

## A Morphological Analysis of Compound Words Exist in Kamala Harris's Democratic National Convention Speech 2024

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**Abstract:** Compounding is one of the word formation processes, it produces new meanings by combining two or more existing words. The resulting word is known as a compound word. The researcher conducted this research with Kamala Harris' speech at Democratic National Convention in 2024 as the source of data. The objective of this research is to find out the compounding processes of English compound words used in Kamala Harris's speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2024, using Bauer's theory. This research used qualitative descriptive method. The result of this research shows that the researcher found 51 data of compounding processes, which are contained in 3 types of compounding. These 3 types of compounding include 34 data from compound nouns, 12 data from compound adjectives, and 5 data from other form classes. In addition, this research did not identify any compounding processes for compound verbs, compound adverbs, rhyme-motivated compounds, or ablaut-motivated compounds.

**Keywords:** Compounding, Compound words, Bauer, Compound Noun

## INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the core aspects that helps us to communicate well with one another; it is essential for us to understand what language is at its core. Language is a structured system including the grammar and vocabulary that helps humans to communicate, it exists in spoken, signed, and some of it can be found in written form. American linguists, Bernard Bloch and George L. Trager (1942), defined language as an adaptable system of vocal symbols used to assemble within a social group. Having knowledge about language not only helps us to improve our communication skills, but also gives us an understanding for deeper linguistic interpretation, for instance one of the important branches in linguistics, which is morphology.

Morphology is the study of word formation or the internal structure of a word. It explores how new words are created, modified, and adapted in different contexts. As Rochelle Lieber (2009) stated in *Introducing Morphology*, "morphology is the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world, and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they're used in sentences" (p. 2). In morphology, there are many types of word formation processes. Those are coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronym, derivation, and various options.

One of the multiple ways that words can be formed is through compounding. Compounding is when two or more words are mixed together to form a new word. Aligning with that in 2003, Bauer expressed that practically all languages have compounds on it and, in most of the languages, compounds are the primary type of new lexeme. Thus, it is summed up that compound words can be invented in a variety of ways. Considering how

effectively compounding can contribute to everyday purposes, it is useful to see how compounds are applied in formal settings, such as political speeches.

This research intends to focus on *Kamala Harris' speech at Democratic National Convention in 2024* transcript and to examine how compound words are applied on it. The decision to choose a political speech, especially the one delivered by Kamala Harris, is based on the fact that one of the predominant forms of speech is a political speech. Adrian Beard (2000) stated when it comes to analyze the use of language in a political context, it is important to see how the language reflects the ideological position of who created it, and how the ideological position of the readers will influence their responses as well. Kamala Harris is considered as one of an important figures in American politics today, not only for her democratic values, but also for the way she uses her voice throughout the issues. Her typical political speeches are often written thoughtfully, where linguistic elements, including word formation, are strategically chosen.

There are several researches related to this topic. The first is a research conducted by Iskandar, Kustatinah, and Suwarti (2021). The research entitled *A Morphological Analysis of Compound Words Used in Business Column of The Jakarta Post Newspaper Published on January 2019*. The objectives of the research are to find out the compound words found in business column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper, to find out the processes of compound words found in business column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper, and the last one is to find out the types of compound words found in business column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper. Descriptive qualitative method is used in this research. The theory used in conducting this research is from Delahunty and Garvey. The results showed that there were 85 compound words in the business column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper published on January 2019; the compound words found in the business column of *The Jakarta Post* newspaper consisted of compound nouns, compound verbs, and compound adjectives. The processes involved 51 compound nouns (60%), 19 compound verbs (22,4%), 15 compound adjectives (17,6%). The researchers discovered 2 types of compound words, such as endocentric compound (52,9%) and exocentric compound (47,1%).

