

Rhyming Compounds as Elements of a Language Game (In Russian and English Languages)¹

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of composite rhyming compounds as a means of word formation games. It explores the place of this category of words in the lexical system and peculiarities of their use in the Russian and English languages. Authors of the article represent compound words as a special lexical subgroup. On the specific publicistic material are revealed the peculiarities of compound words which components are rhymed. Also, in the work the comparative characteristic of rhymed compounds is given, the deep analysis of meanings of these words is carried out for the purpose of establishment of more exact understanding of the text. Rhymed compounds are of great interest to researchers as they are characterized by an extraordinary form, graphic writing and heterogeneity.

Keywords: Word Formation; Rhyming Compounds; Hendiadys; Language Game.

1. Introduction

Compound words represent a special lexical subsystem of language. New compound words are formed on the model unusual to the Russian word-formation system. Activization of this structural group of lexica is one of manifestations of the lexical condensation acting as a natural consequence of the principle of profitability in language (Droga, 2013; Kashisaz & Mobarak, 2018). On concrete actual material the attempt of identification of peculiar features of compound words with rhymed components is made. Let's address a question of the status of the studied units.

2. Research Methods

In this work various methods and ways of a linguistic research are used: a method of the system scientific description by means of which further systematization

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of material is carried out; ways of observation, correlation and theoretical interpretation of results of the language facts analysis. Also, in the research a method of the contextual analysis directed to identification of a structural-semantic variation of the studied words in the specific text is applied; a method of modeling of processes of creation of new combinations. The experimental method allowing to determine specifics of functioning of rhymed compounds in texts of journalism acts as one of the leading methods.

3. Results and Discussion

There is a special type of compound words in Russian language which is called a gendiadis or a rhymed combination. Lexical units created with the gendiadis are complex words and their components are rhymed, for example, focus-pocus, figli-migli etc. This method has been living for a long time in the Russian language and we see the influence of other languages on it, in particular, of Caucasus, Uzbek and Kalmyk languages. The words created with this combination undoubtedly produces a great stylistic interest as the presence of rhymed components makes the whole sentence expressive what is not characteristic for full-valued words. Gendiadis units calling some object of reality show an attitude to it and brings additional semantic aspects. Thus, gendiadis units have not only nominative and significative functions but they represent a stylistic feature. In all works on rhymed combination the scientists are absolutely agree that the gendiadis creations have real expressive possibilities (Gelgardt, Zhuravlev, Izotov, Zemsкая etc.). I.S. Ulukhanov is sure that "echoes play an expressive-stylistic role and change the initial sound or group of sounds" (Ayto, 92). However, we should remark that all gendiadis formations are expressive as the presence of a rhymed component gives an additional stylistic feature. So, the word formation is used as a source of speech expression in creating occasional words (geneadysic formations) and it (word formation) should produces a natural stylistic interest.

The typology of compound words is presented precisely and consistently in works of Shansky (2005) who allocated the following main groups:

Doubling (repetitions), representing "intensifying" on semantics and expressional on character a reduplication of this or that word (an adjective, a verb, an adverb, an interjection and an onomatopoeia): синий-синий, еле-еле, читали-читали, кис-кис etc. In some cases, doubling can be followed by a prefixation or a suffixation at the same time (compare, for example, злой-презлой, дурак-дураком and others).

Synonymic rapprochements of the type звать-величать, путь-дорога, ум-разум, барыня-сударыня. It is important to note that this group of words in the

general use is few and to this group, as a rule, belong the author's individual new formations attached to an artistic context.

The author considers intermediate between the first and the second groups words *трень-брень, шалая-валяя, шуры-муры, трали-вали, фигли-мигли, гоголь-моголь*, peculiar to colloquial style of speech.

Viewpoint of Zhuravlev (1982) according to which the studied formations are called compounds of different words, in which the rheme component corresponds to the separate word and expresses a new sign of the usual word is important to us. In composition of different words Zhuravlev considers necessary to differentiate appositive addition and so-called hendiadys. Examples of appositive composition: *академик-секретарь, бал-маскарад, Бог-отец, дом-музей, изба-читальня, ковер-самолет, мать-героиня, режиссер-постановщик, роман-эпопея, рыба-молот, самолет-разведчик, сестра-хозяйка, человек-невидимка*, etc. The second component of such composition is the specifying attribute to a prepositional "patrimonial" name. Also, the attribute preposition is possible, however: *рубах-парень, кормилец-флот, батюшка-царь*. According to the researcher, to appositive composition adjoin formations with the coordinating relations of components, for example: *купля-продажа, имя-отчество, мать-отец, братья-сестры* etc. Zhuravlev calls hendiadys a rhymed composition of words, the second of which can be asemantic, at the same time "addition to the word of the rhymed wordlike segment pursues or the ornamental, coloristic aims, or adds to word pragmatics a disdain shade": *винтик-шпунтик, каша-малаша, страсти-мордасти, шайка-лейка, танцы-(ш)манцы, штучки-дрючки* etc.

