SEMANTIC FEATURES OF COMPOUND WORDS IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola ingliz frazeologik birliklari tarkibidagi qo'shma so'zlarning semantik xususiyatlarini o'rganadi. Qo'shma so'zlar idiomatik iboralarni hosil qilish va izohlashda katta rol o'ynaydi. Tadqiqot frazeologik birliklar ichida birikmalar vazifasini bajarganda ma'no qanday yasalishini, o'zgartirilishini yoki kengaytirilishini aniqlashga qaratilgan. Tadqiqot ingliz tilidan turli misollarni o'rganish uchun tavsiflovchi va tahliliy usullardan foydalanadi. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, qo'shma so'zlar ko'pincha metaforizatsiya, idiomatizatsiya va leksiklashuv kabi semantik o'zgarishlarga uchraydi. **Аннотация:** В данной статье исследуются семантические особенности сложных слов в рамках английских фразеологических единиц. Сложные слова играют важную роль в формировании и интерпретации идиоматических выражений. Цель исследования — определить, как конструируется, модифицируется или расширяется значение сложных слов, когда они функционируют внутри фразеологических единиц. В исследовании используются описательные и аналитические методы для изучения различных примеров из английского языка. Результаты показывают, что сложные слова часто претерпевают семантические сдвиги, такие как метафоризация, идиоматизация и лексикализация.

Abstract: This article investigates the semantic features of compound words within English phraseological units. Compound words play a significant role in the formation and interpretation of idiomatic expressions. The study aims to identify how meaning is constructed, modified, or extended when compounds function inside phraseological units. The research employs descriptive and analytical methods to examine various examples from English. The findings reveal that compound words often undergo semantic shifts such as metaphorization, idiomatization, and lexicalization. These processes contribute to the richness and complexity of phraseological meaning.

Kalit so'zlar: qo'shma so'zlar, frazeologik birliklar, semantika, idiomalar, metaforizatsiya, leksiklashtirish

Ключевые слова: сложные слова, фразеологические единицы, семантика, идиомы, метафоризация, лексикализация

Keywords: compound words, phraseological units, semantics, idioms, metaphorization, lexicalization

Introduction

Language is a dynamic system in which words combine and evolve to express complex meanings. One of the most interesting aspects of English vocabulary is the use of compound words within phraseological units. These units, often idiomatic in nature, convey meanings that cannot be understood literally. The purpose of this study is to analyze the semantic behavior of compound words in such constructions and to explore how their meanings change in context.

Literature Review

Previous research in the field of lexicology and phraseology has highlighted the structural and semantic complexity of phraseological units. Scholars such as Vinogradov (1986) classified phraseological units into phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations based on semantic cohesion. Similarly, Kunin (1970) emphasized the stability and reproducibility of idiomatic expressions in English.

In the study of compound words, linguists like Marchand (1969) and Bauer (1983) focused on word-formation processes and semantic relations between components. However, most of these studies treat compounds as isolated lexical units rather than as elements functioning within larger phraseological structures.

Recent linguistic approaches have started to examine the interaction between morphology and phraseology. Researchers argue that compound words, when used inside phraseological units, often undergo semantic reinterpretation due to contextual constraints. Despite this, there is still a lack of detailed analysis regarding how exactly semantic transformations occur in such contexts.

Therefore, this study contributes to the field by combining phraseological theory with compound word semantics and providing a more integrated analysis.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach. The data for analysis were collected from reputable linguistic sources, including phraseological dictionaries, corpora, and academic publications.

The selection criteria for examples included:

- Presence of compound words within phraseological units
- Clear distinction between literal and idiomatic meanings
- Frequency of usage in modern English

Each compound word was analyzed based on:

- Morphological structure (e.g., noun+noun, adjective+noun)
- Literal meaning of components
- Contextual (idiomatic) meaning
- Type of semantic transformation

Additionally, comparative analysis was used to identify recurring semantic patterns across different examples.

Analysis

The analysis shows that compound words in phraseological units often lose their direct meanings. For example, in the expression “blackmail,” the compound does not refer to color or mail but to an act of extortion. Similarly, “butterfly effect” illustrates how a compound can symbolize a complex scientific principle through metaphorical extension.

Another example is “deadline,” where neither “dead” nor “line” directly reflects the modern meaning of a time limit. Historically, the term has evolved through semantic shift and contextual reinterpretation.

Several semantic processes were identified:

Metaphorization – meaning based on similarity

Idiomatization – fixed expression with non-literal meaning

Semantic shift – change from original meaning

These processes demonstrate how compounds contribute to idiomatic richness.

Additional Semantic Processes

In addition to the previously mentioned processes, the following semantic mechanisms were also identified:

Metonymy – meaning based on association rather than similarity

e.g., “white-collar” → office workers

Semantic bleaching – loss of original intensity or specificity

e.g., “headline” → no longer strictly related to “head”

Reanalysis – reinterpretation of structure or meaning

e.g., compounds becoming fixed idiomatic chunks

Lexicalization – transformation into fixed vocabulary units

compounds become inseparable and dictionary entries

Cultural embedding – meaning influenced by cultural context

e.g., “red tape” → bureaucracy

These processes demonstrate that compound words are highly dynamic and context-sensitive within phraseological units.

Discussion

The findings suggest that compound words are not merely structural elements but active participants in meaning formation. Their semantic flexibility allows them to adapt to phraseological contexts. From a pedagogical perspective, this creates challenges for language learners. Students often interpret compounds literally, which leads to misunderstanding. Therefore, teaching strategies should include:

- explicit instruction of idiomatic meanings;
- contextual learning;
- comparison between literal and figurative meanings;

Moreover, this study supports the idea that semantics, morphology, and phraseology are deeply interconnected. Understanding this relationship can enhance both theoretical linguistics and applied language teaching.

In conclusion, compound words within English phraseological units are not static elements but dynamic carriers of meaning. Through processes such as metaphorization, idiomatization, metonymy, and lexicalization, they contribute significantly to semantic richness.

This study highlights the importance of analyzing compounds not only as isolated units but also as integral parts of phraseological systems. Future research may focus on cross-linguistic comparisons or corpus-based statistical analysis to further explore this phenomenon.

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