



Some thoughts on the translation into Albanian of the determinative compound of Noun + Noun type of the German Language

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Abstract

Compounds are one of the typical features of the German language, which often put even the most talented and experienced translators in a difficult place, mainly due to the compression of information and their meaning in cases where they are formed by the union of more than three semantically motivated themes. This article is an attempt to help solve dilemmas in such cases, emphasizing the role played by knowing the structure of the German compound and correctly decomposing the grammatical and semantic relations of their parts to realize the correct paraphrasing of the compound. After treating the composition in general terms, as a very productive way in the word formation of both languages, a presentation of the characteristics of the German language compounds is made, highlighting the differences they have with the Albanian compounds. In the last part, through real examples, taken from Albanian dictionaries and works, we are focused on bringing in Albanian the determinative Compounds of the type Noun + Noun by analyzing and emphasizing the linguistic tools that the Albanian language has and makes available for translation of such structures.

Keywords: Composition, Determinative Compounds, Phrase, Syntactic and Semantic Relations, Noun + Noun Determinative Compound, Language Economy, Translation

German language – a language with long words

Translation is undoubtedly an important and ancient element of human communication that not only serves as a bridge between two different cultures, but also helps in their further development. In addition to linguists and writers, translators also play an important role in preserving and enriching the lexicon of a language, a role which is as much honored as it is important.

When we talk about translation, we mean the process of passing the meaning and content of an original text from one language to another by producing as a final product the text translated in the target language. Among them is the translator, whose task is to pose as the author of the text and speak in the translated language. In order to succeed, it is not enough to have very good knowledge of both respective languages and cultures, you need to know the type of text, the addressee, which you seek to achieve through translation, the mastery of word selection and its correct use. You have to be capable of successfully solving the surprises, difficulties and the challenges you face as you wander between two languages.

Anyone who has knowledge of the German language, or who has had to deal with German already knows that it is a language, which is distinguished among other things for a very rich lexicon and a "generosity" in the formation of compound words, or otherwise known as compounds.

While in the monolingual dictionary Duden we find a compound word consisting of five motivating themes "Kraftfahrzeug - Haftpflichtversicherung"¹ https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Kraftfahrzeug_Haftpflichtversicherung Haftpflichtversicherung (Kraft-Fahr-Zeug-Haft-Pflicht-Versicherung) / motor third party liability insurance, in 1999 the designation of the law on the assignment of duties to control the labeling of beef in the Federal Land of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern caught the attention of the media, rightly calling it "das längste Wort der deutschen Sprache/ the longest german word"², as the composition had in its structure seven motivational themes and 63

¹ DUDEN online Wörterbuch in the site: https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Kraftfahrzeug_Haftpflichtversicherung

letters “*Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz*“. This ability of German to create compound words with more than two word-formation themes, on the one hand is seen as an advantage over other languages, but on the other hand attention is paid to the care to be shown with the formation of the compounds, so that this advantage does not turn into a linguistic problem or obstacle (Villiger, 1970: 39). Such words can put everyone in a difficult place, especially the translator, who must understand and decipher properly the grammatical and semantic relations of the constituent parts of the composition, in order to deliver a translation that is as accomplished as possible.

