Pun Compound Words in Publicistic Style and Their Translation (On the Russian and German Examples)

Dr. Tatiana K. Ivanova; Acc. Leila A. Biktasheva

Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia, Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies
E-mail: Tatiana.ivanova@kpfu.ru leilaag@yandex.ru
Contact: +7 843 2213468

Abstract

The topicality of the article is conditioned by active use of pun compound word formations in modern Russian-language political essays, which is also one of the tendencies in the German language. The study of pun compound words in contrastive aspect, word-formative patterns according to which puns are made up, and their translation is in this case of special interest, as they reflect unique language units. The article presents theoretical generalization for further contrastive analysis. The materials may be useful for studying the problem of pun as a word-forming unit, determining word-formative tendencies in Russian and German political journalism. The results are useful in translation work.

Keywords: linguistics, contrastive analysis, pun, word formation, compound word.
Introduction:

The term “pun” is of frequent occurrence in different works on lexicology, for example, by scholars L. Rainers, A. A. Shcherbina, Ye. A. Zemskaya, A. A. Leontiev, Ye. V. Tereshchenkova, G. F. Rakhkimkulova, A. Begson, K. A. John Pollack, Paul Hammond, Patrick Hags and many others. But pun compound words are little-studied in linguistics, and in word formation in particular.

The problem of word formation processes having a set of features in the contrasting languages engages attention of many home and foreign linguists. A major contribution to the study has been made by Ye. S. Kubryakova, M. D. Stepanova, V. Fleisher, K. A. Levkovskaya, R.Z. Muryasov, M. Aronov, F. Plank, V. Dresler, S. Scalise and others.

The word formative units the striking examples of which are found in the pages of publicistic writings attract a heightened interest. Particularly diverse these phenomena are in the genres of political feuilleton or critique analyzing leading topics of the hour from cultural, political, scientific life. It is publicism that possesses greater expressivity of the rendered information, tendency to humor, satire, jeer. One of the language features of political journalism is linguistic economy, which results in compression of the rendered information and occurrence of pun compound words.

Methodological Framework

Both Russian and German are Indo-European languages therefore they have similar features. Contrastive word formation can be called one of the tendencies of linguistics the development of which is conditioned by evolution and improvement of the linguistic investigations. “The kernel of contrastive method consists in systemic-functional approach to the language phenomena, irrespectively to genetic, typological, areal property of languages. The method of comparison is not an end in itself, but the way of in-depth knowledge of systemic-functional regularities of languages, revelation of similarities and differences between them, as well as common language universals”[1,3].

A single systemic-structural approach allows to describe static model of the system considering its qualitative characteristics, whereas functioning individual elements of this system remains outside of the study conducted. Realization of word building patterns and categories in speech is always connected with functional aspect of application of word formation means. Contrastive study of languages from word-formative viewpoint can be defined as “systemic-functional comparison of isofunctional phenomena irrespective of the fact which level of the language system they refer to” [2, 63]. To carry out the comparing procedure, it is necessary to apply a single principle that provides for consideration of the comparing objects as functional systems. The features relevant for internal organization and functioning of this systems are selected as an etalon for comparing.

To make the picture complete, for each word-formative meaning it is necessary to select and systematize all the word-formation means that express it, as well as present those levels of language where the describable phenomena have become the most widespread. This approach provides uniformity in consideration of language systems of family-detached languages in direction from the most common units of language structure to the most concrete.

The key word-formation means in Russian is affix word formation; the leading position is occupied by compounding in German unlike Russian. It should be stressed that the character of using compounding in German and Russian is qualitatively different. So, despite the fact that a compound word can be expressed in these languages by word stems of various parts of speech
(noun, adjective, adverb, numeral, verb and so on), a German compound word can be referred not only to the nouns but to the verbs and adjectives as well. In Russian there are no compound words the first component of which is a verb stem.

**DISCUSSION**

The most productive way to build new words in German is compounding. According to noted linguist M. D. Stepanova, “this way of compounding has existed and played a considerable role in German since ancient historically authenticate period of its history” [3, 21]. A compound word can consist of two, three and more words. It is formed by means of addition of noun with noun and noun with adjective, verb or preposition. The last word indicates gender, plural form and type of declension of compound noun.

Pun is understood as a word or word combination “containing wordplay based on using words that similarly sound but are different in meaning or different meanings of one and the same word” [4, 531]. Thus, it represents “concise capacious emotionally colored description of not only an individual quality but manner in certain situation in which it is expressed with a salient evaluative component” [5, 20].

Pun compound word is two or more underlying stems that have structural and semantic integrity. Pun compound word has a novelty effect, strikes a reader with its singularity in comparing words, is a kind of “word play”, different interpretation of commonly used words and formation of new lexical units on their basis. But having appeared in advertising, on the television screen, in newspaper publications, they are entrenched in vocabulary.

The patterns of pun compound words in publicistic writing satisfy the standards of word-building patterns of a corresponding language, for example German and Russian. But internal valency of word-forming components often differ from external valency of a compound word. Such pun compounds are translated into Russian more frequent by descriptive phrases or definite word combinations. Less frequent they correspond to a lexeme by meaning in the Russian language. Qualitative peculiarity of German compound words lies in combination of two functions: 1) description of single notions and 2) expression of relations between objects and phenomena of the reality. Compound words serve, on the one hand, to name, designate the notions, on the other hand, they are capable to express the relations between the notions. Syntactic function in Russian words is not so pronounced.

The variety of patterns of compound words complicate their classification. Many attempts have been taken to classify compound words. Ya. Grimm developed the classification of compound words on the basis of two features: semantic and formal [6, 407-597]. Such division of compound words in German linguistics has been preserved to this day.

