

(WHAT) SHOULD WE BE VIGILANT WHEN TEACHING WORD FORMATION IN ENGLISH TO BULGARIAN ENGLISH PHILOLOGY STUDENTS?

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Abstract. The research offered here reviews the content of teaching word formation within the bachelor and master’s degree programs at the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Stock is taken with the basic problems arising from the insufficiency of word formation related content taught and the overview nature of the elective courses included in the programs. Basic areas of asymmetry between the word formation systems of English and Bulgarian are discussed, including factors for these, and certain signposts considered musts in word formation courses at university level are suggested.

Keywords: word formation; English; Bulgarian; teaching at university level

1. The problem: The status of word formation teaching

The teaching of word formation in English at university level within the Department of English and American Studies department at Sofia University is notably insufficient and predisposes towards various domestication strategies or borrowing and calquing in translation classes. In view of this, it is extremely important that signposts are outlined which focus on, on the one hand, the most productive processes in English and on the other on features of asymmetry between the two linguistic systems (English and Bulgarian). The agglutinative affixation system of English as opposed to the fusional one in Bulgarian is one such area, followed by the controversy over conversion and back-formation, the purportedly different nature of compounding in the two languages, the high activity of clipping in English as opposed to its moderate and register-marked activity in Bulgarian, etc. Most importantly, word formation is taught in isolation from general typological discussions and with no immediate relation to whole-system differences with direct impact on word formation.

Although some standard language tests (such as *Cambridge Advanced*, *Cambridge Proficiency*) and the tests for the language Olympiad in Bulgaria

contain word-formation tasks, they are performance oriented and follow the same pattern – a base (not necessarily the root) is provided and the learners are expected to produce the contextually appropriate form. The teaching of word formation terminology, processes and units is negligibly incorporated in English language teaching in middle schools in Bulgaria. The same holds true for the curriculum of the bachelor's degree in English and American Studies and the only explicitly language-focused master's program *Language and Culture* within the department of English and American studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Dedicated word formation courses are offered exclusively as electives and are focused exclusively on English. They are of an overview nature and lack a pronounced contrastive component. The four academic hours dedicated to the topic of word formation in the compulsory course *Introduction to General linguistics* are insufficient to provide even a vague background, let alone any deeper understanding of the issues. The compulsory course *Morphology* is focused on grammatical morphology and morphosyntactic features of English and skews the picture of the nature of the lexical stock of the English language and basic differences in the lexicons of English and Bulgarian. No lexicology class is included in the curriculum.

This paucity of exposure to word formation derives from two closely related, yet distinct sources: i) the restricted number of compulsory courses at BA level and ii) the overall tendency for overview courses instead of more narrowly conceived but more clearly focused and thematically coherent courses. As the first factor is institutionally regulated and much more difficult to amend, in the remainder of the paper, after a review of the basic word formation asymmetries between the two languages, an outline is proposed of a condensed core of musts to be included content-wise in any course in word formation at the higher education level.

2. Basic asymmetries

2.1. Language-related

The growing contrastive literature on word formation in English and Bulgarian focuses exclusively on separate word formation processes or patterns (e.g. Choroleeva 2015a,b, 2016; Kovacheva 2006; Luizova-Horeva 2012, 2018; Stamenov 2015, 2020; etc.) or on borrowing and the influence of English on Bulgarian. A holistic description is lacking and the notes below are intended to fill in this caveat.

The two languages under study are both recognized as nominative-accusative; one Slavic, the other Germanic. English is typologically recognized as a highly analytical, isolating language (Štekauer et al. 2012) with "a flexible part of speech system" (Vogel 2000), while Bulgarian is described as a fusional-inflectional language with a moderate degree of analyticity and a rigid, plus an overtly marked part of speech system (Nicolova 2023). Those facts are typically considered of

