Phrasal Compounds in Persian

Mousa Ghonchepour[1]

1. Introduction

In recent years, considerable attention has been given to compounding by linguists worldwide. While Persian linguists have extensively studied root and verbal compounds, phrasal compounds have received relatively little attention, possibly due to the lack of correspondence between the structures of phrasal compounds and common compound standards. This article aims to describe and analyze contemporary Persian phrasal compounds using a dataset of 281 phrasal compound words (135 synthetic and 146 root compound words).

2. Materials and methods

The characteristics of these phrasal compound words, as identified in previous research, were analyzed based on their referentiality/anaphoricity and the criteria of proposing and pro-forms. This analysis led to the classification of these compounds into synthetic and root types, depending on the presence of a verbal constituent within their structure. The study identified a total of 281 phrasal compounds (135 synthetic and 146 root words) and categorized them based on their semantic and syntactic heads.

3. Discussion

Phrasal compounds incorporate syntactic phrases into nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, making it challenging to distinguish them from compound words. However, through the analysis of data related to referentiality/anaphoricity, constituent displacement, proposing, and the use of pro-forms, it became evident that the compounding process played a significant role in constructing these structures. Phrasal compounds consist of at least two constituents: a lexical category (the head) and syntactic phrases (the non-head). The syntactic head determines the grammatical category of the compound word, with verbal syntactic heads classifying the compound as synthetic and non-verbal heads as root compounds.

Verbal phrasal compounds have a verbal syntactic head, with noun phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases contributing to their structure. These compounds can be categorized as noun, adjective, or adverbial types. Additionally, all 135 verbal phrasal compounds are head-final based on syntactic heads, with no initial or unknown head compounds found. The semantic characteristics of verbal phrasal compounds include argument and non-argument types, which can be endocentric or exocentric. Non-argument phrasal compounds are formed by

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[1] Department of Language and Literature, Farhangian University;
m.ghonchepour@cfu.ac.ir

incorporating adjective phrases and prepositional phrases into verbal constituents, functioning as adjunct verbal phrasal compounds and modifiers.

Root phrasal compounds consist of two syntactic phrases and lexical constituents, where noun phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases are incorporated into noun and adjective heads (if a syntactic head is present). The lexical category is not a head in headless compounds. Syntactically, root phrasal compounds are categorized as endocentric (head-initial and head-final) and headless, with no unknown root phrasal compounds identified in the corpus. Semantically, all 146 root phrasal compounds are exocentric, indicating that the head is outside the compound structure.

When comparing root and verbal phrasal compounds, it becomes evident that verbal phrasal compounds are constructed by incorporating noun, adjective, or prepositional phrases into de-verbal nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. In contrast, root phrasal compounds have noun or adjective lexical categories and may have a syntactic head. The frequency of headless compounds is higher in root phrasal compounds compared to head-initial and head-final types. Root exocentric phrasal compounds are more frequent than verbal exocentric phrasal compounds.

4. Conclusion
In conclusion, the analysis of root and verbal phrasal compounds in Persian reveals that phrasal compounding is a non-productive but active word formation process. These compounds are classified based on their syntactic heads, which may be verbal or non-verbal, leading to the distinction between verbal and root phrasal compounds. Persian phrasal compounds vary in their syntactic and semantic characteristics, with differences in frequency based on the type of speech. Root phrasal adjective compounds and verbal phrasal adjective compounds are the most frequent categories, with prepositional and noun phrases actively participating in Persian phrasal compound formation.