Compounds are generally products in analytical languages, which as the main feature of word connection have the embedded order of words, such as English under the Indo-European languages. Given that the inflectional morphemes in these languages are absent, the embedded order is the sole way of expressing the semantic relations. Although the German language has a more developed inflection system, the above examples clearly speak to its ability to form Compounds, even from some motivated topics. This is also due to the fact that German is also characterized by an embedded sequence of words, such as the location of the main part of the noun phrase, which is preceded by the defining part. (*die fremde Sprache / the foreign language*). This is how Erben (Erben, 2006: 140-141) explains the existence of compound words since the Old High German texts (*Althochdeutsch*). According to him, during the development of language, the relationship between the formation of syntactic clusters and word formation has developed in favor of the latter, giving priority to the formation of complex words. This tendency of the German language to replace syntactic syllables (*Univerbierung*) “*durch ein einziges Wort mit komprimierter Bedeutung / with a single word, which expresses the meaning of the whole syntagm, according to the principle of monosyllabic*”, is found since the beginning of the New High German (*Frühneuhochdeutsch*) (Polenz, 2000: 193). Comparative historical linguistics has concluded that compound words have their source in phrases, which over time undergo grammatical, phonetic and semantic changes. Word-forming themes during the process of merging into a single word, overthrow the formal elements of their paradigm such as *breg deti* → *bregdet* (*seashore*). The fall of these morphemes also neutralizes the grammatical relations between the parts of the phrase, which are formally expressed through them, finally creating the compound word and distinguishing it from the phrase, to which it has its source. But the closed structure alone is not enough to make it a compound word and to distinguish it from the phrase. Of course, it is also the holistic meaning they carry, as well as the fact that they express a single concept and that the semantic relations of the parts are more general. A compound word when created is not constructed to express the relationship between its two parts as is the case with the plural parts. Both word-formation themes, when combined in a composition, lose or blur the internal syntactic relations of the phrase from which they have emerged, to some extent even the semantic ones, thus naming a new concept. This is especially the case with lexicalized compounds. Even grammatically the compound word behaves like a single word. Thus in the case of the word *marrëdhënie* (*relationship*) its meaning is not only to receive (*marrje*) and give (*dhënie*), but to receive and give reciprocally. While in German the phrase “*junge Frau / grua e re / young woman*” comes from the word “*Jungfrau / virgjëreshë / virgin*”, it no longer motivates the meaning of this compound word. But this does not happen with all compounds. Especially in German there are many Compounds which are random formations and to decompose the meaning and the relations that their parts create with each other the context plays a crucial role. Such cases are especially important to be understood, deciphered and paraphrased correctly by the translator. This requires in-depth knowledge regarding the formation and operation of compounds.

Composition and types of compounds

German and Albanian languages are characterized by a rich word-formation system, where in both languages derivation and composition are the two most productive ways, which directly help to expand and enrich the lexicon with new words according to the needs of these languages. Both of these languages recognize the existence of compound words from their earliest stages. Since written Albanian was first documented in full writing only in 1555, with the Meshari of Gjon Buzuku, attempts to shed light on the existence of compounds before this period are made by referring to onomastics and especially toponomastics. Regarding the word formation issues of this historical period, we find that:

“... *shqipja mesjetare kishte një sistem fjalëformimi të gjerë, që i lejonte një pasurim të shumanshëm, në të gjitha fushat ku ajo mund ta ndiente nevojën e shprehjes së përditshme dhe të shprehjes letrare.*” (Shuteriqi, 1983: 209)

“...*medieval Albanian had an extensive word-formation system, which allowed a multifaceted enrichment, in all areas where it could feel the need for everyday expression and literary expression.*” (Shuteriqi, 1983: 209)

As far as the German language is concerned, it is noticed that in the earliest grammars of New High German (*Neuhochdeutsch*) simple words are distinguished from compound words as well as primary words (Erben,

² “tagesschau” ARD: <https://www.tagesschau.de/schlusslicht/rekordbandwurmwort100.html>

1975: 9). From the studies carried out in the diachronic aspect to highlight the linguistic rules, on the basis of which the compound words of Indo-European languages were formed, it has become clear that they have their origin in previous syntactic constructions that were not compounds. Over the centuries, new creations have been formed by analogy with existing models, significantly increasing the category of compound words in both languages. Linguists who have dealt with the study and analysis of Compounds have defined compound words in their own way, emphasizing more the aspect on the basis of which they have based their analysis. In the Grammar of the Albanian Language, volume I, published by the Academy of Sciences, the composition is defined as follows (Agalliu et al. 2002: 70):

“... Kompozimi është një mënyrë fjalëformimi me anë të së cilës krijohen fjalë të reja që kanë në përbërjen e tyre dy a më shumë tema motivuese; njëra nga këto (tema mbështetëse, që është zakonisht e dyta) e formëson gramatikisht gjithë kompozitën, ndërsa tema tjetër (ose temat e tjera, kur janë më shumë se një) është e asnjansuar nga pikëpamja e kuptimeve të saj gramatikore...”