high significance for the morphosyntactic descriptions of the linguistic systems but are not taken into account in the literature on word formation (Murdarov 1983; Radeva 2007). These facts have immediate consequences for the nature of word formation. The first reason for this is that, in my view, a word is the language writ small. No matter what view of the architecture of language we adopt, a word as a biunique mapping of meaning and form displays all features of the linguistic system to which it belongs. In that sense, there are three major areas of differences between English and Bulgarian within affixation, compounding and conversion, which necessarily need to be emphasized. In relation to affixation, it is important to note that agglutinative affixation is more characteristic of English, while fusional features of affixation make constituent segmentation more difficult in Bulgarian. Within compounding, due to the isolating properties of English and the nature of its voice system, compound verbs loom large in English as they are products of composition proper, back-formation or conversion, while the few in Bulgarian are of unproductive nature and appear to be of more archaic nature (see Bagasheva 2012). In other areas of compounding the similarities are more than the contrasts between the two languages, taking also into consideration that under the influence of English (see Kovacheva 2006), root nominal compounding and blending (see Stamenov 2015 on blending) have become almost fully nativized word formation processes in Bulgarian. As far as conversion is concerned, the differences are more conspicuous – even if we use the same term, we do not mean the same thing. In Bulgarian, conversion necessarily involves some kind of formal change, which with the exception of stress pattern shifting, is uncharacteristic of English. This contrast is associated with the different part of speech systems in the two languages, the far more pronounced and abundant inflectional system in Bulgarian, which affects even such parts of speech as numerals, and the type of agreement within phrase structure.

From a more global typological and cross-linguistic perspective, data presented in Štekauer et al. (2012) indicate that the most productive word formation processes world-wide are suffixation (95 per cent of the languages of the world) and compounding (90 per cent) followed by reduplication (80 per cent), prefixation (72 per cent) and conversion (63 per cent). Ivanová and Bednářiková (2020, p. 27) report that “word-formation is primarily based on affixation in Slavic languages”. In keeping with such data reports, extensive research on the word formation systems in English and Bulgarian has revealed that from a broad ecological perspective on word formation the following differences are noticeable: in English compounding and blending are far more productive than in Bulgarian; conversion is far more profitable and active in English than in Bulgarian, the latter associated with the overall problematic nature of the analysis of conversion in Slavic languages; while affixation is almost equally viable in both languages, which brings us back to the need to contrast the nature of affixation in the two languages both in terms of formal

expression and in terms of readings, more specifically polysemy chains. One of the significant differences in this respect is the multitude of (particle) phrasal verbs in English, corresponding either to prefixation models or multiword idiomatic expressions in Bulgarian.

Leaving aside the question of what the headedness parameter encompasses or depends on¹, for inflectional purposes in both English and Bulgarian word formation products are predominantly categorially right-headed, while (non-) compositionality and exocentricity are semantic in nature and have scalar properties that may characterize any word formation product in both languages. Prefixation tends to be non-class-changing and prefixes do not behave as heads. In both diminution and augmentation and amelioration and pejoration coincide. It has become customary for the morphological means in a language employed for augmentation and diminution to be recognized as the prototype of morphological evaluation (Stump 1993).

The system of compounding in the two languages is comparable with a few exceptions: i) compound verbs; ii) licensing and structure of synthetic and parasynthetic (verb-nexus) compounds (see Melloni and Bisetto 2010); and iii) root compounding is far more restricted in productivity in Bulgarian. As far as compound verbs are concerned, the derived verbal lexicon in English is rather poor in terms of productive patterns (-ate, -ize, -ify, -en being the only productive verbalizing suffixes), while in Bulgarian the derived verbal lexicon is richer than the compound one (if not in diversity of affixal means, at least in productivity). Besides, as maintained long ago (Lehrer 1990; Clark and Clark 1979, among numerous others), various types of converted verbs are created, for example, agentive verbs like *to butcher*, *to father*, *to model* whose parent nouns specify the (prototypical) agents of the actions designated by the verbs or some other participant role. This consistent difference might be linked to the fact that English speakers tend to encode manner of motion in their verbs (Talmy 1985, 2000, 2003; Slobin 1996), while the rich Bulgarian prefixal system predetermines speakers' preferences for encoding path or ground. Path is naturally encoded by lexical items with spatial meanings, i.e., prepositions, which are most likely to develop into bound morphemes. This may account for the rich prefixal system in Bulgarian, while the manner preference in English for a productive constructional pattern of compound verbs, which permits noun incorporation. Compound verbs are currently a productively growing class in English, as can be seen from the considerable number being created in a range of registers and genres (e.g. *to beach comb*, *to palm-read*, *to brown bag*, *to drink-drive*, etc.). In Bulgarian the few compound verbs of the type *ръкопляскам* (rakoplyaskam, 'clap one's hands', *applaud*, *express approval*), *ръкополагам* (rakopolagam, 'hand-put', *ordain*, *crown*, *knight*), *прахосмуча* (prahosmuča, 'dust suck', *vacuum-clean*), *гласоподавам* (glasopodavam, 'voice-hand', *vote*), etc. remain a pocket phenomenon and do not produce new types.

