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The Word Class Adjective in English Business Magazines Online

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to research the word class adjective in one sequence of the ESP: Business English, more precisely English business magazines online. It is an empirical study on the corpus taken from a variety of business magazines online. The empirical analysis allows a comprehensive insight into the word class adjective in this variety of Business English and makes its contribution to English syntax, semantics and word formation. The syntactic part analyses the adjective position in the sentence. The semantic part of the study identifies the most common adjectives that appear in English business magazines online. Most of the analysis is devoted to the word formation of the adjectives found in the corpus. The corpus is analysed in such a way that it enables its division into compounds, derivatives and conversions. The results obtained in this way will give a comprehensive picture of the word class adjective in this type of Business English and can act as a starting point for further research of the word class adjective.

Keywords: word class adjective, ESP, business magazines online, syntax, semantics, word formation

1 Introduction

The concepts and applications of modern linguistic practice are rooted in studying, establishing and defining boundaries between specific word classes, resting on the criteria applicable to all word classes among which the third largest comprising adjectives is of unquestionable importance. Adjectives in the English language form a very large, open class (Payne et. al., 2010, p. 29), and according to the Oxford English Dictionary's crude estimate they account for about 25% of the total number of words included in the dictionary. In COCA corpus they compose 17% of the most frequent words (Kartal, 2017, p. 5). The proportion, obviously, varies according to different sources, but it can be concluded that this is a very productive class with a large part of new lexemes due to constant language change, as well as contemporary communication needs

and challenges, especially present in the domain of global business. Adjectives belong to the category of 'feature words' (Zerkina et al., 2017, p. 5149), and are also referred to as 'describing words' as they describe, restrict, modify, qualify or point out the living being or lifeless thing designated by the noun or pronoun (Curme, 2011, p. 18). This can be supported by Marza saying that "adjectives are probably the most prototypical way to express the qualification of a noun" (2011, p. 100). This word class is comprehensively described by linguists, and it is quite demanding to find a concise definition of it without considering their morphological, syntactic and semantic characteristics.

In this paper we provide general information about the nature of word class adjective on the basis of an examination of examples of relevant usage, taking into account the frequency of the adjectives in the corpus of English business magazines online. We believe that this information will be of value to anyone teaching word formation across the curriculum with focus on the words specific to the business discipline, and that it may help increase Business English students' awareness of adjective usage in the register, as well as their vocabulary knowledge and the correct use of adjectives.

2 Theoretical framework

In modern linguistic practice and domain of linguistic expressions word classes or lexical categories, though seemingly an ordinary aspect of language, play a key role. However, taken both universally and specifically in the syntax, semantics and morphology of the English language itself, and due to morphosyntactic and semantic properties of words, boundaries between them are vague. Hence, differentiating them can be as difficult as defining words and determining their internal organization, relationships and constituent parts. As a direct consequence of language change over time contemporary word-formation processes represent important concepts as they create new lexemes which come into being in a language and enlarge the vocabulary (Tahaine, 2012, p. 1107).

Contemporary use of the English language in different sociolinguistic contexts evolves and changes constantly through emergence, usage and meaning of new words in today's contexts thereby contributing to its richness. The importance of vocabulary studying has been an area of key importance for linguists since language emergence, and is central to any language teaching and learning as it addresses all the words in a language which Lewis refers to as "the core or heart of language" (in TESOL, 1993, p. 2). Considering the fact that words are fundamental units each language consists of and which are needed for communication, their differentiation on the level of grammar or subdivision into sets of words or syntactic classes is of key importance to understanding the complexity of English vocabulary, and it results in syntactic categories (Plag,

2002, p. 9), word classes or traditionally called parts of speech with common morphological and syntactic properties (Dixon, 2005, p. 7).

The importance of word classes is of major linguistic interest, and according to Polinsky (2004, p. 1) their distinction has long attracted researchers of language. Additionally, they are also central to corpus linguistics. The classification depends on different criteria and its heterogeneity is based on unequal morphological, syntactic, semantic and phonetic properties of words i.e. criteria applied in the classification. Despite the fact that linguists often disagree on the overall number of such categories (Buljan and Gradečak-Erdeljić, 2013, p. 9), grammatical description of words adapted by most English dictionaries classifies them into 10 traditional categories (Rijkhof, 2007, p. 1). Despite the fact that the boundaries between them are not definitely fixed and can be determined differently, there are four major word classes in English that include four lexical categories – nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, or according to Dixon (2005, p. 8), who excludes adverbs, three major word classes.

