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Research Article

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF COMPOUND WORDS IN THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This article undertakes an analysis of compound words within the Korean language, focusing on various aspects of their structure and their semantic properties. Furthermore, the perspectives regarding the distinction between a compound term and a word combination are expressed.

KEYWORDS

Compound word, compound noun, compound verb, phrase, complex internal structure, affixes.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of compound words in the Korean language encompasses not only a scientific perspective, but also involves various tasks related to word units. These tasks include the selection of the primary word in lexicography, the compilation of a catalog across diverse practical domains, and the analysis and tagging of language for computer usage. It is imperative and of utmost significance for those of common standing to primarily engage in solitary writing. This article elucidates the notion of compound words, presents the categorization of compound words in the Korean language, and subsequently examines the pragmatic

challenges associated with discerning between compound words and phrases.

1. The notion of compound words

Compound words are a lexical category that arises from the classification of words based on their internal structure. Compound words are positioned inside the classification system as follows. The classification of neologisms in Korean according to the method of formation does not take into account verb suffixes, as they are considered to be contributing factors in the construction of the inflected case of a word. Hence,

within this article, the term “word” refers to the base form of a verb.

The complicated words are those that possess an intricate internal structure. When such a complicated word is examined by breaking it down into its constituent parts, and one of these parts is an added element, the resulting complex word is referred to as a synthetic word. An illustrative instance is the formation of a novel lexeme by appending the morpheme-히- to the word 잡- and the morpheme -질 to the word 손. Compound words are referred to as such when all the constituent elements consist of stems or bigger units. One illustrative instance of this phenomenon is the incorporation of the term 빛 into the lexicon of the word 햇. The term 잡아먹다 is formed by the combination of the verbs 잡다 and 먹다.

Given that compound words and artificial words are both conceptual constructs, there are instances where discerning between the two might pose challenges.

1. 안경+집

2. 몸가짐, 줄타기 (인생 제백사는 줄타기 놀음이라)

By observing the various categories of compound words in Korean, one can gain insight into the formation process of compound words. To begin, compound words are categorized into word groups in the form of complete compound words.

Instances of compound nouns consist of: 쌀밥, 새언니, 큰절, 사막길 (인생이 사막길이다).

Compound nouns with the “noun₁+noun” structure are the most prevalent kind of compound words. The

subsequent category has compound verbs characterized by the structure “verb₁-어 (affix)+verb₂”. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there exists a compound word that is classified as a repeated compound word. Furthermore, it is worth noting that compound words can also be observed in other linguistic categories, such as compound numbers and compound adjectives, exemplified by terms like ‘하나둘’, ‘한두’. Due to the limited amount of study conducted on co-additions, the ability to accurately forecast or identify numerous co-additions remains challenging.

Compound words can be categorized based on the manner used to combine their constituent parts. a) Syntactic compound words, such as 작은아버지, 뛰어나다, 삶아먹다 (동방삭을 곱 삶아먹었나), can be observed in the Korean language. b) Additionally, non-syntactic compound words, such as 펄럭펄럭, 콧물, 칼, can be combined with other words to form new compounds.

The manner in which a word stem is constructed within a syntactic compound mirrors the process by which two words are combined to form a compound word. However, it should be noted that non-syntactic compounds do not adhere to this pattern. Hence, the determination of whether syntactic conjunctions can be read as a composite word or phrase poses a challenge. Compound nouns are a distinct category within the realm of nouns. Typically, the compound word structure of “noun + noun” involves the combination of two words without any further linguistic features. In contrast, the compound word structures of “noun + verb” and “complement + verb” establish a relationship between the previous and subsequent elements.

Repeated compound words are compounds that arise from the whole or partial repetition of a word or word basis, and it is important to observe and analyze them. In this particular instance, there exists a distinct category comprising words that simulate sound and movement, such as 오래오래, 방울방울, 주룩주룩. Various sorts of repetition can be observed, including the repeat of nouns, the repetition of adverbs, the repetition of sound and action words or stems, and the repetition involving the use of ‘-디’ or ‘-나’. The phenomenon of repeating the adjective stem with the suffixes ‘-디’ or ‘-나’ is consistent with previous observations, however in certain instances it assumes the form of an adverbial and adverbial stem, as exemplified by the recurrence of (“걱정걱정”). Numerous instances exist when the recurrence of auditory and kinetic terms manifests as a noteworthy pattern, as exemplified by the repeat observed in the phrases ‘쿵쿵, 탁탁, 팡팡’.

Another notable aspect of compound words is the presence of "compound words based on reanalysis," exemplified by terms such as 큰손, 밤낮. The term ‘돌아오다’ refers to a linguistic occurrence wherein a single word conveys an alternative or additional meaning. The utilization of the term “큰손” in a metaphorical manner, as well as its adoption as a synonym for “큰손”, can be regarded as the manifestation of a novel lexical entity. In this instance, the process of reevaluating the semantic interpretation can be characterized as having resulted in the formation of a novel lexical item. The reason why the compound noun “밤낮” became a compound adverb is that the adverb describing the participle was reanalyzed as ravish and a new word was generated.

There exist multiple perspectives regarding the distinction between compound words and phrases in the Korean language. According to the principles of normative semantics that are typically applicable, a compound word is defined as a single word when its first part and second portion combine to convey a unified concept. Nevertheless, the application of this norm is inherently subjective, and a current issue arises from certain formulations that convey a singular thought while being structured as a phrase.

Additionally, there exists a grammatical principle whereby if both components of a construction consist of words, it is required that either the first or second component refrain from engaging in autonomous syntactic operations. Therefore, when extra grammatical elements are coupled with the first part, or when either the first or second part is defined by an external element and is attached to it, discarded, or used as a pronoun, the phrase “the first part + the second part” is assessed.

To illustrate, let us examine the subsequent terms:

- 1) 사과를 꺾아/꺾아서 먹어라. (‘꺾아+먹다’: compound verb or phrase)
- 2) 껌질을 꺾아/꺾아서] 먹어야지. (‘꺾아+먹다’: phrase)
- 3) 곰 마냥 발바닥 활아/활아서 먹고 사는 줄 아나 (‘활아+먹다’: compound verb or phrase)
- 4) 펄 새끼는 길러/길러서 놓으면 산으로 간다 (‘길러+놓다’: phrase)

One limitation of this verification approach is its lack of a criterion that specifically delineates a compound word, as it solely relies on a criterion that defines a

phrase. The aforementioned principle can also be extended to the construction “verb1-어+verb2”, as exemplified by the case of “꺾아먹다”. If the verb ‘fe’1-어’ can be combined with the verb ‘서’, it results in the compound verb ‘fe’1-어+fe’12’. However, if the combination is not possible, ‘fe’1-어+fe’12’ represents a compound verb or auxiliary verb structure. This method of detection is widely employed.

As seen above, establishing the precise nature of a compound term is a challenging task. Determining the cause of this phenomenon is challenging, as it pertains to the construction of compound words that exhibit productivity.

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