Morphotactically Bulgarian synthetic compounds contain a linking vowel (most frequently **-o-** or **-e-**), while interfixes are a rarity in English. In English the majority of synthetic compound nouns are licensed by one of the nominalizing suffixes **-er²**, **-ing**, **-al**, **-ance**, **-ation** (**-ion**), **-ment** and **-ure** as in *hair-removal*, *car insurance*, *book-production*, *law enforcement*, *cocaine seizure*, etc. In Bulgarian the licensing suffixes tend to be more clearly associated with specified word formation types, which are defined as “constituted by a particular semantic relationship between the constituents of a word-formation pattern, e.g.: V + N: 1) ‘person characterised by performing some activity’: *crybaby*, *callboy*, *playboy*, etc., 2) ‘person affected by some activity’: *callgirl*, *pin-up girl*, etc., 3) ‘object undergoing some action’: *drawbridge*, *pushcart*, *treadmill*, etc.” (Kastovsky 2005, p. 8):

-тел, -ач, -ник, -ец, -ар (-яр), -ор, -ьор and less frequently **-ко** with *Occupations* (a label which encompasses *Agents*, *Patients*, *Experiencers*, *Habitual doers*, *People with habits or propensities*), e.g. *иконписец* (*ikonopisec*, ‘icon writer’, *icon painter*), *стоманолеляр* (*stomanoleyar*, ‘steel molder’, *steel worker*), *тютюноберач* (*tyutyunoberač*, *tobacco picker*), *телохранител* (*telohranitel*, ‘body feeder’, *bodyguard*);

-ачка, -тел, -ка, -ач, -ник, -ор (-атор) and very rarely on the suffix **-ец** with *Instruments/Appliances*, e.g. *ръкохватка* (*râkohvatka*, ‘hand holder’, *handle*), *самопрекъсвач* (*samoprekâsvač*, ‘self-stopper’, *circuit breaker*), *парочистачка* (*paročistačka*, *steam cleaner*), *пожарогасител* (*požarogasitel*, *fire extinguisher*) **-не, -ство, -ние, -ие, -овка, -ка, -ница, -ба** and **-еж** with *Activities*, e.g. *сърцебиене* (*sârcebiene*, ‘heart beating’ *heart palpations*), *словообразуване* (*slovoobrazuvane*, *word formation*), *текстообработка* (*tekstoobrabotka*, *text processing*);

-на, -ица, -ище with *Locations*, e.g., *каменоломна* (*kamenolomna*, ‘stone breaking place’, *quarry*), *книгохранилище* (*knigohraniliše*, *book storage*), *корабостроителница* (*korabostroitelnica*, ‘ship building place’, *shipyard*).

In both languages the phenomenon of affix polysemy blurs the clear boundaries of suffixal specialization as per word formation type but as the phenomenon of polysemy chains is discussed further below, this consequence is mentioned in passing here.

Root compounds (NN compounds) in Bulgarian (recognized as atypical of Slavic languages, but characteristic of Germanic languages) are the result of a foreign influence. There is unanimous agreement that the newly instigated productivity and the fixation of the pattern of root, affixless, non-verb centered compounding have been achieved under the influence of English (Krumova-Tsvetkova *et al.* 2013; Murdarov 1983; Radeva 2007; etc.). From an influx of lexical borrowing the pattern has grown into a structure accommodating exclusively native constituents or long nativized constituents (e.g., *тото пункт* (*toto punkt*, *lottery kiosk*)), *чалга певец* (*čalga-pevec*, *pop folk singer*), *чалга изпълнител* (*čalga izpâlnitel*,

performer of pop folk music), etc.). Bulgarian word-formation scholars still consider such compounds not characteristic of Bulgarian (Kirova 2012, Murdarov 1983; Radeva 2007; etc.). Blagoeva and Kolkovska (2021) discuss the imminent problems of the lexicographic representation of such constructions, which they still cautiously call “new syntactic structures”.

Exocentric compounds of the NV structural type (*bahuvrihi*) compounds are not productive in Bulgarian (e.g., *нехранимайко* (*nehranimajko*, ‘not-feed-mother’, *scoundrel*, *good-for-nothing*), *гонимъгла* (*gonimâgla*, ‘chase-fog’, a person dealing with trifles), etc.), and with very low productivity in English (e.g., *pickpocket*, *cutthroat*, etc.). The pattern has fallen into obsolescence and when used such compounds sound archaic and colloquial.

