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STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF NOUNS DENOTING NATURAL PHENOMENA WITH THE ROOT "SCHNEE" IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

Kodirova Shohsanam Bobokhon qizi
PhD Student at Urgench State University

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the structural and semantic features of compound nouns formed with the root "Schnee" (snow) in the German language. Focusing on their morphological composition, denotative and connotative meanings, and synonymic relationships, the study highlights how such nouns precisely describe various snow-related natural phenomena. The analysis includes determinative and possessive compounds such as Schneesturm, Schneefall, and Schneewinter, demonstrating the productivity and expressiveness of German word formation. Employing methods of morphological and semantic field analysis, the research also examines cultural associations and emotional overtones conveyed through these compounds. A tabular synthesis presents the structure, meaning, and pragmatic nuances of each term, revealing the interplay between linguistic form and cultural perception in environmental lexicon.

KEYWORDS: *German Language, Snow Lexicon, Compound Nouns, Denotation, Connotation, Morphology, Natural Phenomena, Semantic Field, Cultural Linguistics, Word Formation.*

INTRODUCTION

The German language is distinguished by its precision and expressiveness, which becomes especially evident when describing natural phenomena and analyzing the semantic relationships of lexemes that denote them. For example, the word *"der Winter"* offers an ideal lexical field for conducting an in-depth analysis of linguistic diversity and semantics. In this article, we explore the structure, features, and semantic characteristics of compound nouns related to the theme of snow, subjecting them to linguistic analysis. Snow is considered one of the key natural phenomena across many linguistic systems and plays a vital role as a lexeme. In German, nouns derived from the root *Schnee* (snow) form a productive lexical category. These are primarily determinative compounds, in which the first component specifies the second, providing a more precise definition of the type of snow phenomenon. For example: *Schneesturm* (snowstorm) or *Schneefall* (snowfall). Possessive compounds are less common, such as *Schneewinter* (snowy winter). Our analysis includes a thorough examination of the selected nouns' synonyms, antonyms (or opposites), as well as their denotative and connotative meanings.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE

The research is based on qualitative linguistic methods such as morphological analysis, semantic field theory, and connotation analysis. Data were collected from various sources including dictionaries, encyclopedias, specialized literature, and linguistic corpora. The semantic analysis takes into account both linguistic meaning and the cultural and subjective associations attached to each lexeme. Results are presented in tabular form and supplemented with detailed individual descriptions to provide a comprehensive picture.

DISCUSSION

In describing complex phenomena precisely, German frequently employs compounding, particularly when naming snow-related events. By combining two or more words, new compound terms are created that accurately represent the essence of the phenomenon in question. German linguist Hans Jürgen Heringer describes compounding as follows: *"In der Komposition werden mindestens zwei Lexeme zu einem komplexen Wort zusammengesetzt. Komposita können rekursiv aus wortgebildeten Lexemen gebildet werden: Biospriterzeugung, Biospriterzeugungsfabrik"*. (In composition, at least two lexemes are combined into a complex word. Compounds can be recursively formed from derived lexemes – author's translation) [4, p. 89]. For example, the terms *Schnee* and *Lawine* combine to form *Schneelawine* [5], which evokes the image of a large mass of snow sliding down a slope.

The selected nouns can be approximately categorized as follows:

1. **Schnee + Phenomenon**: *Schneelawine*, *Schneeschauer*, *Schneeregen*, *Schneefall*, *Schneesturm*, *Schneegestöber*, *Schneetreiben*
2. **Schnee + Result**: *Schneebruch*, *Schneeschmelze*, *Schneetau*
3. **Special Form**: *Büßerschnee*

These compounds allow for the precise description of the characteristics and nature of the respective snow phenomena. For instance, *Schneesturm* denotes a combination of heavy snow and strong wind, whereas *Schneeschauer* refers to a short, light snowfall [6]. In addition to structural analysis, semantic analysis plays a decisive role in understanding the range of

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meanings of these terms. **Denotation**, i.e., the core meaning, objectively and neutrally describes the snow phenomenon. **Connotation**, on the other hand, adds emotional, cultural, and subjective aspects that influence how the term is understood and perceived.

Let us examine a few examples:

Schneelawine

- *Denotative meaning*: A large, sliding mass of snow that crashes down slopes.
- *Connotative meaning*: Danger, natural force, destruction, unpredictability.

Schneefall

- *Denotative meaning*: The descent of snowflakes from clouds.
- *Connotative meaning*: Winter, tranquility, silence, cover, purity.

Schneeregen

- *Denotative meaning*: Precipitation consisting of both snow and rain.
- *Connotative meaning*: Transitional weather, slush, unpleasantness, indecisiveness. [Duden, 1542]

In the following section, the compound nouns *Schneelawine*, *Schneeschauer*, *Schneebruch*, *Schneeregen*, *Schneefall*, *Schneesturm*, *Bußerschnee*, *Schneegestöber*, *Schneetreiben*, *Schneeschmelze*, and *Schneetau* will be analyzed in detail using a tabular format.

