

Discussion questions: Booij (2005)

Booij, Geert. 2005. Chapter 4, Compounding. *The Grammar of Words*, 75-95. Oxford: Oxford U. Press.

- (1) [not for RR] Some basic comprehension questions
 - (a) What does Booij give as the basic definition of compounding? Does this work for all the examples of compounding he discusses in the chapter?
 - (b) Based on what you learned in LING 101, what is a *head* in syntax? Can you extrapolate to understand what a *head* might be in morphology?
 - (c) Be sure you understand how to read the bracket notation in (2) and the tree in (3), which both represent the structure of a multi-part compound.
 - (d) What does Booij mean by the term *constructional idiom* (see pp 83, 85 in particular)? Where do these fit into the architecture of the grammar?
- (2) On heads and compounds
 - (a) Name two diagnostics we might use to determine which element of a compound (if any) is the head.
 - (b) Give an example of a compound that has no head, and explain why we conclude that neither of its elements qualifies as a head.
- (3) Booij warns that it can be difficult to distinguish compounds from phrases.
 - (a) Why is this difficult?
 - (b) Give an example that is difficult to classify as compound vs. phrase—either one of Booij’s, or one of your own—and discuss whether there is evidence that allows you to classify it.
- (4) Similarly, it can be difficult to distinguish compounding from derivation.
 - (a) In principle, what would we expect to be the difference between compounding and derivation? (What types of elements are involved in each case?)
 - (b) Why is it sometimes difficult to distinguish which process is at work?
 - (c) Give an example that is difficult to classify as compounding vs. derivation—either one of Booij’s, or one of your own—and discuss whether there is evidence that allows you to classify it.
- (5) In the Haspelmath (2002) reading, we considered three approaches to how inflection and derivation fit into the architecture of the grammar. How would compounding be added to each of these approaches? Be sure that your answer takes into account Booij’s examples such as *20th century welfare state* (sec 4.1), as well as synthetic compounds (sec 4.5).
- (6) [not for RR] Concerning ‘interfixes’/special combining stem shapes, just be aware that they are often observed in compounding (and sometimes other kinds of word-formation as well). Note that they might be seen as morphemes in their own right, whose function is to create combining forms, or they might be seen as part of a stem that has multiple surface forms (“allomorphs”) for use in different morphological contexts.