As affixation in English and Bulgarian demonstrates ostensibly the greatest degree of similarity among the major traditionally recognized word formation processes, its teaching should supposedly be straightforward. However, it appears that even in this subfield contrast in polysemy chains are pretty noticeable. Affixal(systemic) polysemy has been extensively studied ever since it was defined by Apresjan (1974) as “regular polysemy” or recurrent patterns of radial networks of correlated possible affix readings across (and it should also be added within) languages. As Rainer (2011, 2014) shows there is evidence of a cross-linguistics *Agent-Instrument-Place* affixal polysemy (to which we can add *Experiencer*). In a similar vein, Lieber (2016, p. 8) concludes that in English “nominalizations do not have fixed meanings, but that they can take on a variety of readings by virtue of their sparse lexical semantics and the filling in of their representations in contexts.” Even though this may be true of the ecosystem of English nominalizations, the Bulgarian one is characterized by less malleability. The extensive polysemy chains in English include across-the-board deverbal nominalizations, including *Event*, *Result*, *Location*, etc. readings alongside participant readings. In Bulgarian there is a cut-off line between participant deverbal nominalizations and other deverbal nominalizations. Systemic polysemy is detectable only within the niche of participant deverbal nominalizations.

Among the significant differences the following should be mentioned: *-ing* is not used for marking *Experiencer* in English, while one of the patterns corresponding to this polysemous element, the noun converted from the present active participle in Bulgarian, systematically and exclusively names *Experiencer* (and *Agent*) and is not contextually coerced to derive any of the other participant roles, apart from *Quality*. In English the participant semantic niche extends over to other types of nominalizations as well (*Event*, *Result*, *Action*, *Quality* (i.e., adjectival reading), *Manner* (adverbial reading (e.g., *-ing*)). In Bulgarian participant nominalizations are more sharply delineated from other niches in the ecosystem of nominalizations with a plethora of specialized deverbal suffixes. This coheres with the different types of part of speech system that the two languages are characterized with and the more

strongly expressed fusional-inflectional character of Bulgarian. These asymmetries are illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1. Deverbal nominalizations in English and Bulgarian

Reading/meaning	English ³	Bulgarian ⁴
Event	the archdiocese's handling of her case	разглеждането на случая ѝ от страна на архиепископията
Result	her understanding – or acknowledgment of her lack of understanding – of God	нейното разбиране – или признание на нейното неразбиране – на Бог
Agent	Her following is small but loyal.	Нейните последователи са малко, но лоялни. / Следващите ⁵ я са малко, но лоялни
Instrument	light with a match or lighter, add kindling, and voila, instant heat	запалете с кибрит или запалка, добавете подпалка и готово, моментална топлина
Inanimate patient	Take the washing off the line.	Свалете прането от простора.
Location	As a dwelling it was pretty basic	Като жилище беше доста
Quality	intriguing book	интригуваща книга
Adverbial	running down the stairs	тичайки надолу по стълбите

It follows that the meanings of an affix are fluidly coarticulated not only by all rival affixes populating a target naming niche but also by the interrelated semantic niches that have emerged in particular languages for the respective affix. Acknowledging that “there is such a great degree of overlap, polysemy, and general malleability of reading in such nouns that we need to consider the ecosystem of nominalizations as a complex, interdependent whole” (Lieber 2016, p. 117), we advocate a more holistic and meaning-driven (analytical) teaching method.

The ecosystem of English word formation is characterized by a high degree of competition (as defined by Aronoff 2016; Rainer et al. 2019; etc.), or rivalry, between morphological items, patterns, and processes in which conversion plays a major role, followed by the composition of phrasal verbs, still recognized as multi-word expressions without an easily assignable traditional word formation process or product associated label. The ecosystem of Bulgarian is also kept in balance by competitive forces, but conversion is not among the competitors and phraseology (or multi wordiness of expression) and word formation are consistently kept apart in the majority of treatments by Bulgarian scholars.

2.2. Theory and method-related asymmetries

The last remark leads directly to the second major source of asymmetries of a

metalinguistic nature, or divergence in theoretical assumptions and methodological choices. For example, Bulgarian word-formationists are unanimous in dubbing compounding “atypical” for Bulgarian, emphasizing its restricted productivity and the scarcity of individuated word-formation types that can be recognized and analyzed. The naming units that result from compounding in Bulgarian “correspond to foreign word-formation patterns” and are termed “ugly, distorting, unnecessary” by lay people and language professionals alike (Murdarov 1983, p. 97). This also explains the variability of labeling of such constructions in the word-formation literature on and in Bulgarian (Alexieva 2004; Avramova 2003; Kirova 2006; Kovacheva 2006; Moskovska 1995; Radeva 2007; etc.), which ranges from labels such as nominal phrases, lexical combinations, phraseological unities, lexicalized collocations, syntactic combinations, binomials (compositional appositive names), appositive compounds, *izafet*, to loanblends, etc.