Today there exist various classifications of compound words that include grammatical, semantic and syntactic peculiarities.

The notion of semantic integrity, or “structural laconism” (the term by V. M Pavlov [7,180]), underlies the syntactic approach, developed in the 1970s. Word formation, according to these approaches, is a process of original combination, as one can use those universal-grammatical approaches, used to sentence syntax. Significant are at the same time the principles of relationship of individual arguments, or recursiveness. Noun composites are interpreted according to syntactic importance of their constituents in corresponding periphrases and semantic roles related to them. It leads to smaller and more specific subdivision of word building patterns or types which are often either excessive or insufficient, and the very understanding of noun composite comes to its transformation into a corresponding periphrasis. A composite is interpreted in this case according to the following scheme: in composite AB “B is linked with A by means of an image” [8, 36].
Criticizing the syntactic approaches, E. Coseriu [9, 1977] comes to the conclusion that compound word building is impossible to be described by means of specific rules. In this case each noun composite can have infinitely many interpretations which is determined by contextual and extra linguistic factors in every concrete case. Word formative constructions in the form of composites like simple words are means of nomination but unlike the latter can be used as parallel forms in relation to syntactic word combinations, that is, have double function. In early works M. D. Stepanova [3, 36] defines compound word and word combination as parallel construction.

Some types of compound words can perform the function of syntactic word combination. But word formative construction, according to Stepanova, “is not capable of expressing all its morphological and syntactic relations as it performs this “competitive” function usual with a word of its structure stability” [3,76].

Modern linguists note that the composites may belong to any class of words [11, 45]. Their belonging to either of the class depends, as a rule, on the second component which reflects grammatical features of the whole composite; the first component of the compound word can be any part of speech. As a rule, Russian scholars differentiate four types of German compound words:1) definitive compound words; 2) co-ordinating compound words; 3) shifts; 4) clusters. According to type of relationship, two groups of composites can be distinguished: 1) copulative compounds; 2) definitive compounds [10, 39].

Copulative compounds must belong to the same part of speech and be bonded by coordination. Both compounds have their proper lexical meaning but they equally take part in forming meaning of word-formation construction [10, 115].

Definitive compounds are subordinate to each other, that is subject [10, 115]. The final component of the definitive compound is expressed by noun, the first may belong to any grammatical class of words. Both first and second components are lexically meaningful: the meaning of the components coincide with lexical meaning of the corresponding words, that is, their independent usage. On a number of occasions either of the components or the whole component undergoes substantial reinterpretation.

Special cases of definitive compounds are “possessive compounds” [10, 121]. Possessive composites are compound words that characterize man or thing according prevailing or salient feature. Their peculiarity is conditioned by an object accepted as a reference point: Langbein does not mean «langes Bein», but «der Menschmitlangen Beinen», «Graukopf», «Schlafmutze».

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Consider the examples in which one of the components of the compound word has changed its valency. For example, the German word Kredit in Russian equivalent occurs with meaning «бизнес-акула» / “business shark”, where Kredit – credit, and Hai - shark. The word Computercrack was formed to designate «компьютерного взломщика» / “computer trespasser”, where Computer – computer, and Crack – top class athlete. The compound word Orchestersause means «сус из бобовых, вызываемое вздутие кишечника» / “sauce made from beans causing abdominal swelling”, where Orchester – orchestra, and Sause – sauce. German Traumtanzer – «оторванный от жизни мечтатель» / “woolly-headed idealist, dreamer”, where Traum – dream, a Tanzer– dancer. Zechpreller is a word used to designate man who never pays his debts or delays this process in every possible way, where Zeche– bill, prellen – cheat.

More frequent are the pun words with fully changed valency, which adds more expression and salience. So, for example, German Spinatkommode means «роэль» / “the piano”, where the first component Spinat – spinach, and the second component Kommode – chest of drawers. Viehsitte translated word for word as «скотский обычай» “livestock custom” has acquired the meaning


Pun compound words often have negative connotation. By way of example, one may designate “a foolish man” / “глупый человек” in publicistic writing as Nullspanner, Kameltreiber, Kleingärtner, Nachtjacker, Dunkelmann, Winseltüte, Hinterwaldler, Schnudriwudri (bayer.), Dumpfbacke, Dünnbrettoberer, Bodenturner, Dusseltier, Blindfuchs, and also Schwachkopf, Gipskopf Knallkopf Kürbiskopf, Sifffkopf, Kaktuskopf, Primmelkopf, Sülzkopf, Topfkopf, Flachkopf, where the second component of a compound word is German Kopf – «голова» / “head”.

In modern German there are many words of English origin. Linguists note [13, 67], that Anglicisms have been deeply entrenched in the German language, which has spread over the process of compounding. Thus, the pun compound words such as Modefreak - «модник» / “man of fashion”, «цеголь» / “dandy”; Oldtimer – «родители» / “parents”; Ladykiller – «бабник» / “ladies’ man”, Powerfrau – «суперженщина» / “super woman”, «женщина, которая занимается бизнесом» / “a woman who is engaged in business” have appeared.

CONCLUSION:

In German, the most frequent are the pun compound words that have their valency partially or fully changed, i.e., the commonly used words have been reinterpreted and new words have been built on their basis. Pun compound words help to form an image of a person or nature in publicism from the aspect of evaluation, there have been appeared many pun compound words based on Anglicisms.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

The classification of pun compound words presents special difficulties in which morphological, syntactic, semasiological features interact. Each of features of pun compound words can be taken as a principle of their classification, which is of research interest.

This study allows to understand what exactly the process of formation of pun compound words presents: meaning integrity only or additional conditions are needed.

The materials of the article are also of interest for the specialists who are engaged in studying of translation transformation from the aspect of expression plane and content plane, to apply them in theory and practice of translation.

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