

## Semantic Classification of Urdu Compounds

Dr. Abrar Hussain Qureshi<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Muhammad Akram<sup>2</sup>

PAKISTAN

**Abstract:** *Compounding is one of the word-formation strategies, languages employ to form new words out of the existing words in order to enrich and update their lexicon. This lexeme can be written as multiple orthographic words, hyphenated words, or as a single orthographic word (Schmitt, 2000, p.99). It is a very productively and frequently observed phenomenon in world languages; because most of the languages exhibit a great majority of complex words that are compounds. It is essentially an abbreviatory mechanism that languages prefer over corresponding phrasal or clausal constructions. They are unambiguous because of the fixed word order, and unique in the sense that they acquire specialized meaning and, hence, form the immediate choice of the native speakers of any language. In a culturally rich language like Urdu, compounds play a major linguistic role. The present study explores the various combinations of Urdu Compounds semantically from lexicographic point of view, suggesting that these compounds should be focused in Urdu learner's dictionaries.*

**Key Words:** Language, Compounds, Urdu.

### Introduction:

According to semantic criteria, compounds can be subdivided into four groups. Exocentric, endocentric, appositional, and dvandva or copulative compound (Bauer1998) When the compound formed is the hyponym of the head element, it is called endocentric compound. As ننگ کالا ر *kala rung* (black colour). Compound that is the hyponym of both its elements is an appositional compound فوجی جنرل *fauji general* (General in Armed Forces). The compounds that convey idiomatic meaning come under the category of exocentric compounds. If a compound is not a hyponym of both the elements of the compound, but of an unknown head, then such a compound is called an exocentric compound e.g سفید خون *sufaid khoon* (insincere attitude). In a copulative compound it is not clear which of the elements combined is the grammatical head; the compound is not a hyponym of the elements combined; the elements name separate entities that get combined to form the entity denoted by the compound e.g جہاں پناہ *Jahan panah* (His majesty).

### Semantic Classification of Urdu Compounds:

Semantic classification of Urdu compounds is basically based on Sanskrit. Five types of compounds can be classified semantically in the Urdu language (Abd-ul-Haq, 1958).

### a. Subordinate Compounds:

Subordinate compounds are the compounds where the relation of words is subordinate to the case of noun. These compounds are of many kinds according to the case of nouns.

i. In these compounds the second part is subject or verb and the first part is object and subordinate to the first

چڑی مار *chiree mar* (hunter of sparrow)

ii. These are the compounds in which the first part of the compound governs the second part of the compound and has the core of the meaning. These compounds are frequently used in the Urdu language.

پن چکی *pan chakki* (water mill)

iii. These are the compounds in which the first part of the compound has the relation of location with the other compounds.

اوپر والا *ooper waala* (male resident of the top)

### b. Conjunctive compounds.

These are the compounds in which there is a letter of relation between the constituents of the compounds.

شرما شرمی *sharma shermi* (modestly)

Some times the constituents of the compounds are antonym to each other.

د رات *din raat* (continuously)

Some times the constituents of the compounds are rhymed-

دخم *dam kham* (energy)

Some times the compound is formed after adding the feminine of the masculine of the first part of the compound.

دیکھا دیکھی *dekha dekhi* (in imitation)

Some times two synonyms are the constituents of the compound.

روک ٹوک *roke toke* (hindrance)

Some times Hindi and Persian words occur together to form a compound.

تن من *tan man* (body and soul)

Some times two words of the same root occur together to form a compound.

چال چلن *chaal chalan* (conduct)

Some times a meaningful word is accompanied with a meaningless word that creates a special effect. They are frequently used in Urdu e.g. roti woti (bread informal). These meaningless words have many forms.

Some times the first letter of the meaningful word is replaced with و *wao* and added with the meaningful word. This method is optional and can be used with most of the nouns.

روٹی و روٹی *rooti wooti* (bread, informal)

Some times only the first two letters are the same and the remaining part of the word is changed.

دانہ دنکا *daana dunka* (grain)

Sometimes the first meaningful word is reshaped to form a compound.

ٹھیک ٹھاک *theek thaak* (quite right)

Some times the reshaped word occurs in the beginning of the compound.

آدلا بدلا *adlaa budlaa* (exchange)

Some times a new word is approximately rhymed to form a compound.

