Compounds take the short way to the lexicon – A pragmatic approach to novel word-formation products

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Novel **compounds** somehow are better **names for kinds**:

(1) *Das rot Dach / Rotdach hat sich im Laufe der Jahrhunderte immer weiter entwickelt.*
‘the red roof / red_roof has constantly developed over the centuries’

(2) *Die rote Waffe / Rotwaffe ist eine Trainingswaffe, die für Ausbildungszwecke eingesetzt wird.*
‘the red gun / red_gun is a weapon used for training purposes’
Novel **compounds** are somehow are better **names for kinds**:

(1) *Das ??rote Dach / Rotdach hat sich im Laufe der Jahrhunderte immer weiter entwickelt.*

‘the red roof / red_roof has constantly developed over the centuries’

**Lexicalist / separatist approaches:**

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cf., among others, Booij (2010); Di Sciullo & Williams (1987); Lieber (1992), (2004)
Questions and roadmap

- **Why** are (novel) compounds better names?

- Is this a purely lexical preference or are there **pragmatic** factors involved and, if so, which?

1. Adjective-nouns (AN) compounds as labels
   - *So-called* as means of quotation
   - Corpus study on quotation marks

2. A pragmatic implementation

3. Conclusion
Kind reference and labelling

What is naming?

- creating a **sub-category** (i.e. a kind) of the category denoted by the head noun
- **labelling** that category

![Diagram of bags categories]

- bags
  - shoulder bags
    - expression X
  - sports bags
    - expression Y
  - hand bags
    - expression Z

- create a category
- label it
Compounds as better labels

- **Name explanations** are less **tautological** with compounds than with phrases
  
  (1) "Blues Wasser / Blauwasser wird so genannt, weil es blau ist.
      ‘blue water / blue_water is called so because it is blue’

- Phrases are less acceptable in **naming environments** involving *sogenannt*

  (2) *Die Schule hat ein sogenanntes *rotes Dach / Rotdach.
      ‘the school has a so-called red roof / red_roof’

- Phrases improve significantly here when used with **quotation marks** / caps

  (3) a. *Die Schule hat ein sogenanntes “Rotes Dach”.*
      ‘the school has a so-called “red roof”’
  
  b. *Heute ist ein sogenannter “Heißer Tag”.*
      ‘today is a so-called “hot day”’
Compounds as better labels

- **Name explanations** are less **tautological** with compounds than with phrases
  
  (1) **Blaues Wasser / Blauwasser wird so genannt, weil es blau ist.**
      ‘blue water / blue_water is called so because it is blue’

- Phrases are less acceptable in **naming environments** involving **sogenannt**
  
  (2) **Die Schule hat ein sogenanntes rotes Dach / Rotdach.**
      ‘the school has a so-called red roof / red_roof’

- Phrases improve significantly here when used with **quotation marks / caps**
  
  (3) a. **Die Schule hat ein sogenanntes “Rotes Dach”.**
      ‘the school has a so-called “red roof”’
  
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The semantics of *to call / so-called*:

(1) One calls this thing “clicker”.

Semantics of quotational means
The semantics of *to call / so-called*:

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CALL (x, y, NAME (n, z)): z = y]
The semantics of *to call / so-called*:

(1) *One* calls *this thing* “*clicker*”.

CALL (one, this thing, NAME (/'klikər/, z)): z = y]
The semantics of *to call / so-called*:

(1)  
\[ \text{One calls *this thing* “clicker”}. \]
\[ \text{CALL (} \text{one, this thing, NAME (} /'\text{klikər}/, z)\text{): } z = y \]

(2)  
\[ \text{a so-called “clicker”} \]
\[ \approx \text{a thing that one calls so } /'\text{klikər}/ \]

So and quotation marks fulfill the **same function** in naming contexts: They point to the **shape** of an expression.
Davidson’s (1979) **Demonstrative** Theory:
Quotational means help to refer to a linguistic shape by **pointing out** something that has this shape.

(1) “Clicker” has seven letters.

Davidson style prose:
*Clicker*. The expression of which this is a token has seven letters.

(2) a **so-called** “clicker”

*Clicker*. The expression of which this is a token is called so.
Quotes are used more often in naming contexts with expressions whose name status is not inherent.

Lexicalist hypothesis: A-N phrases are used more frequently with quotes than compounds.