The second research was written by Akbar Repanji (2024). The research entitled *A Morphological Analysis of Compound Word in A Man Called Otto Movie*. The objectives of the research are to identify the types of compound words found in the main character utterances in the movie *A Man Called Otto* and to find out compound words that are frequently found in the main character utterances in the movie *A Man Called Otto*. Descriptive qualitative method was employed in this research. Delahunty's theory for semantic relation and Jimmi's theory for forming of compound word were used. The results showed six types of compound words exist, these included 51 compound nouns, 24 compound verbs, 11 compound adjectives, 9 compound adverbs, 11 other form classes, and 1 rhyme-motivated compounds.

The third previous research is from Asyifa Alfahira Balqis (2022). The title is *English Compound Words in the Novel Penny from Heaven* by Jennifer L. Holm. The objectives of this research mainly focused on finding the types of compound words in the novel *Penny from Heaven* by Jennifer L. Holm. The researcher used the theory delivered by Rowe and Levine, and implied a qualitative method as a research technique. This research stated there are 154 data that contained 3 types of compound words based on Rowe and Levine's theory. They are 80 closed-form compounds, 44 open-form compounds, and 30 hyphenated compounds.

In the term of linguistics Aronoff and Fudeman (2011) expressed that the meaning of morphology refers to the mental system implied in word formation or to the linguistics

branch that particularly deals with words, internal structure, and how it formed. Moreover, there's a more concise yet comprehensive description focusing on the roles of morphology, Jon Don (2014, p.24), proclaims “morphology is often seen as the study of word-formation and inflectional”. Word formation is one of the fundamental aspects of morphology. Jan Don (2014) declared that word formation deals with new words and its formation with different meanings from their bases.

George Yule (2010) expressed that word formation is the basic processes by which new words are created. Yule stated several basic processes, which are coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronyms, and derivation. In addition to these perspectives, Bauer (1983) identifies several types of word formation, such as compounding, neo-classical compounds, prefixation, suffixation, conversion, backformation, unpredictable formation (Clipping, Blends, Acronyms, Word manufacture, Mixed formations), and Avoidance of word-formation.

According to Francis Katamba (1994, p. 60), “compounding which combines two bases containing root morphemes to form a new lexical item”. Aligned with that, there is also a statement by Jan Don who gives more explanation by describing his idea about compounding. Don (2014) stated that compounding is known as a process where new lexemes are created by combining two free morphemes into one. To enhance the knowledge about compounding, in the terms of how it is produced, Bauer (1983, p. 84), expressed “in the case of compounding, lead to a string made up of two (or more) stems, and marked as forming a compound”.

To enhance the understanding of how compounding works, this research uses Bauer’s (1983) theory, which outlines the compounding process in terms of lexical categories, as the main theoretical framework. Bauer express that compound words can be formed through seven different compounding processes, which are:

1. Compound nouns

Bauer states that the vast majority of compounds in English are nouns. This is said to be even more true for items containing more than two elements, which are usually nonce formations, than for items containing only two elements. Compound nouns are divided into several subtypes, and each subtype has its own examples. The first subtype is noun + noun, which is the most common, such as hatchback and skinhead. The second subtype is verb + noun, with examples like cut-throat, kill-joy, pickpocket, and spoil-sport. The third subtype is noun + verb, such as nosebleed and sunshine. The fourth subtype is verb + verb, for example make-believe. The fifth subtype is adjective + noun, which can be seen in fast-food, hard-stuff, and new town. The sixth subtype is particle + noun, such as afterheat, in-crowd, and off-islander. The seventh subtype is adverb + noun, for example now generation. The eighth subtype is verb + particle, with newer examples like fallout, pray-in, and teach-in. The last subtype is phrase-based compounds, such as lady-in-waiting and son-in-law.

2. Compound verbs

Most compound verbs in English are not typically formed by simply combining two words into a new verb. Instead, they often arise through processes like back-formation or conversion from compound nouns. Even so, this section follows the same classification based on word class and includes notes on how the verbs are actually formed. That said, compound verbs are relatively rare overall. The classification consists of several subtypes. The noun + verb subtype has examples such as blockbust, carbon-date, colour-code, head-hunt, and sky-dive.

