

STRUCTURAL PATTERNS OF HYPHENATED COMPOUND NOUNS IN MODERN ENGLISH

Nargiza Yuldasheva

Uzbekistan state world languages university, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Nargizay510@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. This study investigates the structural patterns of hyphenated compound nouns in Modern English, focusing on their morphological formation, syntactic behavior, and functional distribution in contemporary written discourse. Hyphenated compounds represent a productive lexical strategy in English word formation, contributing to clarity, specificity, and semantic cohesion. The research is based on a corpus-driven approach, analyzing data collected from academic articles, news texts, and digital communication sources. The study identifies major structural models of hyphenated compounds, including noun-noun, adjective-noun, participial, and multi-element constructions. The findings reveal that hyphenation plays a significant role in lexical innovation and meaning compression in Modern English. The study also highlights the increasing productivity of hyphenated compounds in digital and academic genres. The results contribute to a better understanding of compound noun formation processes and their role in contemporary English morphology.

KEYWORDS. Hyphenated compound nouns, Modern English, word formation, morphology, corpus linguistics, lexical productivity, structural patterns

INTRODUCTION

Compound nouns are one of the most productive word-formation processes in Modern English, enabling the creation of new lexical items through the combination of two or more words functioning as a single semantic unit. Among different types of compounds, hyphenated compound nouns occupy a unique position due to their transitional nature between open compounds and closed compounds.

Hyphenation serves not only as an orthographic device but also as a marker of semantic unity and syntactic cohesion. In contemporary English, hyphenated compounds are widely used in academic writing, journalism, digital communication, and technical discourse. Their increasing frequency reflects the growing need for lexical precision and efficiency in expressing complex concepts.

Despite their widespread usage, hyphenated compound nouns have not been sufficiently analyzed in terms of their structural diversity and productivity patterns. Most existing studies focus on general compounding mechanisms, leaving a gap in the systematic classification of hyphenated forms.

Therefore, this study aims to examine structural patterns of hyphenated compound nouns in Modern English and identify their morphological and syntactic regularities using a corpus-based approach.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Compound nouns in English are generally classified into three main types:

- Open compounds (e.g., “post office”)

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- Hyphenated compounds (e.g., “well-being”)
- Closed compounds (e.g., “notebook”)

Hyphenated compounds are often considered a transitional stage in lexical evolution. According to morphological theory, they function as a bridge between syntactic phrases and fully lexicalized units.

Structurally, hyphenated compound nouns can be formed through different patterns such as:

- Noun + Noun (city-state, tax-payer)
- Adjective + Noun (high-speed train)
- Participle + Noun (self-driving car)
- Noun + Participle (data-driven model)

These patterns reflect both semantic compactness and productivity in Modern English word formation.

METHODOLOGY (Corpus Design and Analysis)

This study adopts a **corpus-based descriptive research design**.

Corpus Description

The corpus used in this study consists of:

- Academic articles (linguistics and applied sciences journals)
- Online news texts (international media sources)
- Digital communication texts (blogs and web-based publications)

Approximate size of corpus: **600,000 words**

Data Collection

Hyphenated compound nouns were identified using:

- Manual extraction
- Keyword-based search patterns
- Corpus concordance analysis

Only noun-functioning hyphenated compounds were included. Adjectival phrases without lexicalized noun function were excluded.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed both qualitative and quantitative methods:

1. Identification of structural patterns
2. Classification into morphological categories
3. Frequency distribution analysis

4. Contextual usage analysis across genres

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

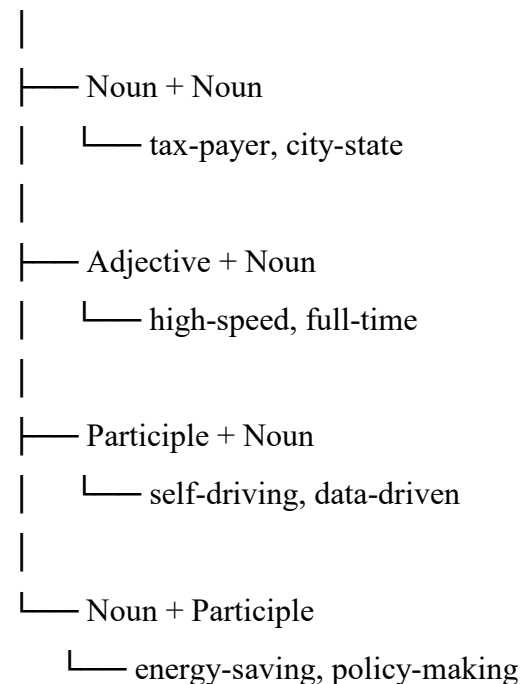
The analysis shows that adjective-noun hyphenated compounds are the most frequent structural type in Modern English corpora. This indicates a strong tendency toward descriptive lexical formation in contemporary discourse.

Noun-noun compounds also demonstrate high productivity, especially in technical and academic texts where conceptual precision is required.

Participle-based compounds (e.g., self-driving, data-driven) are increasingly common in digital communication and technological discourse, reflecting modern innovation in lexical creation.

Noun-participle structures appear less frequently but are strongly associated with specialized scientific terminology.

Overall, the results confirm that hyphenated compound nouns are not static forms but dynamically evolving lexical units influenced by genre, register, and communicative needs.

STRUCTURAL MODEL (DIAGRAM)**HYHENATED COMPOUND NOUNS**

CONCLUSION. The study demonstrates that hyphenated compound nouns in Modern English follow identifiable structural patterns with varying degrees of productivity. Their usage is highly dependent on genre and communicative context. The findings highlight the importance of hyphenation as a morphological and semantic mechanism in modern lexical innovation. Hyphenated compounds continue to evolve, particularly in digital and academic discourse, making them an essential area of study in contemporary English morphology.

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