

## Compounding

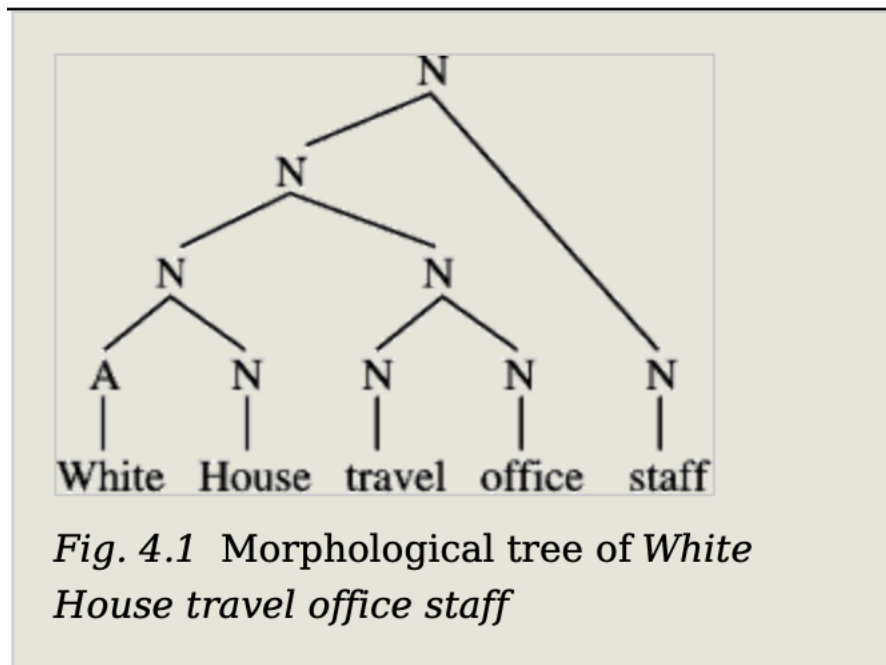
### 1. Compounding: Basics

- Compounding is another important form of derivation. We last talked about compounding in Week 2, where we reviewed some basic concepts like the Right-Hand-Head-Rule, endocentricity and exocentricity.

(1) Compound: a word with more than one root

- Compounding derives hierarchical, binary branching structures
  - In the simplest case it combines just two stems or roots e.g. (1)
  - But in many languages compounding is **recursive**, taking the output of one compounding operation as the input of another. Recursion creates complex structures like (2).

- (1) Dutch      huis-vrouw “house wife”  
 German      Rot-licht “red light”  
 Greek        organo-pektis “instrument player, musician”  
 Hungarian asztal-láb “table-leg”
- (2) Recursive compounding



- In English, the category of a node created by compounding receives the same syntactic category as its right-hand constituent. This is known as the **(right-hand)**

**head rule.** (See Week 1 slides)

(1) (Right-Hand) Head Rule (Booij version)

$[X Y]_Y, Y = N, A, V$

- The directionality of headedness is a point of parameterization. Some languages have a left-hand head rule. We saw examples from Hebrew and Vietnamese in Week 2; Booij gives examples from Maori)
- The head rule (HR) holds not just of category features but also other features, e.g. gender features on Ns as well as meaning (2).

(2) Dutch

het                  soep-vlees  
DET.SG.NEUT   soup-meat(NEUT)  
“the soup meat” (=a kind of meat, not a kind of soup)

de                   vlees-soep  
DET.SG.NON-NEUT   meat-soup(NON-NEUT)  
“the meat soup” (=a kind of meat, not a kind of soup)

- When right-hand member is [neuter] the whole compound is too
- When right-hand member is [non-neuter] the whole compound is too

## 2. Compound types

- rest of this handout briefly reviews the subtypes surveyed in Booij Ch. 4.

### Endocentric vs. Exocentric

- In some cases there is no apparent head: the meaning of the whole is not predictable from the meaning of the constituent that would be designated by the head rule. Such compounds are said to be **exocentric**.

(3) Italian          porta-lettere “lit. carry letters, postman”  
                         lava-piatti “lit. wash dishes, dish washer”

Spanish          lanza-cohetes “lit. launch rockets, rocket launcher”  
                         limpia-botas “lit. clean boots, bootblack”

- Compounds that are internally-headed are called **endocentric**.

### Attributive compounds

- This is not a term introduced in Booij but it is useful in that it is a name for a very common type of compound, where the non-head stands in some kind of attributive relation with the head. The range of meanings introduced in this relation is flexible, e.g. *alligator shoes* can mean “shoes made for alligators to wear”, “shoes made of alligator”, “shoes made in the shape of alligators”, “shoes that were given to an alligator”, etc. Attributive compounds can be endocentric or exocentric.

(4) alligator shoe(s)  
 apple pie  
 light house

### Bahuvrihi-compounds

- A special type of exocentric compound where the meaning of the whole compound denotes the individual/entity who is in possession of the property/quality expressed by the compound

(5) German    Kahlkopf (lit. bald-head, person with a bald head)  
 English    blue-stocking  
 Dutch    een-oog (lit. one-eye, cyclops)

### Copulative compounds (aka appositive compounds)

- A special type of exocentric compound where there is no semantic head and the parts of the compound are in coordination relation

(6) English    blue-green, washer-dryer  
 Dutch    rood-wit-blauw “red-white-blue”

### Phrasal compounds

- The non-head element of a compound can be a phrase.

(7) [wages or employment]NP protection  
 [‘one size fits all’]S mass production public service

- Note that Booij is careful to exclude from this category apparent phrasal compounds that violate word-formation rules, e.g. French *salle à manger* “dining room, lit. room for eating”. This cannot be a compound because it forms the plural on the left-most element (*salles à manger*) and word-internal plurals are not permitted in French.

### Neo-classical compounds

- These are compounds where one more of the pieces involves roots borrowed from Latin or Greek that do not correspond to independent lexemes.
- (8)
- a. bio-logy, psycho-logy, socio-logy, geo-graphy, tomo-graphy
  - b. tele-camera, tele-graph, tele-gram, tele-kinesis, tele-matics, tele-phone, tele-vision
  - c. bureau-crat, magneto-metry, magneto-hydro-dynamic

### Synthetic compounds

- These are compounds in which the non-head is interpreted as an **argument** of the head and the head is a deverbal noun. E.g. a *heart-breaker* breaks hearts, a *sword-swallower* swallows swords.
- (9) sword-swallower, heart-breaker, church-goer, money-changer, typesetter
- The interpretation of the non-head as argument of the head raises questions about how this comes about, which we will address next week. We will posit that the argument structure of the verbal base is inherited by the derived noun via the suffix *-er*. This is how the head noun can be interpreted as an argument of the head.

### Noun incorporation

- A very common process cross-linguistically is for the object of a verb to be **incorporated** into the verb-word (aka **noun incorporation**). Incorporated objects must be non-specific/non-referential. They usually also lack inflection like number or case marking.
- (10) Ponapean (Micronesia)
- a. I kanga-la wini-o  
I eat-COMP medicine-that  
“I took all that medicine” [there cannot be medicine left]
  - b. I keng-winih-la  
I eat-medicine-COMP  
“I completed my medicine-taking” [there may be medicine left]
- Note the meaning difference correlated with free versus incorporated objects.
  - In the incorporated structure, the form of the verb is the same as the transitive, but the incorporated noun saturates the object argument of the verb so the object will not be expressed (again) independently in the syntax.