

October 27, 2003

CLASS 5: COMPOUNDING AND PHRASAL WORDS

COMPOUNDS: AN OVERVIEW

A **compound** is a *word that contains more than one root*.

- (1) a. high school, black board, green house, white house, toy factory [NP phrases]
b. h́ighschool, bláckboard, gréen house, Whíte House, tóy factory [compounds]

- compound **verbs**: VV, NV, AV, PV (these are all **right-headed**)
- compound **adjectives**: NA, AA, PA (?*VA: *fail-safe*, *sing-happy)
- compound **nouns**: VN, NN, AN, PN (main **stress** on left, right-headed)

Headless compounds are also known as **exocentric** (“center outside”).

- *faintheart* (not about a heart or a faint), *pickpocket*, *killjoy*, *cutpurse*

- VP-N: *take-off*, *sell-out*, *wrap-in*, *sit-in* — PN-A: *overland*, *in-house*, *offshore*, *downmarket*

Right-headed (most English) and **left-headed** (*attorney general*) compounds are **endocentric**.

COMPOUNDS: SOME PROPERTIES

Compounding is **recursive**.

- (2) a. film society
b. student film society
c. student film society committee

Compounds have a **constituent structure** (allowing disambiguation; see Class 7 on structure).

- (3) a. student [film society]
b. [student film] society

Elements of compounds are **related** to each other: head-modifier, predicate-argument, apposition.

- (4) a. film society, hand-wash, footpath ...
b. truck driver, language teacher ...
c. learner-driver, mother-child ...

Compounds can be **endocentric** or **exocentric**:

- (5) a. film society, truck driver ...
b. pickpocket, push up ...

Lack of referential properties of the non-head:

- (5) a. film society (no reference to specific film)
b. truck driver (no reference to a specific truck)

Compounds show **morphological integrity**: they cannot be split up by other elements.