Complexity of determination of the status the different-words compounds is connected as well with the fact that recently in scientific literature several terms are used, for example: hybridization (Kostjukov, 1986). Analyzing the specified way, Kostyukov established that compound names (hybrids) are characterized by a semantic saturation that reflects aspiration of the author for the maximum information capacity of the text within limited language space. The hyphen is a supportive graphic means of connection of pairs of words. Our observations over the facts of language confirm that the specified way of formation of new words is applied in texts of newspaper journalism quite widely. In the examples given below the second component of compound is the independent word:

«Кот-бегемот»: Внимание! Дорогие читатели, мы объявляем конкурс на самого крупного кота. Не случайно мы его назвали «кот-бегемот». Известно, что самая огромная кошка в мире по кличке Химми весила 21 килограмм и 3 грамма. А может, мы побьем этот рекорд? Но даже если вес у вашего кота

обычный, а прославился он другими своими способностями, все равно ждем вашей истории! (Комсомольская правда, 24.04.-01.05.2008).

«Лимон-дракон» (headline): Около 120 тонн лимонов и апельсинов ушло на создание персонажей для фестиваля «Сказочный остров» в Ментоне, на юге Франции. Дракончик – это только маленькая деталь экспозиции. Зато его можно потихоньку поедать с хвоста. С крепостной стеной такое не пройдет (Собеседник, 2012, №12).

To an independent pure way of word formation refers hendiadys and Izotov, calling it a kind of composition (Izotov, 1998). The author allocates several types of a hendiadys, at the same time there is not clear a formant of this or that method. In English-language literature the term shm-added repeat is common (Malysheva, 2002) (for cases like fancy-shmancy).

Sannikov (1999), describing the Russian compounds, called a chapter of his monograph “focus-pocus method”. Such units as страсти-мордасти, the author refers to an unusual way of word formation, called differently: “repetition-reverberation”, “echo construction”. The essence of this method is that any word repeats with change of an initial sound or group of sounds. A peculiar rhymed addition, as if reverberation to the basic word. In the Russian advertizing this expressional word-formation way is used very often. An example is the line from a jingle of chocolate bar “Topic”:

Все батоны-разбатоны нынче нам двоим

Не помеха: два ореха лучше, чем один

The purpose of such “rhyming”, according to Kristal (1998), is to tell information intended only for “initiated” therefore some kind of a language game turns out, which for “profane persons” completely loses sense. The rhymed substitute often has a playful and ironical context. According to Green (2003), two factors – an accent and a rhyme form the basis of the principle of formation of the rhymed expressions, and precisely the rhyme plays the most important role. But there are cases when the rhyme is absent or is inexact, “imperfect”.

The researcher E.G. Ozerova, considering features of creation of composites in the children's speech, notes: “Nonconventional ways of word formation are presented first of all in such a way as hendiadys: варенички-маленички, птенец-цыплец, чухча-мухча, супер-мупер. Distinctive feature of the use of a hendiadys is motivation, semantic fullness of components of compound” (Kurganova, 2014).

The intensification of compound words is noted also in language system of the English language (Aylwin, 1973; Meredith, 1993; Franklyn, 1994; Ayto, 2002). So-called re-duplicative rhyming compounds – that is rhymed compound English

words, differ in use frequency in modern media: for example, hanky-panky, hubble-bubble, mishmash and etc. (Wheeler & Broadhead, 1985). These words consist of two parts, as a rule, one has sense, the second does not contain it. But cases when each of components has its own meaning are noted, but merging in one word, they begin to denote something absolutely different. As an illustration can serve the compound flip-flops – “vietnameses” (to flip-flop – “sharply to change opinion on something”; at this flip – “to throw in air”, and flap – “clapping, blow”). Dienhart (1999) divides rhymed compound words into three groups:

1. Boo-boo words: Words in which the second component (syllable) completely repeats the first (boo-boo – “a silly and annoying mistake”, bling-bling – “expensive jewelry, wearable for show”);
2. Mish-mash words: Words in the second component of which the root vowel changes (fiddle-faddle – “trifles, nonsense, chatter”, knick-knack – “trinket”);
3. Hocus-pocus wordsP: Compound words which parts are rhymed at the expense of a final syllable i.e. the first syllable differs (hurdy-gurdy – “street organ”, hubble-bubble – “noise”).