It has been argued that compounding in English is word-based, while in Bulgarian it is root-based. Libben (2019) proposes that this is a moot argument, since he believes complex words should be conceived as actions, which presupposes a dissociation between what linguists standardly recognize as morphological processes and products and the resultant instantiations of what he calls “superstates”. Promoting “a maximization of opportunity” principle, he maintains that complex words are configurations of slots associated with epiphenomenal categories, or “traces” (Libben 2014). In other words, compounds are not made of words or roots but of positionally and functionally specialized or dedicated intracompound components which are extended via analogy for the construction of constituent families.

As already noted, novel developments such as *бизнес център* [*biznes centâr*, business center], *джаз фестивал* (*džaz festival*, *jazz festival*), *кино център* (*kino centâr*, *film studio*), etc. (Radeva 2007) appear atypical along two different parameters: they lack the typical linking vowels and do not display an argument or thematic relation characteristic of verbocentric compounds. The extant NNs without a linking component are either considered appositive as in *вагон-ресторант* (*vagon-restorant*, *dining car*), *заместник-директор* (*zamestnik-direktor*, *deputy director*), etc. (Radeva 2007, pp. 56 – 58) or are interpreted as a group in their own right (with a variety of labels attached to them by different authors, see Kirova 2012; Murdarov 1983; Radeva, 2007; etc.) with an implicit comparison semantic operator (Radeva 2007, p. 58) as in *очи-череши* (*oči-chčereshi*, ‘eyes-cherries’, *large, beautiful eyes*), *гайтан-вежди* (*gaytan-veždi*, ‘woolen braid’, *well-shaped eyebrows*), *снага-топола* (*snaga-topola*, ‘body-poplar’, *slender body*), etc. All of these, including the novel formations, are unequivocally interpreted as resulting from composition (Kirova 2012; Murdarov 1983; Radeva 2007; etc.), but are not unanimously recognized as compounds. The following classifications are available in the literature:

i) *заместник-министър* (zamestnik-ministâr, *deputy minister*), *помощник-треньор* (pomoshnik-trenyor, ‘helper-coach’, *junior coach*) – compositionally formed binominals with a determining relationship;

ii) *касиер-платец* (kasier-platec, ‘cashier-payer’, *cashier*), *плод-зеленчук* (plod-zelenčuk, ‘fruit-vegetable’, *greengrocery*), *храм-паметник* (hram-pametnik, ‘temple monument’, *a church of cultural and historical value*) – compositionally formed appositive complex names with a coordinative relationship;

iii) *град-герой* (grad-geroy, ‘town-hero’, *hero city*), *песен-изповед* (pesen-izpoved, ‘song-confession’, *a very moving song*) – compositionally formed synaptic formations;

iv) *кино център* (kino centâr, *film studio*), *джаз фестивал* (džaz festival, *jazz festival*), etc. – compositionally formed complex naming structures comprising two bare nouns;

v) *очи-черешу* (oči-čereshi, ‘eyes-cherries’, *large, beautiful eyes*), *зайтан-вежди* (gaytan-veždi, ‘woolen braid’, *well-shaped eyebrows*), etc. – izafet, compositionally formed complex names with an implicit comparison semantic operator.

This incomprehensible classificatory heterogeneity can easily be avoided if we accept the parametrized understanding of headedness in compounding (Guevara and Scalise 2009; Scalise and Guevara 2006; Scalise, Fábregas and Forza 2009; Scalise and Fábregas 2010). Scalise, Fábregas and Forza (2009) propose the recognition of three different types of exocentricity based on a three-fold understanding of head and headedness. The three types of exocentricity identified are categorial, morphological and semantic, where categorial exocentricity is recognized when “the constituent in the head position does not impose its categorial features to the whole construction” (Scalise, Fábregas, Forza 2009, p. 61). Morphological exocentricity is defined as the case in which “morphological features of the compound are not identical to the morphological features of any of its internal constituents” (ibid., p. 62). This type of exocentricity in the view of the authors is highly sensitive to type of language. As for semantic exocentricity, the authors claim that it “is well-attested and well distributed across the languages of the world” (ibid., p. 59). In their view, “that exocentricity that derives from semantic conditions on the lexical items involved is universal and leads to comparable results in typologically unrelated languages” (ibid., p. 68).