The verb + noun subtype can be seen in the example *shunpike*. The verb + verb subtype is shown in the example *trickle-irrigate*. The adjective + verb subtype has more recent examples like *double-book*, *fine-tune*, *free-associate*, and *soft-land*. The particle + verb subtype includes examples such as *outachieve*, *overachieve*, and *overbook*. Other groupings, like adjective + noun and noun + noun, are considered less typical.

### 3. Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives are formed in many different ways, though there is some debate over which constructions should actually be called compound adjectives. It is classified into several subcategories, including noun + adjective, as in *capital-intensive*, *card-carrying*, and *childproof*; verb + adjective, as in *fail-safe*; adjective + adjective, as in *double-helical*, *large-statured*, *open-ended*, and *ready-made*; adverb + adjective, as in *over-qualified* and *uptight*; noun + noun, as in *backstreet* (*abortionist*), *coffee-table* (*book*), and *glassteel* (*skyscraper*); verb + noun, as in *break-bulk* (*consignment*), *roll-neck* (*sweater*), and *turn-key* (*contract*); adjective + noun, as in *broad-brush* (*estimate*), *grey-collar* (*worker*), *red-brick* (*university*), and *solid-state* (*physics*); particle + noun, as in *before-tax* (*profits*) and *in-depth* (*study*); noun + verb, as in *hand-picked* and *heartbreaking*; verb + verb, as in *pass-fail* (*test*) and *stop-go* (*economics*); adjective/adverb + verb, as in *high-rise* (*tower*) and *quick-change* (*artiste*); and verb + particle, as in *see-through* (*blouse*), *tow-away* (*zone*), and *wrap-around* (*skirt*).

### 4. Compound adverbs

The most common way to form compound adverbs is by adding the suffix *-ly* to a compound adjective. However, other patterns also exist, as seen in terms like *double-quick*, *flat-out*, *flat-stick*, *off-hand*, and *overnight*. Some of these can also be used in different word classes. It's unclear how widely these formations are still being created.

### 5. Other form classes

Compounds from other word classes also exist, but they are rare and not very productive. Compound prepositions include words like *into*, *onto*, and *because of*. Compound pronouns are the *-self* forms, as well as words like *somebody*, *anyone*, and *so on*. Compound conjunctions include terms like *whenever*, *so that*, and even *and/or*.

### 6. Rhyme-motivated compounds

Most of this category consists of noun compounds formed by combining two nouns, but other types also exist, allowing for a distinct classification. In these compounds, the rhyme between the two elements (one of which may not even exist as an independent form in English) plays a key role in their formation. Established examples include *higgledy-piggledy*, *hobnob*, *hokey-pokey*, *hoity-toity*, *roly-poly*, and *teeny-weeny*. More recent examples (all nouns) are *brain-drain*, *culture-vulture*, *flower-power*, *gang-bang*, *nitty-gritty*, and *stun-gun*.

### 7. Ablaut-motivated compounds

Bauer has noted no recent examples, but he believes this process is still productive, although not as much as rhyme motivation. It may be most active in nonce formations. Established examples include *flip-flop*, *riff-raff*, *shilly-shally*, *tick-tock*, *wishy-washy*, and *zig-zag*. Looking at how compounding works concludes that language is flexible and creative. From compound nouns to verbs,

adjectives, and even the rarer forms like compound prepositions, it gives an insight that compounding plays a major role in the formation of new words.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used descriptive qualitative methods aimed at providing explanations and collecting data. DeMarrais, Roulston, and Copple (2024), in *Qualitative Research Design & Methods: An Introduction*, stated that qualitative research involved methods such as inquiry, close examination, and observation, rather than experimentation. . More recently, in 2023, Ayton expressed that the design of qualitative descriptive research emerged to describe studies that incorporate elements of various qualitative methods without fully aligning with any single one.

The source of data for this research was the transcript of *Kamala Harris' speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention*, accessed from PBS News and published in August 2024 by Kevin Wurm. The data specifically focused on compound words found in the transcript of *Kamala Harris' Democratic National Convention 2024 speech*.

