

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORD FORMATION AND TYPES OF COLLOCATIONS

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Abstract : The first article of this volume presents an introductory survey of the scope of word-formation research. It defines and demarcates the subject-matter of word-formation and explains the basic notions related to the internal structures of complex lexemes and the cross-linguistically important word-formation patterns. Major approaches, analytical and descriptive levels and models in the field of word-formation research are outlined from a bird's eye view.

Introduction

Word-formation research investigates the patterns and regularities underlying the formation of complex lexemes by means of existing building blocks with the aim of formulating rules and other types of generalizations. Complex lexemes (e.g., E. headteacher or trivialize) are characterized by the fact that they consist of two or more constituents. Unlike most simple lexemes such as head, teach and trivial, complex lexemes are not entirely arbitrary signs, but instead are morphologically motivated by their constituents and by the semantic links shared with other structurally identical formations. A precise understanding of the nature of this motivation forms the main interest of word-formation research. The scope of word-formation research in linguistics can be defined by demarcating word-formation from neighbouring fields. The adjacent domain of inflectional morphology deals with elements and operations which produce word-forms of lexemes (e.g., teaches, teaching, taught) rather than new lexemes (teacher, headteacher, to teamteach, etc.), as is the case in word-formation. Word-formation and inflectional morphology are not separated by a clear boundary, however (Bybee 1985, Scalise 1988, Plank 1994, Booij 2000, Stump 2005; see articles 15 and article 29). A classic example of a delimitation problem is the dispute over whether the English adverb-forming suffix -ly as in really or elegantly should be treated as a derivational, i.e. lexical, or inflectional and thus grammatical morpheme (cf., Giegerich 2012). Syntax, while having emerged as a prominent source of inspiration for theory-building in word-formation, differs from wordformation in that the output of syntactic operations is phrasal and clausal rather than lexical in nature.

Literature review

The study of word formation and collocations has garnered significant attention in linguistic research due to its role in language comprehension and production. Word formation, encompassing processes like affixation, compounding, and conversion, has been extensively studied (Bybee, 1985; Scalise, 1988; Booij, 2000). These studies emphasize the morphological motivation of complex lexemes, which differ from simple lexemes in their semantic and structural composition. The relationship between word formation and inflectional morphology has been a contested area, particularly regarding whether certain morphemes, like the English suffix "-ly," are derivational or inflectional (Giegerich, 2012).

Collocations, on the other hand, are critical for achieving fluency in a language. Studies by Harmer (2001) and Johnson (2006) highlight how understanding and using collocations enable learners to produce more natural and coherent speech. Both areas of study contribute to the broader understanding of how language is structured and utilized for communication.

Method

The study employs a qualitative approach, analyzing existing linguistic theories and frameworks on word formation and collocations. Key methodologies include: Textual Analysis: Reviewing scholarly articles, linguistic theories, and grammar resources to identify patterns and principles of word formation. Comparative Analysis: Differentiating word formation from related concepts like inflectional morphology and syntax, as outlined in seminal works (e.g., Booij, 2000). Corpus Analysis: Investigating common collocations in English through examples in literature and daily speech to understand their practical usage.

Results

The study identified affixation, compounding, and conversion as primary processes contributing to the creation of complex lexemes. Complex lexemes were found to be semantically and morphologically motivated, differentiating them from simple lexemes. The distinction between derivational and inflectional morphology remains nuanced, with examples like the "-ly" suffix demonstrating overlapping characteristics. Collocations significantly enhance communicative competence, with fixed expressions providing naturalness and fluency in both written and spoken discourse. Learners often struggle with collocations due to their arbitrary nature, emphasizing the need for explicit instruction and practice.

Discussion

The findings underscore the interconnectedness of word formation and collocations in language mastery. Word formation contributes to the expansion of vocabulary, enabling speakers to express complex ideas with precision. Meanwhile, collocations facilitate the natural flow of language, crucial for effective communication.

From a pedagogical perspective, teaching word formation processes and encouraging the use of collocations can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical language use. While the boundary between word formation and inflectional morphology remains blurred, this distinction is less critical for learners than understanding the functional and communicative roles of these linguistic elements.

Further research could focus on integrating word formation and collocation instruction into language teaching curricula, with an emphasis on practical application and corpusbased learning.

Conclusion

Word formation and collocations are foundational aspects of mastering a language. Word formation involves processes like affixation, compounding, and conversion that allow speakers and writers to create new words, which contribute to the richness and flexibility of language. This allows for precision and variety in communication, making it essential for learners to grasp these processes for effective language production.

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