We further need to acknowledge that both thematic (relational) and attributive relations can be detected in noun + noun constructions (NNs). If we compare Bulg. *майка-орлица* (mayka orlica, ‘mother-eagle’, *helicopter mom*) and the Eng. *helicopter parents* (and the whole series: *lawnmower parent*, *bulldozer parent* and *snowplow parent*) we can immediately see that they share the same conventionalized lexical meaning. The NN structure in Bulgarian is recognized as an izafet construct (with a covert comparative semantic operator, i.e. *a mother like an eagle*), not as

a compound (Radeva 2007). Admittedly, the Bulgarian one is semantically left-headed but formally both constituents would function as *locus inflectionis*, while the English series comprises both formally and semantically right-headed primary, non-compositional compounds. In both English and Bulgarian metaphor and metonymy are at play in the conventionalized lexical meaning, which would render the compounds creative ones (Benczes 2006). The NN in Bulgarian should be recognized as a primary nominal compound as there are no meaning, composition or grammatical differences between the NNs in English and Bulgarian apart from the left position of the semantic head in the Bulgarian one.

It can reasonably be concluded that the differences in the compounding ecosystems of English and Bulgarian are analytical and labeling artefacts, not language facts.

The opposite seems to be the case with conversion. The same term is used to encompass significantly different phenomena in the two languages whose properties in relation to the biuniqueness of the sign – no formal change but significant semantic alternation (English – e.g. *a book* and *to book*) vs. obligatory formal change (Bulgarian⁶ – e.g. *nečam* (pečat, *seal*) < *nečamam* (pečat-ø-a-m, *print*). Numerous definitions of conversion exist, more importantly, they diverge not only in terms of essence, but also in terms of language (or language group) for which they are provided. According to Bauer et al. (2013, p. 27, p. 545 and p. 562) conversion in English is a morphological word-formation process, “a change from one word class to another with no concomitant change in form”, which implies that thus understood conversion will hardly at all operate in Bulgarian. In the Slavic analytical tradition, conversion (also known as paradigmatic or affixless derivation) encompasses diverse phenomena, where formal changes are recognized (e.g., thematic markers, inflectional affixes, etc. For a concise overview of the issues see Ivanová and Bednaríková (2020)). At the same time zero derivation, used in the English-speaking analytical tradition as a synonym for conversion, in and for Bulgarian is usually used for what would in and for English be considered back-formation, i.e. a subtraction or deletion procedure of a presumed constituent, which necessarily involves the introduction of a non-existent constituent boundary and the deletion of said constituent, i.e. reanalysis, e.g. *зъбокоренобол* (zâbokorenobol, ‘toothrootpain’, *tooth root ache*), *принцонад* (princopad, ‘falling of princes’). Admittedly, theoretical proposals have been voiced that conversion is a type of back-formation. For example, Nagano (2007, p. 68) contends that “BF [back-formation] consists of conversion, a rule-based word-formation process, and clipping, a non-rule-based speech-level process, and the various properties of BF have been proved to be deducible from the properties of these two processes”. If adopted, this position allows for recognizing a moderately productive process of back-formation-based conversion in Bulgarian (e.g. *енология* (enologiya, *oenology*) < *енолог* (enolog, *oenologist*)). But if the nature of conversion in English has to be emphasized, such

a view blurs the differences between a form-changing process (back-formation) and a form-preserving one (conversion). In view of the across-the-board productivity of conversion, admitting anything to be the source in English (e.g. *up* < *to up*, *to take away* < *takeaway*) and tolerating all kinds of semantic relations between base and output (e.g.,⁷ instrument “use x” *hammer*; locative “put (in)to x” *jail*; ornative “provide with x” *staff*; causative “make (more) x” *yellow*; resultative “make into x” *bundle*; inchoative “become x” *cool*; privative “remove x” *bark*; performative “perform x” *counterattack*; simulative “act like x” *chauffeur*, *pelican*; stative “be x” *landmark*) it is advisable for teaching purposes to focus on the unique properties of conversion in English as opposed to recognizing as conversion various form-changing phenomena in Bulgarian (some of which opposing, i.e. back-formation as in *енология* (enologiya, *oenology*) < *енолог* (enolog, *oenologist*) vs. formant addition as in *зелен* (zelen, *green*) < *зеленя* (zeleneya, *look/be green*)).

In view of all the issues raised above, the last section is devoted to a proposal for content-inclusivity and a methodological approach to the teaching of word formation at university level to English philology students.

