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Adjectival Compounds

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Adjectival compounds

can have nouns or other adjectives as non-heads. The interpretation of noun-adjective compounds follows basically the same principles as those of noun-noun compounds. The non-head element can serve either as a modifier or, given the appropriate adjectival head, as an argument of the head. Consider the examples in (26):

(26)   capital-intensive   sugar-free

        knee-deep   structure-dependent

        dog-lean   girl-crazy

        blood-red   class-conscious

Depending on the semantics of the compound members and on likely semantic relationships between them, the compounds in the left column receive various kinds of interpretations ('intensive with regard to capital', 'deep to the height of one's knee', 'lean as a dog', 'red like blood'). The most common type of interpretation is the one involving a comparison ('lean as a dog', 'red like blood'), and very often the first element of such compounds assumes the role of an intensifier, so that *dog-lean, dogtired* etc. may be paraphrased as 'very lean', 'very tired'.

The items in the right column of (26) can be analyzed in such a way that the first element of the compound satisfies an argument position of the adjective. In syntactic constructions this argument would appear next to a preposition: *free of sugar, dependent on structure, crazy for girls, conscious of class (differences).* Adjective-adjective compounds with the first adjective as modifier (as in *icy-cold, blueish-green*) seem not to be as numerous as noun-adjective compounds. Among the adjective-adjective type we also find copulative compounds similar to the nominal ones discussed in section 3.1. above. On the one hand, there are appositional compounds such as *sweet-sour* and *bitter-sweet*, which refer to entities (in this case tastes or emotions) that are at the same time *sweet* and *sour*,

or *bitter* and *sweet*. On the other hand, there are coordinative compounds that are, like their noun-noun counterparts, exclusively used attributively: *a French-German cooperation, the high-low alternation, a public-private partnership.*

 Finally, there are adjectival compounds that involve derived adjectives as heads and that behave in a similar fashion as deverbal synthetic compounds. Examples are given in (27):

> (27)   blue-eyed   university-controlled   hair-raising   clear-sighted
>   Washington-based awe-inspiring

Again there are two possibilities for the structural analysis, exemplified for *blue-eyed, university-controlled* and *hair-raising* in (28):

> (28)   a.   [[blue eye] -ed]
>   b.   [blue [eye-ed]]
>   c.   [[university control] -ed]
>   d.   [university [control-ed]
>   e.   [[hair raise] -ing]
>   f.   [hair [raise-ing]

The meaning of *blue-eyed* as 'having a blue eye/blue eyes' strongly suggests that (28a) is the best analysis for these words. We are dealing with the derivational suffix *ed*, whose derivatives can be paraphrased as 'having X, provided with X' (cf. *binoculared, blazered, gifted*, see chapter 4.4.3.). What appears to be slightly problematic with such an analysis is that it entails that phrases (such as [*blue eye*] or [*clear sight*]) may serve as input to a derivational rule. This is an unusual state of affairs, since most suffixes do not attach freely to phrases, but only to roots or words. However, we have seen in chapter 4 that the possibility of phrases and compounds feeding derivation is needed anyway to account for the behavior of

the suffixes *-er* (e.g. *fourth-grader*), *-ish* (e.g. *stick-in-the-muddish*) and *-ness* (e.g. *over-the-top-ness*), which all readily attach to phrases.

Although involving the same surface form *-ed*, the case of *university-controlled* is different from the case of *blue-eyed* in that we are dealing not with the ornative suffix *-ed*, but with the adjectivally used past participle *controlled*, which is modified by *university*. Compounds with adjectival heads that are based on past participles often receive a passive interpretation ('controlled by the university'), with the nonhead expressing the agent argument of the verb. Hence, structure (28d) seems to be the best analysis.

The same analysis holds for *hair-raising* (see (28f)) and similar compounds, in which the non-head is usually interpreted as the object of the verbal base of the head (e.g. a hair-raising experience is an experience that raises one's hair, and an aweinspiring person is a person that inspires awe).

With regard to their stress-pattern, adjectival compounds show both leftward and rightward stress. For example, all copulative adjectival compounds, and compounds like *knee-déep, bone-drý, dog-tíred, top-héavy* are all stressed on the final element, but other formations have initial stress: *fóotloose, thréadbare*. The source of this variability is unclear, but the stress criterion is not as important for determining the status of adjectival compounds as compounds as it is for nominal compounds.

