

## INTRODUCTION

Composition *sensu largo* is a cross-linguistic word-formation mechanism. It consists in creating new vocabulary items through combining two or more words into compound structures in a variety of ways (e.g. *notebook*, *middle class*, *over-the-counter*, *connect the dots puzzle*, *truck driver*, etc.). Compound words are part of many word formation systems, such as English, Dutch, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Mandarin Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, to name a few. It has often been argued (e.g. Katamba 2005, Bauer 2001, Bauer and Huddleston 2002, et al.) that compounding, in particular the noun – noun pattern, is a highly productive morphological process in English. Undeniably, its output constitutes a substantial portion of the English lexicon. Though the contribution of compounding to the class of Polish morphologically complex words is less significant, similarly to English, its relevance for the domain of word formation cannot be underestimated.

In contrast to root compounds, being the result of sheer concatenation, synthetic compounds have played a major role in the development of linguistic theory. Due to the fact that they raise a number of questions concerning the morphology-syntax interface, as they balance on the verge of these two domains of grammar, English synthetic compounds have drawn a lot of scholarly attention and, unlike in Polish, become one of the most extensively covered topics in word formation.

Synthetic compounds are formed from deverbal heads (derived from a verb by affixation), e.g. *bricklayer*, *horse-breaker*, *sokowżymaczka* ‘juice extractor’. Their non-head constituent fulfils the function of the argument or complement of the verb from which the head is derived. In Polish the relevance of synthetic compounding for word formation seems even more crucial than in English. This complex compound structure, not necessarily resting on a verb (e.g. N-N-Af. *nosorożec* ‘rhinoceros’, A-N-Af. *bosonóżka* ‘female barefoot dancer’), is far richer in representatives than the root compound-type (e.g. N-N *parostatek* ‘steam boat’).

We wish to make a morpho-semantic analysis of Polish synthetic deverbal compound nouns the focal point of our dissertation. Our aim is to set this analy-

sis in the context of synthetic compounding in English with a view to bringing out the differences and similarities between these representatives of Slavonic and Germanic languages in the domain of synthetic compounding. Since typologically the two languages differ considerably (English being a word-based language and Polish a stem-based one), it is safe to make an assumption that the analysis of the same compounding pattern, operating in two genetically different morphological systems, is bound to confirm such salient differences and hopefully expose to view considerable similarities. Our contrastive description will be carried out at the level of morphological and semantic structures.

While English synthetic compounds are described as exclusively *endocentric*<sup>1</sup>, Polish reveals a large number of representatives of both kinds, i.e. *endocentric* and *exocentric* synthetic compound words. Still, neither class has received the deserved scholarly attention, regarding their morphological and semantic make-up, in the same way that their English counterparts have. Moreover, relevant, but scant publications on compounds proper, obtainable within Polish linguistic literature, were, without exception, written decades ago (see Klemensiewiczówna 1951, Kurzowa 1976, Sambor 1976, and Grzegorzczkowska 1963). Though the mentioned publications constitute a substantial and irrefutable contribution to the field of Polish compounding, they provide strictly descriptive accounts of the morphological process in question, overlooking the fact that word formation is not merely a linear process of concatenation. They do not raise such substantial questions as the mechanism of argument assignment<sup>2</sup>, the morphosyntactic feature percolation, the hierarchical morphological structure of words, and last but not least, the crucial problem of morphology-syntax interface, having a direct bearing on the positioning of compounding on the map of grammar.

In our dissertation we draw on existing literature on English and Polish compounding as well as on our own research proposals to investigate parallel synthetic nominal constructions found in Polish and English. Our main focus will be on both the morphosemantic and morphosyntactic structures of synthetic deverbal<sup>3</sup> compound nouns, placing special emphasis on their argument realization. We

<sup>1</sup> We are sceptical of the claim that English synthetic compounds are exclusively endocentric. There are reasons to believe that certain exocentric root compounds should in fact receive the structural interpretation of synthetic compounds (see discussion in 3.1.2 and 3.2.2).

<sup>2</sup> The issue of argument realisation is, to a degree, raised by Kurzowa (1976), Sambor (1976) and Lewiński (1993). Unlike Lewiński, who does not circumvent the gray areas and problematic cases of the semantics of Polish exocentric deverbal compound nouns, Sambor's analysis of endocentric and exocentric deverbal compound nouns is based on limited data. All the scholars, however, abstain from sketching the mechanism of argument assignment *per se*. Instead, they turn their attention to the semantic role interpretation of the most popular representatives of Polish deverbal compound nouns.

<sup>3</sup> Unlike in English, by *deverbal* we mean not only these compounds whose lexical heads are derived from verbs (e.g. N-V-Af. *snopowiązałka* 'sheaf binder') but also those whose internal root

adopt a modified version of the Weak Lexicalist Hypothesis, in particular Lieber and Scalise's (2007) Firewall Theory. We argue that the overall evidence clearly weighs in favour of the hierarchical left-branching structure of both endocentric and exocentric synthetic nominal compounds in both languages, and that percolation of morphosyntactic features originates from the rightmost head constituent, i.e. the derivational affix.

We hope that the empirical findings in our study of the morpho-semantic structure of Polish synthetic compounds will add substantially to our understanding of the morphological as well as semantic make-up of two types of English deverbal compounds, namely V-N- $\emptyset$  *daredevil* and N-V- $\emptyset$  *shoeblick*, largely disregarded as synthetic. In the light of the conclusions drawn from the study of Polish material, we consider it necessary to re-examine the criteria for synthetic compound classification in English and argue that the cited types be interpreted as instances of simultaneous concatenation and conversion (i.e. zero derivation)<sup>4</sup>.

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compound is headed by the verb occupying compound-initial position (e.g. V-N-Af. *bawidamek* 'lady's man').

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion, see section (3.2).