3. Methodological recommendations

The recommendations proposed here rest on the following assumption: Any complex word belongs simultaneously to at least three different types of paradigms: (i) a family (a series of lexemes with a positionally identical categorically non-specific element, i.e. family-effect-dependent analogy), (ii) a derivational nest (a series of lexical items with the same parametrically differentiated semantic head), where metonymic re-construal of a frame operates and (iii) the arch set of entrenched, existing complex words. This enables language users to unconsciously grasp the underlying semantic and formal similarities between the units in word formation paradigms.

The above assumption is most naturally accommodated within constructionalism as an epistemological commitment. The basic contention of constructionalism adopted here (based on Chapter 1 from Traugott and Trousdale’s *Constructionalization and Constructional Changes*, 2013) is that language is a constructicon, a set of taxonomic networks where each construction constitutes a node in the network that forms a continuum from the fully concrete to the highly schematic. The relations between constructions are ones of inheritance and motivation. A construction itself is a conventionalized pairing of meaning and form. The constructicon is acquired via language use and innovated via neoanalysis and analogization. Both process are localized within constructions, or more precisely in actualized constructs. Form and meaning can in the incremental stages of constructionalization undergo individual shifts, but the co-evolution hypothesis (Bybee et al. 1994) holds true for the whole construction, preserving the biuniqueness of the symbolic complex. A construction is instantiated in actual language use by specified constructs that

are fully phonetically specified and have contextually sensitive meaning, based on their conventionalized meaning or any appropriate extension thereof. A shift in any dimension of the construct might be strengthened via propagated use across the speech community into a modified or novel construction depending on degree of dissimilarity from the initial one(s).

Constructions vary along three significant dimensions: type of concept, schematicity and complexity. Type of concept specifies whether the construction could be used referentially or whether it encodes intralinguistic relations. The dimension of schematicity is related to formal (phonological) specificity and degree of abstraction from a token construct and classifies constructions into substantive (fully specified), schematic (abstract), and intermediate or partial (at least one constituent is specified). The dimension of complexity captures the internal constituency of a construction and distinguishes between atomic, complex and intermediate. Besides these inherently gradient dimensions, of immediate relevance to describing constructions are the notions of compositionality and productivity. The former one is operationalized in terms of analyzability, while the second one can relatively be measured by type constructs (the fully formally specified and actually used instantiations of a construction), i.e. by the degree to which a construction sanctions less schematic constructions or specific constructs. Within this constructicon, constructionalization defined as “the creation of form^{new} - meaning_{new} (combinations of) signs” that constitute “new type nodes, which have new syntax_{new} or morphology and new coded meaning, in the linguistic network of a population of speakers” (Traugott and Trousdale 2013, p. 22) is achieved incrementally via constructional changes, defined as shifts along one of the dimensions of a construction (ibid., p. 26).

In this context, beside affixal polysemy discussed above, we also need to take into account the systematicity of constructional polysemy. That is, different available readings of a partial or intermediate construction have to be related in a way that can be systematically explained. Booij (2012, p. 221) utilizes the notion of domain shift to account for the *Agent – Instrument* polysemy, “the notion AGENT is transferred to the domain of inanimate material things that are conceived of as agents that perform a particular task”. He actually adopts the natural grammaticalization path established by Heine et al. (1991, p. 48) as a cross-linguistically valid directed chain of domain shifts within constructional polysemy networks: “PERSON > OBJECT > ACTIVITY > SPACE > TIME > QUALITY” (ibid.).

The last note relates to the pervasive non-compositionality of word formation products or lexical constructions, implicit in Baeskow’s contention that “word-formation involves aspects of meaning, which are neither predicted by the syntax nor reducible to dictionary entries” (Baeskow 2015, p. 39). On the basis of this assumption that derivational meaning is different from both lexical meaning and principles of syntactic meaning computation and against the background of extensive affixal

polysemy, it is the complexity of the ecosystem of affixes and rival derivational processes within a word-formation type cluster that presents the ideal granularity level and presents a suitable *tertium comparationis* as the basis for thematically shaping a university course.

In a nutshell, what is suggested here is that the framework of a cognitive-functional onomasiological approach to word formation is the most profitable approach to teaching word formation to English philology students who are taught functional-structural syntax and a mixture of item-and-arrangement and item-and-process morpheme-based morphology with a strong syntagmatic focus. Without imposing a paradigmatic view, but adopting the Relational Hypothesis, which holds that “[a]ll rules/schemas can be used relationally, while only a subset of them can be used generatively as well” (Jackendoff and Audring (2020, p. 4), since “the grammar is grounded in the relations among lexical items”, and “generativity is the add-on, albeit a very important one” (ibid.), it is advocated that it is the relational networks among word formation schemas, i.e., the constructional polysemy networks, which encode the essential conceptual distinctions, which may be abstracted and used in a more generatively operational manner in constructions of higher constituent complexity, and that these should be the core elements of instruction.

