The Syntactic and Semantic Typological Study of Endocentric and Exocentric Compound Nouns in Iranian Children and Adolescents Stories[1]

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1- Introduction

Compounding is one of the most common and useful methods for creating new words. Investigating compound formation is a continuing concern within the field of morphology. Recent developments in the field of linguistics have led to the renewed interest in this phenomenon from different aspects such as semantics perspectives, cognitive linguistics, morphology, acoustic phononetics, neurolinguistics and sociolinguistics.

However, far too little attention has been paid to compounding in the field of typology. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the endocentric and exocentric compound nouns in different age groups of children and adolescent stories. This research tried to answer the following questions: (1) what would be the probable syntactic prototype pattern(s) for the endocentric and exocentric compound nouns? (2) what would be the probable semantic prototype pattern(s) for the endocentric and exocentric compound nouns?, and (3) how could the difference in the ratio of their frequencies be explained?

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2- Theoretical framework

There are various theoretical frameworks for categorizing endocentric and exocentric compound nouns, including Spencer, 1991; Fabb, 1998; Olsen, 2001; Bauer, 2001; Haspelmath, 2002; Booij, 2005; Bisetto and Scalise, 2005. Nonetheless, endocentricity and exocentricity deal with syntactic and semantic aspects of the language; therefore, to investigate the two aforementioned types of compound nouns, Shaghaghi's framework (2008) was used. Regarding the semantic relation between the constituents, compound nous are classified as: (1) endocentric compound: it consists of two words in which one of them functions as the head, such as *steamboat* (the head is <boat>), *blackboard* (the head is <board>), and (2) exocentric compound*:* it is a *compound* construction that lacks a head word: that is, the construction as a whole is not semantically equivalent to either of its parts. So the central meaning isn't carried by the head, but is external to the *compound*; examples include: *paleface, pickpocket*.

3- Methodology

Based on the purpose of the present study, 315 stories have been selected using convenience sampling. The stories were allocated to different age groups: group A (pre-school & primary school children) and group B (middle school and high school adolescents). To investigate the two aforementioned types of compound nouns, Shaghaghi's framework (2008) was used. After calculating the frequency of compound nouns in stories, the two groups were compared with each other in order to reach the decision about the probable prototype pattern for endocentricity and exocentricity of Persian compound nouns.

4- Results and discussion

Regarding the first question of this research, the syntactic prototype patterns for endocentric and exocentric compound nouns in both groups are: N+N > N+Adj> V+ Adj. The second question addressed the issue of extracting the semantic prototype pattern of compound nouns. The results demonstrated that the most frequent type of

compound in both groups was endocentric compound: group A 70.5 % and group B 52%. So, endocentric compound nouns> exocentric compound nouns. Furthermore, the results also showed that the usages of exocentric compound nouns were higher in the second group in comparison to the first group. So it seems that social and cognitive development plays a key role in using exocentric compounds. In other words, cognitive development in adolescents and their attention to details, help them to understand and process exocentric compound nouns faster and easier.

5- Conclusion and suggestions
The study raises questions that would require further investigation. Future research can include a kind of diachronic study; i.e. studying the described prototype patterns in past and present prose texts. The findings of the present study might be a contributing factor for Iranian authors to narrate their story according to language development in childern and the level of cognition.

Key Words: Hierarchy, compound nouns, endocentric and exocentric, children and adolescents stories, typology