“...Composition is a way of word formation by which new words are created that have in their composition two or more motivating themes; one of these (supporting theme, which is usually the second) grammatically shapes the whole composition, while the other theme (or other themes, when there is more than one) is neutral in terms of its grammatical meanings...”

The German linguists Römer and Matzke define composition in a similar but more concise way, who in their work on the lexicology of the German language see composition as “... eine Wortbildungsart, bei der durch die Verbindung von mehreren, mindestens aber zwei Basismorphemen oder Stämmen ein neues Wort (Kompositum) entsteht.” / a way of word formation, by which a new word (compound) is formed by the union of at least two or even more basic morphemes or roots (Römer & Matzke, 2005: 71).

Semantically motivated themes that come together to form the compound word are placed in certain syntactic relationships between them. The classification of compounds into copulative compounds and determinative compounds is done based on these ratios.

The parts of these compounds being equivalent can be paraphrased in a compound sentence with the conjunction *und/and* as is the case of the words *taubblind* = *taub und blind zugleich* / deaf and blind at the same time, *ngarkim-shkarkim* = *ngarkim dhe shkarkim* (loading and unloading), *teknikoshkencor* = *teknik dhe shkencor* (technical and scientific). However, it should be noted that this applies mainly to hairy adjectives, as in many cases we are dealing with the creation of a new concept, the paraphrasing of which would require more than just a phrase with the conjunction *dhe (and)*, as is e.g. the case of the word *Südost* / *juglindje* / *SouthEast* with which it is not named south and east, but a new direction of the horizon located between south and east and defined precisely by the connection between them. The parts of the copulative compounds are words of the same part of the lecture. In both languages the number of copulative compounds reflected in the respective dictionaries occupies a negligible place compared to the number of determinative compounds. It is also noticed that in both, German and Albanian, we find these compounds mostly in adjectives, a phenomenon which Naumann explains by the fact that it is easier to combine qualities and features than circumstances or objects (Lohde, 2006: 38).

The parts of determinative compounds / *Determinativkomposita* as they are known in German, are in subordinating relationship with each other and unlike copulative compounds, one of these parts defines the other part by specifying, concretizing or even narrowing it from the point of view of meaning. Before we move on to the peculiarities of the determinative Compounds of German and Albanian, which we consider to play a very important role in their accurate translation and will therefore be addressed in the following issue, we will dwell on some commonalities. Regardless of the number of themes that come together to create the composition, it is always made of two lexical parts. A compound can be divided into its constituent parts, but this division is always done on the basis of two-dimensional structure, as the compound has binary structure. Thus, words composed of three word-forming themes are two-part ed, of which one part is simple, while the other part of the composition is a compound word as occurs in the case of the Albanian compound *vajgursjellës* (*vaj+gur – sjellës*) (the system that brings kerosene) (or the German compound *Lebensmittelladen* (*Leben(s)+Mittel - Laden*). The semantic meaning of the whole compound is motivated by the meaning of its parts. Within the group of determinative compounds both languages recognize the so-called *kompozita pronësore* / *Possessivkomposita* (*possessive compounds*), which are also known by the name *bahuvrihi* or *kompozita ekzocentrike* (*exocentric compounds*), a name which they have received because the defined part does not name a certain class to include this part (Fleischer & Barz, 2007: 125), but something else, outside of the compound. This happens e.g. with the Albanian word “*gushkuq*” (a bird with red feathers on the neck) and the responsible “*Rotkehlchen*” in German, by which in the respective languages is not named the ‘red neck’ of the bird, but the bird itself, which has the characteristic feature of red feathers on the neck. Property compounds in both languages mainly name other persons and living things

In both languages the defining compounds are mainly nouns and adjectives and much less verbs and adverbs. The reason is explained by Jung, who while dealing with word formation in his work “*Grammatik der*

deutschen Sprache" / Grammar of the German Language states the following:

