Book Review

# Laurie Bauer, *Compounds and Compounding*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xvi, 195. ISBN 9781108402252.

**Satoshi OHTA**

Laurie Bauer, Emeritus Professor at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at the University of Wellington, is a world-famous leading scholar in the field of morphology and word formation, who has published many books, including Bauer (1983, 2001, 2004). His present work *Compounds and Compounding*, though not voluminous, is a compilation of the research he has undertaken over many years.

It is well known that children begin to use compounds before they form derivatives. That is, they can combine two or more words (or parts of words) to express new things, concepts, or matters before they begin to attach affixes to base words: *cut-thing, build-man*, instead of *cutter, builder* (see e.g. Kageyama et al. 2004: 22). In addition, as Ohta (1991), for example, showed, even children as young as two and a half can form compounds quite productively and do so frequently (cf. also Berman 2009). From this evidence, it is plausible to regard compounding as the most primitive and fundamental process among several word-formation processes. In this sense, it is worthwhile and a natural consequence that Bauer selected topics on compounding for an overall summary of his research.

In the Preface and Acknowledgements he states, "When I started my thesis, Chomsky's Extended Standard Theory was a recent innovation and cognitive grammar had not been developed at all. These days, though I would hesitate to call myself a cognitive linguist, I have been strongly influenced by many of the ideas of cognitive grammar and, within that overall framework, by construction grammar and exemplar theory." As this statement suggests, Bauer goes on to devote numerous pages to consideration and analyses of the semantic aspects of compound words.

In the following, I review each chapter while briefly introducing its contents.

In his Introduction, Bauer points out the following issues:

- Compounding is often thought of as the simplest kind of word-formation …. Only the semantics of compounding remains difficult to deal with, since the superficial formal simplicity of compounds appears to mask a great deal of semantic complexity.
- There is no overall agreement on such basic issues as the definition of a compound. Accordingly, there can be no agreement on whether compounding is a linguistic universal or not. Even the question of whether compounding is a morphological process or a syntactic one is not settled, …

With these issues in mind, let us examine what Bauer discusses in subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, Compounds and Words, the notion of a word is considered, and the criteria that distinguish single words (which may be morphological structures) from sequences of words (which are syntactic structures) are analyzed. The basic assumption underlying compounds is that they are words and their elements are words. Sequences of words are usually syntactic structures or phrases. Thus, the distinction between compounds and phrases is problematic and difficult. Bauer's conclusion is that there are multiple notions of a word, and the various kinds of criteria for wordhood are not necessarily the same in all languages. He offers a better analogy with the phonological units of mora, syllable and foot (p. 15). Any spoken language has all three units, but in Japanese the mora is of upmost importance; in French, the syllable is important, and in English the foot is crucial, for example, in the analysis of verse. Likewise, morphemes, words, compounds, and phrases may be of varying significance in individual languages.

Chapter 3, The Grammar of Compounds, as its title suggests, is concerned with several factors involved in the grammar of compounds, such

as headedness, recursion, and so on.

Most introductory books of linguistics provide explanations such as, "Compounds that have a head, namely a central element, are called endocentric. For example, a *blackboard* is referring to a kind of board, and so *board* is clearly the head of this example. Therefore, *blackboard* is an endocentric compound. On the other hand, a *blackhead* is not a kind of head, but a kind of pimple. *Blackhead*, then, is an exocentric compound." That is to say, in most literature, the notion of whether a word has the head or not is considered equal to whether a word has a central element. However, Bauer claims that a "centre" is a semantic notion, while a "head" is a grammatical one (p. 37). This view is very remarkable and persuasive. The meaning of *blackhead* is "a small spot on the skin with a black top (= a black head)," so we can say that *blackhead* is an abbreviated compound and is a case of a metaphorical, or, more accurately, a synecdochical expression. Thus, it is possible that *blackhead* has a center semantically or in interpretation but that it does not have a head grammatically or in form.

In section 3.4, Bauer demonstrates the results of an investigation in which 37 languages chosen as having accessible descriptions but providing a genetic and geographic spread were considered. Surprisingly, 5 of the 37 languages do not have compounds, and only 12 allow recursion. Accordingly, 25 languages do not allow recursion or information on recursion was missing in them. As von Humboldt and Chomsky insisted, recursion is one of the main means whereby languages can generate an infinite number of sentences from finite elements. In languages such as English and Japanese, recursion is, of course, also made use of in compounding. How would examples like [[[toilet paper] roll] holder] or [[[blackboard] eraser] [vacuum cleaner]] be represented in languages that do not allow recursion? I wanted Bauer to show concrete examples from languages that do not allow recursion in compounding.

