



NOMINATIVE WORD COMBINATIONS IN ENGLISH: A SEMANTIC- STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *The article examines nominative word combinations in English from a semantic-structural perspective. Word combinations are considered fundamental syntactic units that serve a nominative function by naming objects, phenomena, and concepts. The study explores their structural organization, semantic properties, and functional roles in language. Special attention is given to the interaction between lexical meaning and grammatical structure. Examples from English illustrate the theoretical points. The research highlights the importance of nominative constructions in linguistic theory and practical communication.*

Keywords: *nominative function, word combination, semantic structure, syntax, English linguistics*

In modern linguistics, the study of word combinations occupies an important place within syntax and semantics. A word combination is defined as a group of two or more meaningful words connected by grammatical and semantic relations. Unlike sentences, which perform a communicative function, word combinations primarily perform a nominative function, that is, they name objects, actions, qualities, and relations in reality. The semantic-structural approach allows us to analyze how meaning is constructed through the interaction of components within a phrase. This article aims to explore the types, structure, and semantic features of nominative word combinations in English.



The concept of nominativity refers to the ability of language units to name and represent objects of reality. According to linguistic theory, nominative meaning reflects the relationship between language and the external world. Nominative units include:

- Words (e.g., book, teacher)

- Word combinations (e.g., interesting book, young teacher) The nominative function is closely related to human cognition, as language structures help conceptualize and categorize reality.

A word combination is: a syntactic unit, formed by two or more independent words and based on grammatical and semantic relations

Word combinations can be classified structurally as:

1. Simple (two-component):

- blue sky (Adj + N)

- read books (V + N)

2. Complex (multi-component):

- the beautiful old house

- a very interesting scientific article

3. Nominal (substantive) combinations:

- the student's answer

- a group of people

Nominal combinations are especially important because they express a complete concept without forming a sentence.

The semantic structure of a word combination includes: **Denotative Meaning:** the literal or primary meaning of a word or phrase. It refers directly to real-world objects, phenomena, or concepts without emotional or stylistic coloring. Example: The word rose denotes a type of flowering plant. **Connotative Meaning:** the secondary or associated meaning that carries emotional, cultural, or stylistic shades. It reflects how a word makes people feel or the associations it evokes beyond its literal sense. Example: The word rose connotes love, romance, or beauty. **Functional Meaning:** the meaning derived from how a word or phrase is used in a



specific context. It reflects its role in communication, grammar, or discourse. Example: In “She rose quickly,” the word rose functions as a verb meaning “stood up,” not as a noun referring to the flower.

Compositionality: meaning in word combinations is often compositional, meaning it is derived from the meanings of individual components. Examples:

- red apple = color + object
- fast train = quality + object

However, in some cases, the meaning is not fully predictable:

- black market → illegal trade (non-literal meaning)

The components of a word combination may have different semantic relations:

1. Attributive relations: a beautiful girl - adjective describes noun
2. Objective relations: read a book - verb acts on object
3. Adverbial relations: run quickly - adverb modifies verb

These relations reflect how meaning is organized within the structure.

Word combinations are divided into: Free Combinations: Word groups where each component retains its independent meaning, and the overall meaning is simply the sum of the parts. **Example:** *open the door* → "open" means to make accessible, "door" is a physical object. Together, the meaning is straightforward and literal. Stable (Phraseological) Combinations: Fixed expressions where the meaning cannot be deduced from the individual words. The phrase has an idiomatic, indivisible meaning. **Example:** *kick the bucket* → literally, the words suggest a physical action, but the phrase means "to die." The meaning is figurative and culturally established.

One important feature of nominative constructions is nominalization, where a sentence or action is transformed into a noun phrase. Example: Sentence: The pilot steered the ship. Nominative combination: the pilot's steering of the ship. The transformation removes predication but preserves naming function.

Type Example Explanation:

Attributive a bright future quality + noun



Objective make a decision action + object

Adverbial speak clearly manner of action

Complex a very talented young artist multi-layer structure

The semantic-structural analysis shows that nominative word combinations are:

- Essential building blocks of sentences
- Flexible in structure and meaning
- Closely connected to cognitive processes

They demonstrate how language encodes reality through structured naming systems.

Nominative word combinations in English represent a crucial link between vocabulary and syntax. Their semantic-structural properties reveal how meaning is constructed through grammatical organization. The study confirms that these combinations play a central role in communication by naming and categorizing elements of reality. Further research may explore cross-linguistic comparisons or cognitive aspects of nominative constructions.

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