“Neure Forschungen schätzen den Wortbestand unserer Literatursprache auf ungefähr 500000 Wörter. Davon sind mehr als die Hälfte Substantive, etwa ein Viertel Verben, etwa ein Sechstel Adjektive und Adverbien. Dagegen gibt es insgesamt nur etwa zweihundert Präpositionen und Konjunktionen. Die Substantive, Verben und Adjektive vermehren und verändern ihren Bestand ständig, Pronomen und Fügewörter bleiben in Form und Umfang nahezu konstant. / New studies estimate that our literary language has about 500,000 words, of which more than half are nouns, about a quarter are verbs, nearly one sixth are adjectives and adverbs, and primary words and conjunctions together are about two hundred. Nouns, verbs and adjectives are constantly increasing and changing their number, pronouns and words with a connecting function remain almost constant in form and quantity (Jung, 1988: 369).”

Referring to the determinative compounds that are found in the respective dictionaries of both languages (Duden, 2001 and Toena 2002) the very high number of noun compounds stands out, where those of German language make up over 80% of the total number of compounds, while the noun compounds of Albanian language make up about 45%.

There is also a variety of word-formation topics from different parts of the lecture, which participate in the formation of Compounds of both languages starting from the noun and adjective to the pronoun and numeral. Another common one is related to the developed system of models for the formation of compound words that have created these two languages, the most productive of which, *the noun + noun* model has been selected to be treated in the following.

Determinative noun compounds of the German language

A feature of determinative compounds is the use of the two lexical parts. In the determinative compounds of the German language, the second part, or “*koka*” / “*Kopf*” of the compound is always the definite part of the compound, in German *Grundwort*, defining at the same time the lexical-grammatical category of the whole compound. It always stands to the right or bottom of the compound. While the other part, the first part in this case, is the defining part, German *Bestimmungswort*, which by defining the second part, specifies, concretizes or even narrows it from the point of view of meaning. The only exception is the noun composition *Vierteljahr*/quarter year = *Viertel eines Jahres* as it is the second part that defines the first. Thus, in the word *Wanduhr*/ wall clock is the word wall / *Wand* which defines the type of clock / *Uhr* and distinguishes it from other clocks. This is also one of the main differences between the defining Compounds of the German language and those of the Albanian language, as in the Albanian language in the role of the defining part can be also the part to the right of the compound, i.e. the second part, such as in the case of the compound *ditëlindje* (*birthday*). The second part, defining the first one, distinguishes it from ordinary days.

Since the second part is also defining of the lexical grammatical category of the composition, all noun defining compounds have the second part expressed by name, while the first part, in addition to the noun, can also be expressed as an adjective as in the case of the composition *Fremdsprache* / foreign language, as an verb such as *Warteraum* / lounge, as an preposition as in the case of the compound *Fürwort* / pronoun, as an adverb, *Jetztzeit* / present, as a numeral as in the case of *Dreieck* / triangle or even as a pronoun like *Ichsucht* / selfishness.

Also a feature of German-language compounds is the ingrained order of their parts, the change of which would have consequences for the compound, either by undoing it or creating a new compound as in the following case:

Musikfilm = Film mit vielen musikalischen Darbietungen (Duden-Wörterbuch)

Musikfilm / musical movie, as the first part music determines the type of film by giving a characteristic or quality of it

Filmmusik = speziell für einen bestimmten Film komponierte Musik (Duden-Wörterbuch)

Filmmusik / movie music, as it is now the film that determines the type of the music

Another characteristic of German language compounds is the connecting element (*Fugenelement*). According to Duden (Duden, 1998: 494), most German language Compounds contain only the defining part and the definite part. Nearly a third of them, about 30% realize the union of word-forming topics with the participation of a connecting element, which has no semantic or grammatical meaning. In some cases, these elements resemble with the endings of inflection, but even though they have their origin precisely of them, in the synchronous plane they have nothing to do with such endings. In some cases, these elements resemble, with the endings of inflection, but although they originate exactly from them, in the synchronous plane they have nothing to do with them.