Such an approach, adopts the key tenets of the onomasiological approach to word formation (Štekauer 1998; Štekauer 2001; Štekauer 2005), supplements them with Lieber’s (2016) onomasiology informed ecological view of the system of word formation and all the patterns and elements populating it, and embeds any offered analysis in the larger framework of the cognitive-constructionist architecture, where language is assumed to be a dynamic system of symbolic pairings of meaning and form. Thus, a balance can be maintained between a more generative power oriented approach and a more lexical network relational one, especially in view of the fact that there is no course in lexicology incorporated in the curriculum. Among the central tenets of the onomasiological theory is the word-formation type cluster, which is comprised of all lexemes coined for expressing a specific conceptual category, e.g., Patient, Instrument, Location, etc., which coiners may encode choosing for the linguistic expression among eight onomasiological types, which differ in terms of the expression of the onomasiological categories of the determining constituent of the mark, the determined constituent of the mark, and the onomasiological base. The Morpheme-to-Seme Assignment Principle, which is premised on the idea that “the semantics of morphemes stored in the lexicon is matched with the individual semantic categories of the onomasiological structure” (Körtvélyessy et al. 2015, p. 90) regulates the mapping of conceptual components and elements of linguistic expressions. Thus, the analysis of a word-formation type cluster may focus on the onomasiological types utilised or it can explore the ecology of the morphemes, patterns and processes involved in the mapping of the requisite semantic constituents. The stored morphemes themselves (including

what are traditionally called word formation processes such as compounding, conversion, affixation, etc.) constitute a complex ecosystem of polyfunctionality and competition.

In keeping with Krzeszowski's recommendation for choosing a meaning component for contrastive word formation analysis,

[s]ince formal comparisons of individual lexical items do not seem to lend themselves to any significant generalizations, contrastive studies of word formation are better off if they are based on some conceptual framework. [...] As a matter of fact, any aspect of the meaning can serve as a basis for cross-linguistic comparisons (Krzeszowski 1990, p. 75),

it is recommended that the word-formation type cluster and the polysemy networks among language resources be the elements extensively studied in a university-level comprehensive, introductory course with a pronounced contrastive engagement.

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NOTES

1. For a discussion of this contentious question and a parametrized treatment of the concept see Scalise and Fábregas 2010.
2. There is a notable specialization of the *-er* licensing suffix in English for *Occupations* and *Instruments /Appliances* but on the whole verb-nexus compounds need not be licensed by a suffix in English and there do not seem to be conspicuous correlations between word formation type and licensing suffix.
3. All the examples of across-the-board *-ing* nominalizations, to the exception of the *Quality* and *Adverbial* readings, are excerpted from Lieber (2016, pp. 65 – 67) and modified for the purposes of the argument developed here.
4. Only the nominalizing suffixes for the requisite readings in the two languages are bolded, without any indication of grammatical marking in Bulgarian
5. This is actually the determined substantivized form of the active present participle in Bulgarian.
6. The example is taken from Manova (2005, p. 5), where the general formula for conversion in Slavic languages is “PREFIX-ROOT-DERIVATIONAL SUFF-(THEMATIC MARKER)-INFLECTIONAL SUFF”. In the absence of a derivational suffix (marked as \emptyset in the example), the author recognizes conversion.
- 7 All the examples provided here are taken from Lieber (2004, p. 91).

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ТРЯБВА ЛИ (ЗА КАКВО) ДА ВНИМАВАМЕ, КОГАТО ПРЕПОДАВАМЕ АНГЛИЙСКО СЛОВООБРАЗУВАНЕ НА БЪЛГАРСКИ СТУДЕНТИ АНГЛИЙСКА ФИЛОЛОГИЯ?

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Резюме. Предлагащото тук изследване разглежда съдържанието на обучението по словообразуване в рамките на бакалавърските и магистърските програми на катедра „Англицистика и американистика“ на СУ „Св. Климент Охридски“. Направена е равностметка на основните проблеми, произтичащи от недостатъчното преподавано съдържание по словообразуване и обзорния характер на избираемите дисциплини, включени в програмите. Обсъждат се основни области на асиметрия между словообразователните системи на английски и български език, включително фактори за това, и се предлагат някои ориентири, които би следвало да се заложат като задължителни в курсовете по словообразуване на университетско ниво.

Ключови думи: словообразуване; английски език; български език; университетски курс