Chapter 4, The Semantics of Compounds is the central part of the book, and Bauer discusses the semantic effects of distinctions between endocentric, exocentric, and coordinative compounds. Rather than pushing his own analysis and views of compound words, he provides a balanced introduction

of the views and suggestions of various researchers. His neutrality makes this a useful source of information for readers.

In section 4.5, Bauer deals with so-called synthetic compounds that contain a verb as their base. He concludes that "[t]here is at least a possibility that the range of semantic interpretations available for items which have a verb-base in the righthand element can be accounted for by precisely the same factors which account for the interpretation of non-verbal N+N compounds" (p. 81). He briefly argues that the first element of synthetic compounds may be an argument or an adjunct of the base verb, but he does not analyze deeply how the two types of compounds differ. Japanese verbal compounds are characterized by the fact that their pronunciation changes depending on whether the first element is an argument or an adjunct. For example, in the case of *sakana-turi* (fish-catch) "fishing", *sakana* "fish$_N$" is a direct object of *turi* derived from the base verb *turu* "fish$_V$"; on the other hand, in *iso-zuri* (beach-fishing) "fishing on the beach", *iso* "beach" is an optional or secondary element for *turi/turu*, and *turi* undergoes "rendaku" or sequential voicing to become *zuri* (cf. Sugioka 1986). Even though semantic analysis is Bauer's main focus, I really wanted Bauer to mention such interesting points.

In section 4.6, Bauer discusses compound verbs. English has very limited examples of compound verbs, such as *blow-dry* and *stir-fry*, and they might not be so interesting to analyze. However, in Japanese, there are many V+V compounds, and they are divided into two types, namely, lexical compound verbs and syntactic compound verbs. For instance, *soo su-/si-* "so do" can substitute the first V in the case of syntactic compound verbs, as shown in (1a), but not in the case of lexical compound verbs as in (1b):

(1) a. Taro-ga aruki-hazime-te, Hanako-mo [soo si]-hazime-ta.
Taro-NOM walk-begin-and Hanako-also so do-begin-PAST
"Taro began to walk and Hanako began to do so, too."

b. *Taro-ga John-o osi-taosi-te, Hanako-mo Mary-o [soo si]-taosi-ta.
Taro-NOM John-ACC push-tumble-and Hanako-also Mary-ACC so do-tumble-PAST.
"Taro tumbled John by pushing him, and Hanako tumble Mary by doing so, too."

There are numerous papers that analyze V+V compound words in Japanese, including Kageyama (1989, 2016) and the works referred to therein. These provide interesting suggestions on the framework of grammar, and so Bauer should have referred to them. Ralli (2019) also remarks that it is a pity that mention of modern Greek which has many V+V compound words is missing.

However, when the number of languages analyzed is increased, the semantic research of compound words may become stuck in a maze. The meanings of various types of compound words are complicated because of diverse factors such as pragmatics, analogy, metaphor, culture, and so on. Figuratively or abstractly speaking, the meaning of compound "A+B" is not as simple as "A-ic B-ing", "AB-en" but becomes "A-al XB-ity", "AY-ly B-ize" and so on. Therefore, it would have been safer for Bauer not to mention examples of languages that he is not familiar with.

In Chapter 5, The Classification of Compounds, Bauer discusses the feature system proposed for the analysis of compounds. He examines such features as [±subordinative], [±attributive], [±endocentric], [±argumental], [word-class], [head word-class], and [headedness]. However, the merit of feature-based analyses of compounds is not clear. In syntactic argumentation, Chomsky (1970) proposed the [±N] and [±V] feature systems. In this system, [+N, −V] = Noun; [+N, +V] = Adjective; [−N, +V] = Verb; [−N, −V] = Preposition, and we can capture the commonality of words and phrases regarded as in different categories and achieve better generalizability. For example, both noun phrases and prepositional phrases that have the feature [−V] can appear in the emphasized position in so-called cleft sentences: "It was *a car* that John bought." "It was *in the park* that John met her." Furthermore, verbs and prepositions have [−N] in common, and they assign the objective case to the following element: *kick him, with him*. On the other hand, I do not know what generalization can be achieved by using features such as [±subordinative] and [±attributive] for compounds.

On page 115, Bauer takes up the so-called Righthand Head Rule and touches on the possibility that French and Vietnamese are left-headed languages. However, the discussion is so short that it leaves me dissatisfied. There are many languages in which the right-most element is the head, and

examples are easy to obtain. Lieber (2016) pointed out, for example, that the left or first element can be the head of French and Vietnamese compound words, but she does not submit sufficient discussion and evidence. I wanted Bauer to provide adequate discussion on compound words in which the left-hand element is the head.

In Chapter 6, Facets of English Compounding, Bauer states, "... even with such a well-described language as English, and with such a specific area of grammar as compounding, there are matters of interest that have not been fully investigated" (p. 167). In addition, using Google Books Ngram Viewer (https://books.google.com/ngrams), he demonstrates the relative density of singular and plural forms—*company legislation* vs. *companies legislation*, for example—in texts over the past century. The method itself is very instructive to readers, but unfortunately a clear and accurate statement of what was discovered is not provided.