Wordplay is in a varying degree peculiar to all of us, it is natural ability of each person. For example, look at the kid who only learns to speak. He daily plays with sounds which hears, “tastes” them, tries to try them on himself, rhymes words. Actually, a wordplay and a rhyme as one of its brightest forms is an important stage of assimilation of language for children which is closely connected with the subsequent skill of language proficiency and literacy. Many English children's works are constructed on wordplay, namely on use of rhymed compounds. For example, Humpty Dumpty (Shaltay-Boltay), Georgie Porgie (Georgie-Pordzhi) brightly imitate the speech of English children. The language facts confirm active use of elements of a language play in the English media, advertizing or fiction. Researchers say that rhymed compounds become a part of daily communication of British. For example: When was the last time you went to gym? That jelly belly is getting pretty big. The word jelly belly is used in the meaning “huge stomach at men”.

Yemelyanov (2016), studying expressions of this kind, singles out “the rhymed slang”. The researcher considers it as a type of English slang in which the first part of the phrase or expression is rhymed with its second part, creating various options of writing (brief, hyphenated, separate, verbose). Most often the studied words occur in the television advertizing slogans differing in appeal and wit. The speech of media employees is characterized by creativity, therefore the compounds appearing in English are rhymed “momentary” in the speech of modern carriers of colloquial English: chick flick (“the sentimental movie about love”), nitty-gritty (“the

essence, details”). Linguists, investigating specifics of such words, note some peculiarities: laconicism and capacity makes them memorable and steady in the language; they have the huge potential for the invention of new words, compounds constantly fill up the English language; they add shades of humour and sharpness to the statement. At the same time “the comic effect is reached by drawing attention to what is derided even if it is soft and playful” (Vostrikova, 2012; Aziz & Abdolghader, 2018). But in itself it does not mean the positive attitude: in conversational phrases some rhymed components are characterized by meaning of disdain and sarcasm: ragtag (unorganized group of people). “What would be English without Georgie-Porgie, tootsy-wootsy, razzle-dazzle, heebie-jeebies, walkie-talkie, nitty-gritty, polly-wolly-doodle? We almost do not notice presence of a rhyme at words: picnic, humdrum, humbug, hobnob, and tidbit: the amusing essence of their internal form was already erased” (Karval’o, 2011; Kheirabadi & Mirzaei; Yazdekhasti et al., 2015).

4. Conclusion

Illustrative material shows that the graphic criterion of differentiation of rhymed compounds from the phenomena, adjacent to them, is not always unambiguous. So, the name fuddy daddy designating “the old-fashioned person the one who does not accept anything new and youth” meets in writing both with a hyphen, and without it, “as the choice of writing of compound words – process spontaneous and unpredictable, connected rather with preferences of users of language” (Vostrikova, 2012; Ali et al., 2017). In the Russian language components of rhymed compounds are always connected by a graphic sign. “Beyond a hyphen” are semantic connections thanks to which to the compound word is assigned certain, only to it inherent meaning.

Thus, the disparate in terminology, definitions, classifications of rhymed compounds is connected with the fact that this material is quite extensive and non-uniform. It is of great interest to further detailed classification of a hendiadys. Most of researchers are similar that rhymed compounds are characterized by an unusual playful form, hyphenated writing and complexity of semantics. These words are formed on the models earlier not peculiar to the Russian word-formation system. In usage of Russian nominative compounds (шутым-бывает) make 90% of total number of words-hendiadyses, in English there is a large number of verbal rhymed compounds (to shilly-shally – “to fluctuate”). The form of composition is similar in both languages, but fullness by semantics in English is smaller. As the uniting factor acts “contemporaneity” of appearance of hendiadys as an element of a language game in a concrete speech situation. Obligatory existence of a hyphen is characteristic for compounds in the Russian language. Rhymed words meet in journalese style of

English more often. The English language as any another, has the rich potential for word-play. Even British so often and everywhere use a re-duplication in the daily speech that they do not pay any more attention to what unusual is a phenomenon. “The deep analysis and constant contextual comparison of meanings of corresponding lexical units of the English and Russian languages allows to establish more precisely semantic shape of the studied language material” (Novichkov, 2008; Eslami & Ahmadi, 2019; Nurgaliyeva et al., 2018).

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