COSMNAS corpus data; so-called + A-N:

**sogenannt* + A-N compound [frequency class]**

- Grauwasser  ('gray_water') [21]
- Weißfäule  ('white_rot') [21]
- Grünbrücke  ('green_bridge') [18]
- Schwarzlicht  ('black_light') [17]
- Langholz  ('long_wood') [16]

‘Dieses gering verschmutzte, häusliche Abwasser – sogenanntes Grauwasser – kann im Haushalt wiederverwendet werden.’

(‘this slightly polluted domestic wastewater – so-called gray-water – can be re-used in households’)

[NUN09/DEZ.02649]

**sogenannt* + A-N phrase [frequency class]**

- blauer Brief  ('blue letter', 'pink slip') [21]
- grüner Pfeil  ('green arrow', 'turn-right sign') [21]
- roter Faden  ('red thread', 'golden thread') [18]
- grüne Welle  ('green wave', 'synchronized traffic') [17]
- kleine Anfrage  ('minor interpellation') [16]

‘Zu Hunderten werden in diesen Tagen von Schulen des Rhein-Lahn-Kreises sogenannte “blaue Briefe” verschickt.’

(‘by the hundreds these days schools in the Rhine-Lahn district are sending out so-called “blue letters”’)

[RHZ98/MAI.13242]
More A-N **phrases** than compounds with *sogenannt* (‘so-called’):

![Graph showing comparison between AN compound and AN phrase counts]

This indicates **higher pressure to identify the naming function** of the phrases.
In *so-called* contexts, more often **phrases** are used with **quotation marks** than compounds:

This indicates a higher pressure for the phrase to **promote its naming use**.

\[ \chi^2 = 33.90, p < 0.001 \]
Even when written in capitals, phrases are used more often with quotes than compounds:

- We conclude that phrases compared to compounds underlie a higher pressure to specify their name status as well as to mark the naming use of the phrasal expression.
A pragmatic approach

Why are (novel) compounds better names?

Main idea:
Novel A-N compounds give rise to an **implicature** that they denote a **category** which **deviates** from that of the phrasal expression.

Evidence comes from **apparently identical pairs** involving Latin loan adjectives:

(1) a. Der Bentley hat ein optimales Design, fast schon ein Optimaldesign.
   ‘the Bentley has an optimal design almost an optimal_design’
   
   b. ?? Der Bentley hat ein Optimaldesign, fast schon ein optimales Design.

**almost**: Some property is not fully attained on the corresponding **scale** and the **complement** still holds: **almost X → not X**

(2) The water was pretty warm, almost hot.
Scalar implicature: The choice of the **weaker** expression suggests that the **stronger** expression does not hold.

(1) *Der Bentley hat ein optimales Design, fast schon ein Optimaldesign.*

‘the Bentley has an optimal design almost an optimal_design’

ushed

† The compound represents the **stronger** category,\(^1\) more eligible to represent a concept’s name.

\(^1\) Note: *Optimaldesign* is not assumed to be more optimal than *optimales Design*. 

A pragmatic approach

Why should the compound be the stronger, more name-prone category?

Proposal:
A novel A-N compound **deviates from the grammatical default way** of forming A-N complexes

- Syntax is default: **Morphology** produces **more marked forms** than syntax when the two generate otherwise equivalent outputs, see Ackema & Neeleman (2010):

  \[ \text{to drive a truck} \not\equiv \#\text{to truck-drive} \]

- Compounds are perceived as non-conventionalized:
  They produce a **novelty effect**, phrases don’t, see Barz (1998), Olsen (1986).
The choice of a novel compound gives rise to an implicature based on M-/R-principle (Horn 1984, Levinson 2000):

- **M-principle**
  (Marked stuff indicates marked meanings)

  Compound = more marked expression

  → meaning **deviates** from that of the unmarked expression (phrase)
  and denotes a kind of thing

- **R-principle**
  (Say no more than you must)

  Compound = non-default, less economical expression

  → meaning deviates from that of the default (phrase)
  and denotes a kind of thing
Compounds are better names.

They are less likely to be combined with quotational means (sogenannt, quotation marks), which can enforce a name status.

A compound like Optimaldesign represent a stronger category than the (semantically analogous) phrase optimales Design.

A pragmatic implementation seems reasonable: The meaning of the compound as the more marked expression deviates from the meaning of the phrasal counterpart, thus giving rise to a kind reading.

Corollary: Kind reading is present right from the beginning – and not only after lexicalization.

Thank you.
References can be found in:


Available here: www.uni-kassel.de/go/haertl