5. Verbal compounds

In our table of possible and impossible compound patterns we saw that compounds with a verbal head may have nouns, adjectives and verbs as their non-head, as exemplified in (29):

(29)   **noun as non-head   adjective as non-head   verb as non-head**

proof-read deep-fry stir-fry talent-spot shortcut dry-clean ghost-
write blindfold freeze-dry chain-smoke broadcast drink-drive

Upon closer inspection we notice, however, that the majority of compounds involving a verbal head is best analyzed as the result of a back-formation or conversion process. Thus, the items in the leftmost column are all back-formations from noun-noun compounds with either a verbal noun in *-ing* or a person noun in *-er* in head position (e.g. *proof-reading*, *talent-spotter*, *ghost-writer*, *chain-smoker*). With regard to adjective-verb compounds, conversion is involved with *to shortcut*, *to blindfold*, while *to deep-fry* and *to broadcast* seem to be rather idiosyncratic instances of this type, whose semantics is not transparent.

That the back-formation and conversion analyses make sense is supported by the above-mentioned impossibility of forming verbal compounds with nouns as nonheads, and the general impossibility of verbs to incorporate adjectival/adverbial non-heads. For instance, neither *read a book, steal a car* nor *drive fast, move slowly* can be readily turned into compounds (**bookread*, **carsteal*, **fastdrive, *slow(ly)-move*), whereas nominalized verbs and their arguments (as in *the reading of books*, *a driver of trains*) and deverbal adjectives and their adverbial/adjectival modifiers are happily condensed to compounds (*book-reading, train-driver, a fast-driving chauffeur, a slowmoving animal*).

In contrast to noun-verb and adjective-verb combinations, verb-verb compounds are not so readily explained as the product of back-formation or conversion. They seem to be regular copulative compounds referring to events that involve the conceptual integration of two events into one (e.g. *to stir-fry* 'to stir while frying'). This interpretation parallels that of appositional nominal and adjectival compounds. Appositional verbal compounds are much less frequent, however.

With regard to stress assigment, verbal compounds show no uniform

behavior. While *deep-frý, dry-cléan* and *stir-frý* have final stress, *fréeze-dry* and most of the other compounds in (29) have initial stress. As with adjectival compounds, the reasons for this variability are not clear, but, again, stress if not a crucial criterion for determining the compound status of these formations.

6. Neoclassical compounds

In chapter 4 we already defined neoclassical formations as forms in which lexemes of Latin or Greek origin are combined to form new combinations that are not attested in the original languages (hence the term NEOclassical). I repeat here the examples from chapter 4:

(30) *bio*chemistry   *photo*graph   geo*logy*
      *bio*rhythm   *photo*ionize   bio*logy*
      *bio*warfare   *photo*analysis   neuro*logy*
      *bio*graphy   *photo*voltaic   philo*logy*

We have already argued briefly in chapter 4, section 1, why such formations are best described not as the result of affixation. In this section we will examine in more detail the properties of neoclassical forms, focussing on three phenomena that deserve special attention. First, the position and combinatorial properties of neoclassical elements, second, the phonological properties of the resulting compounds, and third, the status and behavior of medial *-o-* that often appears in such forms.

 Let us start our analysis by looking at a larger number of pertinent forms. The list of forms that can be argued to belong to the class of neoclassical forms is rather long. For illustration I have compiled the collection in (31):

(31)   **form**   **meaning**   **example**

a. astro- 'space' astro-physics, astrology   bio- 'life' biodegradable, biocracy   biblio- 'book' bibliography, bibliotherapy

electro-   'electricity'   electro-cardiograph, electrography

geo- 'earth' geographic, geology   hydro- 'water' hydro-electric, hydrology   morpho- 'figure' morphology, morpho-genesis   philo- 'love' philotheist, philo-gastric   retro- 'backwards' retroflex, retro-design   tele- 'distant' television, telepathy   theo- 'god' theocratic, theology b. -cide 'murder' suicide, genocide   -cracy 'rule' bureaucracy, democracy

-graphy	'write'	sonography, bibliography
-itis	'disease'	laryngitis, lazyitis
-logy	'science of'	astrology, neurology
-morph	'figure'	anthropomorph, polymorph
-phile	'love'	anglophile, bibliophile
-phobe	'fear'	anglophobe, bibliophobe
-scope	'look at'	laryngoscope, telescope

Let us first consider the position and combinatorial properties of the elements in question. As indicated by the hyphens, none of these forms can usually occur as a free form. With the exception of *morph-/-morph* and *phil-/phile*, which can occur both in initial or in final position, the elements in (31) occur either initially or finally. Hence a distinction is often made between **initial combining forms** and **final combining forms**. The difference between affixes and combining forms now is that neither affixes nor bound roots can combine with each other to form a new word: an affix can combine with a bound root (cf. e.g. *bapt-ism, prob-able*), but cannot combine with another affix to form a new word (**re-ism, *dis-ism, *ism-able*). And a root can take an affix (cf. again *bapt-ism, prob-able*), but cannot combine exclusively with another bound root (e.g. **bapt-prob*). Combining forms, however, can either combine with bound roots (e.g. *glaciology, scientology*), with