Kinderbuch / libër për fëmijë (children's book), *Sonnenuntergang* / perëndimi i dellit (sunset), *Universitätsgebäude*/ ndërtesa e universitetit (the University building)

Sometimes the connecting element turns into a distinguishing unit for two different Compounds formed by the same motivational themes such as:

Geschichtenbuch = Buch mit Geschichten / libër me histori (history book)

Geschichtsbuch = Lehrbuch für das Schulfach Geschichte / libri i lëndës së historisë (history course book)

Even in such a case they do not carry semantic values, but merely distinctive meanings.

Determinative compounds Noun + Noun and their translation into Albanian

The type of determinative compounds Noun + Noun is even more productive within German language Compounds. Regarding the morphological structure of the constituent themes of this type of Compounds we find both expressed with primary words (*Notarzt* / mjek urgjence / emergency doctor), both expressed in derived words (*Informationsgespräch* / bisedë informuese / informative conversation), one of them a primary word and the other derived (*Ausgangspunkt* / pikënisje / starting point; *Windstärke* / fuqi e erës / wind power), the first part expressed by proper name (*Europameisterschaft*/ kampionat evropian / European Championship) as well as cases where one of the parts is expressed by an abbreviation (*LKW-Fahrer* = Lastkraftwagenfahrer / shofer kamioni / truck driver; *Dampflokomotive* = Dampflokomotive / lokomotivë me avull / steam locomotive).

From the review and the analysis we have done of the compounds found in the Duden dictionary, we have concluded that over 80% of them are noun compounds and that more than 75% of these compounds belong to the type Noun + Noun.

In addition to the word-formation literature, the productivity of this type of compounds is evidenced by the fact that they are found much more often in all types of texts, starting from the literary ones and even more in administrative-legal or technical-scientific texts, as compounds give the opportunity to say a lot by expressing a little, based on the principle of language economics (*Prinzip der Univerbierung* = përmbledhja e një sintagme në një fjalë të vetme / principle of universality), which encouraged the creation and use of compounds. But such creations often put the translator in difficulty, who must know well the characteristics of the Compounds, if he wants to translate or interpret as accurately as possible the legal or technical term expressed in a German language composition or a random composition created by the author of a literary work. Thus, he should know that since the head of the defining compound is always the definite word and in an embedded order, then the Albanian translation of the defining compounds starts from this part, because it is the part that is defined by the other defining part.

German language Compounds of the type Noun + Noun come in Albanian through³:

a) A simple (primary) word:

Grundfläche – bazament (Floor area)

Grundbuch – kadastër (cadaster)

... dass womöglich selbst zu seinen *Lebzeiten* kaum ein Zeitgenosse so ganz auf dem Schirm hatte. – ... that perhaps even in his time few of his contemporaries had at their fingertips.

A compound: (in this case we are dealing with equivalent translations, as the word exists as a compound in both languages, making it possible for the translation to be as close as possible to the original and facilitating the work of the translator, especially when it comes to technical and legal translations)

Gesichtspunkt – këndvështrim (point of view)

Eisenbahn – hekurudhë (railroad)

Vaterland – atdhe (homeland)

Weltanschauung– botëkuptim (worldview)

b) A derived word:

Handschuh – dorashkë, dorezë (gloves)

Handwerk – mjeshtëri (mastery)

³All the examples presented are real translations, which are taken from: Langenscheidt Dictionary, Handwörterbuch Albanisch-Deutsch und Deutsch Albanisch; Winter Tale - Little ABC of Literary Translation / Ein Wintermärchen – Kleine Fibel der literarischen Übersetzung; Individual Constitutional Complaint - German Experience and Albanian Perspectives - Practical Manual / Die Verfassungsbeschwerde – Ein Handbuch für Praktikerinnen und Praktiker aus deutscher und albanischer Perspektive; 24 hours in the spider web / Du spinnst wohl! Eine außergewöhnliche Adventsgeschichte in 24 Kapiteln

c) **A group of words:**

Noun + Adjective

In this type of phrase the adjective plays the role of determiner with adaptation and these determinants depending on their lexical meaning express different qualitative characteristics.