The data collection process involved the following steps. The researcher accessed and downloaded the full transcript of *Kamala Harris' speech at Democratic National Convention in 2024* from the PBS News website, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and read it several times for a deeper understanding. The researcher examined the text to identify all compound words and highlighted them along with their context. The researcher compiled all identified compound words. The researcher rewrote the identified compound words to look into how the words were formed.

The data analysis was conducted through the following chronological steps. The researcher classified the compound words according to their formation processes. The researcher analyzed the compound words in the transcript of *Kamala Harris' 2024 Democratic National Convention speech* based on their grammatical structure. The researcher drew conclusions from the results of the analysis in relation to the research objectives.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As a result, the researcher identified data that supports the ongoing analysis. The researcher found 51 data of compound words. The data are classified based on the process of compounding according to Bauer's theory. Out of total, 34 data were compound nouns, 12 data were compound adjectives, and 5 data were classified under other form classes. The researcher found that compound nouns were used the most in *Kamala Harris' speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention*. Among the 7 processes of compounding, 3 were found in *Kamala Harris' speech at Democratic National Convention in 2024*, which include compound nouns, compound adjectives, and other form classes. The other 4 processes, which are compound verbs, compound adverbs, rhyme-motivated compounds, and ablaut-motivated compounds, were undiscovered in *Kamala Harris' speech at Democratic National Convention in 2024*. The representation of data can be seen below.

### 1. Compound Nouns

Compound noun is a word formed by combining two free morphemes, usually nouns and putting them together to create a new, specific meaning. 5 out of

37 identified data of compound nouns will be explained below, to show how it formed.

### **Datum 1**

#### **Sentence:**

My mother was 19 when she crossed the world alone, traveling from India to California, with an unshakeable dream to be the scientist who would cure **breast cancer**. (p. 1)

#### **Analysis:**

The word *breast cancer* is an English compounding. Breast cancer is formed from two words; that is breast and cancer. In the context given breast and cancer have the same word classes; that is a noun. Based on Cambridge online dictionary breast here refers to a part of a chest, specifically the front of the chest. According to the National Cancer Institute, the word 'Cancer' means a disease that grows in the body's cell uncontrollably and usually has an impact on other parts of the body. On top of that, the combination of the word 'breast' and 'cancer' develops the word 'breast cancer'. As stated by the World Health Organization the meaning of breast cancer is a disease that has an abnormal growth of breast cells and it forms tumours ("Breast Cancer").

Consequently, according to Bauer's explanation the formation process of compounding in the word "breast cancer" is noun + noun. Here, the noun 'breast' influences the meaning of 'cancer' by indicating the specific location of the disease, enhancing the overall meaning. This aligns with Bauer's (1983) perspective of common noun + common noun compounds, which is by far the most productive type of compound, and where a wide range of semantic relationships can hold between the elements.

### **Datum 2**

#### **Sentence:**

In the Bay, you either live in the hills or the **flatlands**. We lived in the flats. (p. 2)

#### **Analysis:**

*Flatlands* is an example of English compounding, derived from "flat" and "lands". Here, "flat" acts as an adjective, while "lands" is a noun. According to Oxford online dictionary, the adjective "flat" indicates a smooth surface without any curves or elevations. On the other hand, "lands" describes a part of earth that are not covered by water, as opposed to oceans or air. Therefore, the word "flat" and "lands" combine to create the new word "flatlands", which signifies areas of land that is uniformly level, lacking any hills or mountains.

The compounding process in the word "flatlands" use the adjective + noun pattern, where the adjective "flat" modifies the noun "lands". Bauer (1983) stated that what makes it a compound is the stress. Here when the word "Flatlands" is uttered, the main emphasis falls on the first part, which is "FLAT"lands. This specific stress pattern is how adjective + noun become compounds, differentiating them from simple noun phrases where the stress would typically be on the noun (lands).