	Nomen	**Struktur**	**Denotation**	**Konnotation**	**Synonyme**
	Schneelawine	Schnee +Lawine N+N	Große, abgleitende Schneemasse, die Hänge hinunterstürzt.	Gefahr, Zerstörung, Naturgewalt, Unberechenbarkeit, Winter, Gebirge, Bedrohung	Lawine
	Schneeschauer	Schnee + Schauer	Kurzer, leichter Schneefall von geringer Intensität.	Flüchtigkeit, Winterlichkeit, Unbeständigkeit, Kälte (mild), Unerwartetheit	Schneegestöber, leichter Schneefall
	Schneebruch	Schnee + Bruch N+N	Durch Schneelast-verursachte Schäden an Bäumen oder Ästen.	Zerstörung, Beschädigung, Naturgewalt, Winter, Last, Unglück, Beeinträchtigung der Natur	-
	Schneeregen	Schnee + Regen N+N	Niederschlag, der sowohl aus Schnee als auch aus Regen besteht.	Übergangswetter, Matsch, Kälte, Nässe, Unentschlossenheit, oft als unerwünscht empfunden.	Graupel, Schneematsch
	Schneefall	Schnee + Fall N+N	Der Vorgang, bei dem Schneeflocken aus Wolken zur Erde fallen.	Winter, Ruhe, Stille, Decke, Reinheit, Winterlandschaft, Besinnlichkeit, Verzauberung	Schneegestöber, Niederschlag
	Schneesturm	Schnee + Sturm N+N	Starker Schneefall in Kombination mit starkem Wind.	Gefahr, Unwetter, Kälte, Winter, Naturgewalt, Sichtbehinderung, Orientierungslosigkeit	Blizzard, Schneegestöber, Schneetreiben
	Büßerschnee	Büßer + Schnee N+N	Spezielle Schneeformationen in Hochgebirgen, die an kniende Menschen erinnern.	Hochgebirge, extreme Bedingungen, Kuriosität, Naturphänomen, Erhabenheit, Faszination, Unberührtheit der Natur	-
	Schneegestöber	Schnee + Gestöber	Leichter Schneefall, bei dem die Schneeflocken vom Wind umhergewirbelt werden.	Leichtigkeit, Winter, Kälte (mild), Unbeständigkeit, Schneeflockentanz, idyllische Winterlandschaft	Schneetreiben, Schneeschauer, leichter Schneefall

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	Schneetreiben	Schnee + Treiben	Starker Schneefall, bei dem der Schnee durch den Wind waagerecht getrieben wird.	Intensität, Winter, Kälte, Gefahr, Sichtbehinderung, Unaufhaltsamkeit, Naturgewalt, Verwehung	Schneegestöber, Schneesturm, Blizzard
	Schneeschmelze	Schnee + Schmelze	Der Prozess, bei dem Schnee in Wasser übergeht.	Übergang, Frühling, Erwärmung, Ende des Winters, Veränderung, Aufbruch, Befreiung von der Kälte, Vorfreude auf wärmere Tage	Schneetau, Tauwetter
	Schneetau	Schnee + Tau N+N	Wasser, das durch das Schmelzen von Schnee entsteht.	Feuchtigkeit, Übergang, Frühling, Erwärmung, Matsch, Vergänglichkeit, Nachlassen des Winters	SchneeschmelzeTauwasser

Usually, synonyms are categorized into complete (absolute) synonyms and incomplete (semantic) synonyms. In language, absolute synonyms are very rare [2, 97]. This is especially evident during the analysis of natural phenomena, as the concepts expressing these phenomena typically describe specific events or occurrences. The meaning that characterizes the denoted object is called the *denotative meaning*. Denotative meaning is also referred to as conceptual or descriptive meaning, and it represents the part of the meaning that is relevant for understanding or referencing the concept — that is, it covers the conceptual component of meaning. For this reason, denotative meaning may also indicate expressive meaning or expressive content.

In contrast, connotative meaning involves objective, social, or cultural associations that reflect the current standards and social conventions of a cultural community. A.A. Ufimtseva interprets semantic groups as lexical-semantic groupings or structures, considering the national and cultural identity of a given language [3, 138].

Let us examine a few nouns more closely: The word *die Schneelawine* (snow avalanche) encapsulates the destructive force of nature. This concept represents large masses of snow falling down mountainsides, sweeping everything along with them. The strong negative connotation stems from the fact that snow avalanches pose a real threat to human and animal life. Unlike the dangerous *Schneelawine*, *Schneeschauer* (snow shower) conveys a gentler, almost playful atmosphere. It signals the arrival of winter without expressing its full force. Its short duration and low intensity make it a fleeting event, typically occurring in milder weather conditions. *Schneebruch* (snow breakage) is a term mainly used in forestry and environmental protection. It describes the negative impact of winter on nature, particularly the damage to trees caused by the weight of snow.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined the productivity and diversity of word formation involving “Schnee”-based nouns that describe natural phenomena in the German language. Studying these compound nouns represents an intriguing area of linguistics, providing deeper insights into the structure and meaning of words related to natural events. Through the analysis of their structure, characteristics, and semantic properties — including synonyms, antonyms (or opposites), denotations, and connotations — we have achieved a broader understanding of the linguistic diversity and cultural significance of winter terminology.

Using the provided table and detailed lexical descriptions, we thoroughly analyzed the structural and semantic aspects of the lexeme “Schnee.” This in-depth analysis of compound nouns illustrates the linguistic precision of German in describing aspects of nature. Composition allows for the depiction of complex concepts that express both objective traits and subjective associations. Connotations play a key role in understanding the cultural and emotional significance of snow-related phenomena. The summary table above presents the analytical results clearly and allows for quick comparison of various terms.

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