than two lexemes *doubly compounded synthetic compounds* and observes with Selkirk (1982) that they are not possible. Typical examples they give are compounds based on ditransitive verbs, such as **shelf book putter*, **book shelf putter* and so on. Lieber (2004: 59) also finds “marginal at best” doubly compounded synthetic compounds consisting of transitive verbs like *garage car keeper*, *hand lace maker*, and *tree pasta eater*.

The aim of this paper is to address the issue on the difficulty of doubly compounded synthetic compounds in terms of building a hierarchical structure with a process of merge. Specifically, I adopt a labeling approach developed by Chomsky (2013, 2015), and argue that a word form of verbs taking two internal arguments cannot be realized or externalized in compounding. I also mention that this conclusion supports an approach generating VP structures of VP-Shell type.

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Compound emergence in Highland Mayan Sign Language (HMSL)

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We present work on compounding in Highland Mayan Sign Language (HMSL), an undocumented language from highland Guatemala. Previous research shows that compounding is productive in both spoken and sign languages (SLs), with the latter exhibiting rarer or even impossible properties in spoken language. For instance, the availability of two articulators (the hands) allows for simultaneous compounds in SLs, where each hand produces one element of the compound at the same time. Emerging SLs, like HMSL, provide a unique window into compounding emergence since they can provide evidence about the lexicalization and conventionalization paths of compounds. For example, based on data from Al-Sayyid Bedouin SL (ABSL), Meir et al. (2010) argue that compounds develop from a process of carving down phrases, rather than combining words together. Essentially, older signers of ABSL produce multi-constituent compounds which are reduced with each subsequent generation. This accords with the fact that while tri-constituent compounds have been attested in several urban SLs, including American SL, Italian SL, and French SL (Santoro 2018), such compounds are felt as 'outdated' by younger signers.

We add to the literature on compound emergence with data from 23 signers of HMSL spanning several generations. Signers completed picture-based elicitation tasks targeting the Swadesh-207 (1952) and Woodward (1993) basic vocabulary lists. Our primary empirical results support Meir et al. (2010) on ABSL. In particular, we observe substantial variation in HMSL compounding, suggesting incomplete conventionalization, but younger signers are reducing the multiword compounds from previous generations. We go beyond Meir et al. (2010) in reporting a novel compounding strategy in HMSL involving semantic classifiers.

All signers produced compounds, with variation in headedness, constituent number and the lexical and semantic nature of constituents. Left-headedness was overall more frequent. Older signers produced longer multi-compounds, while younger signers reduced them and sometimes even produced them as simultaneous compounds (Fig. 1a,b). Despite the variation, most compounds contained a constituent indicating class membership (e.g., FISH, QUADRUPED, WORM) combined with descriptive constituents (Figs. 2,3), suggesting a productive compounding strategy is developing in this emerging SL.

Figures

Figure 1 – Sequential (a) vs. simultaneous (b) ‘DOG’ compound produced by father and daughter, respectively.



bark (mouthing)



bark (mouthing) a) QUADRUPED^BARK b) QUADRUPED

Figure 2 – different water animal compounds – a) ‘SHARK’, b) ‘DOLPHIN’, c) ‘WHALE’.



a)

FISH^FACE^TEETH



b) FISH^JUMP



c) FISH^BLOWHOLE

Figure 3 – examples of mammal and soft-bodied animal compounds – a) ‘SHEEP’, b) ‘SNAIL’.



a)

QUADRUPED^HORNS^BODY^WOOL



b) WORM^ROUND-OBJECT^HORNS

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