Bauer also unsuccessfully attempts to solve the problem of what neoclassical compounds are, but ultimately only observes that "… we really need better criteria for what is or is not a neoclassical compound" (p. 157).

Concerning the difference between compounds and blends, Bauer comments that "[i]t may be that the distinction is mainly one of style, with blends being seen as lighter-hearted, less formal, wittier formations than compounds" (p. 163). This comment is certainly true for portmanteau words or blends in, for instance, Lewis Carroll's works. However, in the case of blends used for Japanese place names, such as *Ota-ku* "Ota Ward" formed from *Omori-ku* "Omori Ward" and *Kamata-ku* "Kamata Ward", light-hearted or witty connotations do not seem to be present.

In section 6.7, Bauer refers to the compactness of compounds: *windmill* is more compact than *mill powered by the wind*. However, the compactness of compounds is related to their relative lack of explicitness. Thus, due to this lack of explicitness, compounds can contain various unspecified meanings, making analysis even more difficult.

In Chapter 7, Discussion, Bauer summarizes as follows:
"This book has raised a host of problems, and if it has suggested solutions in

many instances, it would be irresponsible to presume that it has solved the problems. There are alternate views on virtually everything that has been said, and this book has provided no more than a relatively consistent viewpoint around which further discussion can take place" (p. 172).

Bauer does not use a specific theoretical framework to analyze compound words, but he reviews and verifies various theoretical ideas, from Bloomfield (1935), which is a monument of structural linguistics, or Lees (1960), written in the framework of early transformational grammar, to Tarasova (2013) based on Cognitive Grammar. Moreover, he displays data from over 90 languages. I am amazed by his erudition. However, he may have some misunderstandings about languages other than the Germanic and Romance languages that he is familiar with. For example, I found some typos in Japanese examples: *naki-sakebu* "read write" should be "cry-shout" (p. 91), and *ti-asiru* should be *ti-basiru* "to get bloodshot" (p. 98). Incidentally, I cannot agree with his comment that a killer whale (= an orca) is a type of dolphin, not a whale, and therefore *killer whale* is a kind of exocentric compound (p. 67, p. 169). In fact, all dolphins are whales (though all whales are not dolphins), and so the killer whale is a kind of whale. In any case, Bauer does provide sources for most of the examples he presents, so we can check them in the original. That is, his way of writing and presenting examples is kind to the reader.

Bauer's book looks back on previous morphological studies and carefully discusses their merits and demerits. Although he raises many questions, he does not provide many clear-cut answers of his own. However, all the more, he encourages readers to conduct further research. Shortcomings aside, I definitely recommend the book not only to advanced researchers but also to beginners who are just starting research on morphology and word-formation.

## References

Bauer, Laurie. 1983. *English word-formation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bauer, Laurie. 2001. *Morphological productivity.* Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press.

Bauer, Laurie. 2004. *A glossary of morphology*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Berman, Ruth. 2009. Children's acquisition of compound constructions. In Rochelle Lieber and Pavol Štekauer (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of compounding*, 298-322. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bloomfield, Leonard. 1935. *Language*. Revised edition. London: Allen & Unwin.

Chomsky, Noam. 1970. Remarks on nominalization. In Roderick A. Jacobs and Peter S. Rosenbaum (eds.), *Readings in English transformational grammar*, 184-221. Waltham, MA: Ginn.

Kageyama, Taro. 1989. The place of morphology in the grammar. *Yearbook of Morphology* 1989: 73-94.

Kageyama, Taro. 2016. Verb-compounding and verb-incorporation. In Taro Kageyama and Hideki Kishimoto (eds.), *Handbook of Japanese lexicon and word formation*, 273-310. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Kageyama, Taro, Brent de Chene, Junko Hibiya, and Donna Tatsuki. 2004. *First steps in English linguistics*. 2nd edition. Tokyo: Kurosio.

Lees, Robert B. 1960. *The grammar of English nominalizations*. The Hague: Mouton.

Lieber, Rochelle. 2016. *Introducing morphology*. 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ohta, Satoshi. 1991. Ningen gengo no shotokusei ni tsuite (1) [Lecture notes on human language properties (1)]. *English and English-American Literature* (Yamaguchi University) 26: 1-35.

Ralli, Angela. 2019. Book Review: Laurie Bauer, *Compounds and compounding*. *Folia Linguistica* 53(1): 277-286.

Sugioka, Yoko. 1986. *Interaction of derivational morphology and syntax in Japanese and English*. New York: Garland.

Tarasova, Elizaveta. 2013. *Some new insights into the semantics of English N+N compounds*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.