Verfassungsbeschwerde – ankim kushtetues (constitutional appeal)

Bindungswirkung – efekt detyrues (binding effect)

im Gesprächston – me intonacion bisedor (with conversational intonation)

Literaturübersetzung – përkthim letrar (literary translation)

Wortfeld – fushë leksikore (lexical field)

i. Noun + Noun in definite genitive or in indefinite ablative and accusative with or without preposition.

This is also the dominant model, which is commonly found not only in translations of compound words of this type in dictionaries and specialty language texts, but also in literary texts. This is explained by the fact that between the parts of the defining composition of the German language expressed by Noun + Noun, semantic relations are created from the most different, due to the semantic qualities that these parts have being nouns. Lohde (Lohde, 2006: 66-68) has attempted to derive basic models that express these relationships. In the Albanian language, the ability to determine has mostly the determiner and the determiner expressed with a noun in genitive or a noun in ablative and accusative with or without preposition are the most common types and express different semantic nuances (Çeliku etj., 2002: 222) such as belonging, quality, destination, object of action expressed by a verbal noun, place, time, material, composition, presence or absence, purpose, etc.

Wassertemperatur – temperatura e ujit (water temperature)

Bedeutungsnuancen – nuancat e kuptimit (nuances of meaning)

Zimmerdecke – tavani i dhomës (room ceiling)

Glaskugeln – topa qelqi (glass balls)

Tannenzweige – degë bredhi (fir branches)

Inhaltsverzeichnis – pasqyra e lëndës (contents)

Konfliktlösung – zgjidhja e konfliktit (conflict resolution)

Handlungsfreiheit – e drejta e veprimt (freedom of action)

Menschenrechte – të drejtat e njeriut (human rights)

Steuererklärung – deklarim taksash (tax declaration)

Wasserversorgung – furnizim me ujë (water supply)

Orangenkekse – biskota me portokall (orange biscuits)

Hünersuppe – supë me lëng pule (chicken soup)

Papiertiger – tigër prej letre (paper tiger)

Freiheitskämpfer – luftëtarë për liri (freedom fighter)

Asylrecht – e drejta për azil (right of asylum)

ii. With extended phrase

Extended phrase translation of this type of compound is more common in specialty texts, especially legal language, when there is no equivalent term in the target language. In such a case the translator must possess good knowledge of the specific field and at the same time consult and read to understand well the term he will translate. Another case that requires translation with extended phrases is also random Compounds, especially when they consist of many motivating themes. Here is the opportunity to carefully analyze the context and at the same time make the proper paraphrasing of the composition.

Verfahrensfähigkeit – Zotësia juridike për të marrë pjesë në gjykim (Legal capacity to participate in the trial / process capability)

Zulässigkeitskriterien – Kriteret për shqyrtimin paraprak (Criteria for preliminary review / eligibility criteria)

Menschenrechtsmündigkeit – Zotësia juridike për të qenë bartës i të drejtave themelore (Legal capacity to be a holder of fundamental rights / majority concerning the human rights)

Conclusions

The issue of word formation in general and composition in particular is a complex and well-addressed issue in the relevant literature in many respects, coming to the aid not only to researchers of this linguistic discipline, but also of translators, who are very much required to have in-depth knowledge in this field, of the very specifics of the word-formation of the German language. Both languages are rich with various models of Compounds, making it

possible not only for the author but also for the translator to play with the word, and to have the opportunity for contributing to the further enrichment and expansion of the lexicon.

Compounds formed by combining several motivating themes are no longer just a monopoly of the technical language, but are increasingly encountered in creativity and literary texts as well. In order to bring them as naturally as possible in the target language, it is necessary to know their structure, to make the right paraphrasing, very often focusing on the context in which they are created, but also by carefully analyzing and selecting those linguistic tools that make available the incoming language to achieve the fullest possible equivalence. A good knowledge of these tools would not only minimize the differences and frills of translation, but would also make the text more diverse and interesting in linguistic and stylistic terms.

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