### Datum 3

#### Sentence:

Every day in the **courtroom**, I stood proudly before a judge and said five words: “Kamala Harris, for the People.” (p. 4)

#### Analysis:

In English, *courtroom* is a compound word formed by combining the words “court” and “room”, both of which belong to the same word class; that is a noun. As stated in Cambridge online dictionary “court” denotes a judicial setting, and “room” describes enclosed space. Therefore, it creates a new word, “courtroom”, which referring to a specific space where legal proceedings take place. The word “courtroom” acts as a compound noun, following the noun + noun pattern.

According to the explanation by Bauer (1983), the word “courtroom” also considered as an example of endocentric compound, because it constitutes the majority of compounds in this class. This means that a "courtroom" is a type of "room," and "court" acts as the modifier that specifies what kind of room it is.

## 2. Compound Adjectives

Compound adjective is a single adjective formed from two or more words that work together to modify a noun. 5 out of 12 identified data of compound adjectives will be explained, to show how it formed.

### Datum 4

#### Sentence:

As Attorney General of California, I took on the Big Banks. Delivered \$20 billion for **middle-class** families who faced foreclosure. (p. 5)

#### Analysis:

Middle-*class* is an example of English compound words, specifically a compound adjective, formed by combining the word “middle” acts as an adjective and “class” serves as a noun. As stated by Hornby (2015), the word “middle” means the very center of something, or a time right between its start and end. While the word “class” in the context of society denotes “one of the groups of people in a society that are thought of as being at the same social or economic level” (Hornby, 2015, p. 262). Thus, these words combined and creates a new word “middle-class” that signifies “the social class whose members neither very rich nor very poor and that includes professional and business people: the upper/lower middle class” (Hornby, 2015, p. 950).

The compounding pattern of this word is adjective + noun. When forming compound adjective “this is perhaps the most productive set of those containing nouns” (Bauer, 1983, p. 211). As Bauer (1983) stated, one of a crucial note of this compound is, it often not compounds, unless it used attributively. This implies that while "middle class" as two separate words could simply be a noun phrase, and when the word combined and used before another noun, it clearly functions as a single compound adjective. The transition into a compound is typically marked by a change in its stress pattern. When the word "middle-class" serves as a compound adjective, the stress commonly falls on the first word, differentiating it from a noun phrase where stress might fall differently.

### Datum 5

#### Sentence:

And now, for an entirely different set of crimes, he was found guilty of fraud by a jury of **everyday** Americans. (p. 5)

#### Analysis:

*Everyday* is an English compound words, combining the word “every” and “day” with different word classes. “Every” act as an adjective, which Hornby (2015, p. 512), defined as “used with singular nouns to refer to all the members of a group of things or people”. On the other hand, the word “day” serves as a noun, described by Hornby (2015) as a time period, most typically 24 hours. Therefore, the words “every” and “day” combine to create the new word “everyday”, which Hornby (2015, p. 512), expressed as being “used or happening every day or regularly; ordinary”.

The compounding pattern of the word “everyday” is adjective + noun. As *stated* by Bauer (1983, p. 211), “The confusing point here is that most of these compounds are not compounds, unless they are used attributively, but noun phrases”. Thus, its status as a compound is determined by its attributive use (modifying a noun) and a distinct stress pattern. When "everyday" functions as a compound adjective, the main emphasis typically falls on the first syllable ('EV-ery-day), which sets it apart from the non-compound phrase "every day."

### Datum 6

#### Sentence:

A beautiful **working-class** neighbourhood of Firefighters, nurses, and construction workers, all who tended their lawns with pride. (p. 2)

#### Analysis:

*Working-class* is an example of English compounding, specifically a compound adjectives. It combines from the word “working,” which acts as a verb (more precisely, a present participle functioning verbally), and the word “class,” as a noun. According to Hornby (2015, p. 1733), “working” is expressed as “to do sth that involves physical or mental effort, especially as part of a job”, also Hornby (2015) expressed that "class" in a societal context means a group of people within society in the same line of position. Thus, the word “working” and “class” combine to create the new word “working-class”, which describes “the social class whose members do not have much money or power and are usually employed to do manual work (= physical work using their hands).” (Hornby, 2015, p. 1736).