ٹال مٹول *toll matole* (excuse)

c. Attributive Compounds:

These are the compounds in which commonly the first constituent of the compound describes the quality of the second constituent of the compounds.

جاہل آدمی *jaahil aadmi* (illiterate person)

Some times the first constituent describes the personal condition or quality of the second constituent of the compound.

شریر لڑکا *shareer larka* (naughty boy)

Some times the first constituent shows the relation of the second constituent of the compound.

ترکی ٹوپی *Turki toopi* (Turkish hat)

#### d. Numeral compounds

These are the compounds in which the first constituent shows the numeral quality of the second compound.

چوراہا *cho raaha* (the junction of four roads)

#### e. Adverbial Compounds.

These are the compounds in which both the constituents work as adverb and are called adverbial compounds.

اندرباہر *ander bhaheer* (in and outside)

Some times an adverb is repeated to work as an adverbial compound.

رفتہ رفتہ *raftaa raftaa* (gradually)

Some times Arabic words work as adverbial compounds.

حتی المقدور *hatt ul maqdoor* (as far as possible)

#### f. Verbal Compounds

Compound verbs may be formed with roots, participles, and infinitives.

##### 1. Intensives

Intensive compounds are formed by prefixing the root of a verb to another verb, which is regularly conjugated, the root remaining unchanged (Platts, 2002). The signification of the compound is that of the root intensified by the second member. In many cases however the effect produced by the second member of the compound is not obvious.

جا ملنا *ja milna* (to join)

##### 2. Potentials

These verbs express the ability to perform an action. They are formed by the adding the verb **سکنا** *Sakna* (to be able) to the root form of another verb.

پا سکنا *pa sakna* (to be able to attain)

### 3. Completives

These are obtained by adding the verb چکنا *chukna* (to come to an end) to the root of a verb.

کھا چکنا *kha chukna* (to have done eating)

### 4. Nominals

These are formed by prefixing a noun to a verb.

پانی دینا *Paani dena* (to irrigate)

### 5. Continuatives

Continuatives are formed by prefixing an imperfect participle to one of the verbs جانا *jana* or رہنا *rhenā* used as synonymous with ہونا *hona*; the participle, which always takes the inflected masculine form conveying the idea of a continuous or habitual act or state.

پڑھتے رہنا *parh-tay rhenā* (to go on reading)

### 6. Habitative:

ملا کرنا *mila karna* (to meet frequently)

### 7. Inceptives

Inceptives are compounds in which an inflected infinitive precedes the verb لگنا *lagna* (to come in contact, to begin or to take to).

سنانے لگنا *su-naane lagna* (to begin to tell)

### 8. Permissives

An inflected infinitive is followed by the verb دینا *dena* (to give or grant) and (to allow or permit)

کھانے دینا *khanay dena* (to allow to eat)

### 9. Desideratives

These are formed by adding the verb چاہنا *chahna* (to wish or desire) to a perfect participle used as a verbal noun and hence uninflected. They express the desire to perform the act or enter the state signified by the participial noun.

دیکھنا چاہنا *dekhna chahna* (to wish to see)

The same forms are also commonly employed to express the fact of an act or state being imminent.

#### 10. Conjunctive Participles Compounds:

These are formed by prefixing a conjunctive participle, commonly لے *lay* of the verb لینا *lena* (to take) to an intransitive verb of motion.

لے بھاگنا *le bhaagna* (to run away with)

#### 11. Acquisitives

An inflected infinitive is followed by the verb پانا *pana* (to get permission or to obtain):

لکھنے پائے *likhnay paaya* (to be allowed to write)

#### 12. Reiteratives

Platts (2002) wrote about another compound that is termed Reiteratives by European grammarians. According to him, these compounds consist in the asyndetic connection of two verbs or participles (most commonly of two conjunctive participles, or two imperfect participles followed by the auxiliary verb), the second of which usually rhymes with the first, and is either synonymous with it, or without any significatin:

بول چال کر *bol chal kar* (having conversed)

تھکا ہارا *thaka hara* (worn out)

#### Concluding Remarks:

The above study shows that Urdu compounds constitute a major portion of Urdu lexicon. It requires a special place in the teaching of Urdu as the first and second language, especially, their role in the learner's dictionaries can not be ignored. In the end, all the aspects of Urdu compounds from semantic perspective may not have been discovered. Hence, it would encourage the lexicologist to discover further the rich field of Urdu compounds for linguistic purposes.

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