According to Bauer’s explanation, the word “working-class” follows the verb + noun compounding pattern. As expressed by Bauer (1983, p. 226), “the forms in this group are more obviously adjectival, since some of them do not appear to be used nominally”. This means their primary function is to describe a noun, which "working-class" clearly does when refer to a "working-class neighbourhood". While one can speak of "the working class," treating "working class" as a compound noun phrase referring to the group, the combined form "working-class" is typically used directly before a noun as an adjective and less commonly functions as a standalone noun.

### 3. Other Form Classes

Other form classes is a process of compounding, where the compound words are not a nouns, verbs, adjectives, which are the most common types of compounding. 5 out of 5 identified data will be explained, to explore how it formed.

#### **Datum 7**

##### **Sentence:**

His explicit intent to jail journalists. Political opponents. **Anyone** he sees as the enemy. (p. 5)

##### **Analysis:**

The word “anyone” is considered as a part of English compound words. In the context given, the word “anyone” serves as a compound pronoun, which is formed by combining the word “any” that serves as a determiner which is usually used to point to something, or it can also acts as an adjective to describe a word. Meanwhile, the word “one” typically takes the place of a noun or simply acts like a noun itself. According to Bauer (1983), compounds outside the major categories (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) are rare and considered as extremely a low productivity. Thus, while such words exist, recently the English language doesn't frequently create new compounds in these categories anymore. Moreover, the word "Anyone" is explicitly listed by Bauer as an example of a compound pronoun.

#### **Datum 8**

##### **Sentence:**

This is what is happening in our country. **Because of** Donald Trump. And understand, ---he is not done. (p. 7)

##### **Analysis:**

In English, the phrase “because of” is considered a compound word, specifically a compound preposition. This aligns with Bauer’s (1983) classification that pointed out the common categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Bauer explicitly noted 'because of' as an example of a compound preposition. Compounds that belong to other form classes are marked as rarely used. This indicates that while "because of" is an established and functional part of the English language, this particular pattern for forming new prepositions is not actively used to create new words in modern English word formation.

#### **Datum 9**

##### **Sentence:**

It’s all laid out in “Project 2025.” Written by his closest advisors. And its sum total is to pull, our country back **into** the past. (p. 6)

##### **Analysis:**

The word 'into' is a compound word that falls under the category of other form classes, specifically a compound preposition. It indicates movement to the inside of something or a change of state. As stated by Bauer (1983), this formation has low productivity because these compounds do not fit into the primary word classes. Additionally, the word 'into' is included in Bauer’s explanation as an example of a compound preposition.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Through the research, the researcher found 51 data of compound words with its compounding processes consist in *Kamala Harris' 2024 Democratic National Convention 2024 speech*. The data consisted of 3 types of compounding, which are **34 data from compound nouns, 12 data from compound adjectives, and 5 data from other form classes**, as classified by Bauer's theory. However, there are **4 types of compounding, which are** compound verb, compound adverb, rhyme-motivated compound, and ablaut-motivated compound, unidentified in this research.

The most dominant type is compound nouns. Out of 34 data found, 27 data were formed through Noun+Noun, 4 data through Adjective+Noun, and 1 data formed with Verb+Noun. Additionally, there are 12 data of compound adjectives found. 4 data follow the pattern Adjective+Noun, 3 data were formed through Noun+Adjective, 2 data through Adverb+Adjective, 1 data formed Adjective+Adjective, 1 data formed with Verb+Noun, and 1 data through Particle+Noun. The least data found are other form classes. Out of 5 data, these include 3 compound pronouns and 2 compound prepositions.

From this research, the researcher suggests that future researchers consider examining other types of word formation processes, such as borrowing, coinage, blending, backformation, conversion, acronyms, and others, while using diverse subjects. Moreover, future researcher should consider expanding their focus beyond purely linguistic texts to include other forms of interaction such as novels, films, and news media, in order to discover additional types of compounding and help readers further enrich their knowledge.

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