The major grammatical feature of word classes and a distinction that can be drawn among them is their division into two broad supercategories which include membership to either closed class or open class type, whereby the four major word classes belong to the open word class. In the major word classes new lexemes arise for communicative reasons, and they are continually being increased or updated by new words which are either coined or borrowed from other languages. This is accomplished, according to Buljan and Gradečak-Erdeljić (2013, p. 19), by "combining morphemes to form new lexemes." Word formation, in particular, enables the openness and contributes to the flexibility and elasticity of the language system and the respective corpora making the open class words extremely large in number. According to Rajarajeswari and Mohana (2013, p. 6) new words are "called forth by a need for it or a consciousness that no existing word is really adequate to fill that need". To conclude with, introduction of numerous new words into a language and enlargement of the vocabulary is, among other things, a result of social, political and, nowadays especially, business developments, since a globalized marketplace and need for intercultural competences impose a constant demand for new lexemes to be created and used in order to describe new real world phenomena.

3 Adjectives as a word class

In any of the world's numerous languages, adjectives represent one of the four dominant word classes, each composed of thousands of members, and in English they compose the third most common type of open word classes after nouns and verbs (Leech in Kartal, 2017, p. 6). In other words, the estimated total number of words in English is more than a million, and *the Oxford English Dictionary* mentions 171,476 words in current use and around 9,500 derivative

words included as full entries or subentries respectively, one quarter of which are adjectives. The extent of grammatical differentiation between them, as well as the previously mentioned major classes, may show a considerable amount of variation, as Payne et. al. explain (2010, p. 29). So, the attempt to describe the nature of adjectives considers different criteria, and crucial for establishing them as a separate word class are their semantic, syntactic and morphological characteristics.

Despite having the same degree of importance as the other content words, adjectives have not been paid adequate attention. However, grammatically and semantically, they have the same degree of importance as the other content words in the linguistic code and their importance is unquestionable, especially in certain types of discourse (Marzá, 2011, p. 100; Tomuro, Kanzaki & Isahara, 2007, p. 1). Moreover, in terms of function, their prominent role in the English language is based on the fact that they are "responsible for classifying events or entities or describing their qualities" (ibid.), which is why they are referred to as 'describing words'. They, accordingly, answer the following questions in English: *Which one?*, *What kind (of)?*, *How many / much?* and *Whose?*, and denote a quality or property attributed to a noun, i.e. of the thing named, specify or narrow down what the noun refers to and specify it by creating description and detail. According to Marza (2011, p. 100), adjectives are the most frequently used and important tool for evaluating a sentence, which "can account for merely objective or more subjective features and as such they can reveal much of the speaker's/writer's attitude towards the textual content." They can express physical and other qualities, writer's opinion or attitude, origin, place, frequency, degree, necessity and degrees of certainty (Eastwood, 1994, p. 259) adding auxiliary information to the nouns and enabling therewith elaborate communication with attitude and character.

There is an extensive literature on adjectives, and according to Marza (2011, p. 100ff.) "the literature on adjective categorisation is vast and varied, since adjectives have been classified in a multiplicity of ways depending on the criteria adopted... based on morphological, functional, syntactic, pragmatic or semantic criteria or even based on a combination of some of these", and among which syntactic and semantic classification stand out. In terms of syntactic criteria, adjectival functions, and thereby their most common positions, are determined by the fact that they can be found in close proximity to nouns and essentially function as noun modifiers or rarely pronoun modifiers. Though in English there is a large overlap between the items in terms of their function, i.e. occurrence (Payne et. al., 2010, p. 30), their central features related to syntactic functions are threefold: the ability to function attributively, predicatively and postpositively (Greenbaum & Quirk, 1995, p. 129ff.). In attributive position, the adjective precedes or premodifies the noun composing together a noun phrase, whereas

in predicative position, it follows the noun as the complement of a copula verb, a referring verb, or a verb indicating a change of state, and functions as subject complement to noun phrases, finite clauses and nonfinite clauses, or as object complement. In their third position or postposition, adjectives in a noun phrase follow the noun or pronoun they modify immediately, and these adjectives can be regarded as reduced relative clauses. Finally, adjectives can function as a modifier of an indefinite pronoun following the pronoun.

Another important feature of adjectives is gradability – they can describe different amounts or degrees or qualities that can vary allowing comparison or grading. They, therefore, take comparative and superlative forms, either by means of inflections (-*er* for comparative and -*est* for superlative), or via quantification or addition of the premodifiers *more* and *most*. However, the adjectives that describe the qualities that do not vary can not be changed. Greenbaum and Quirk add the premodification by the intensifier *very* as one of adjectival features (ibid.). Also, adjectives do not take plural inflections or endings for gender, do not have verbal or nominal properties, and in rare contexts, they can be used as the noun.

In summary, in accordance with their basic features given above, adjectives can:

1. Premodify a noun, i.e. occur in attributive position: *a social survey, useful fact*
2. Follow the noun as the complement of a copula verb, i.e. occur in predicative position: *it sounds interesting, the information is useful*
3. Immediately follow the noun/pronoun they modify, i.e. occur in postpositive position: *the CEO responsible, something exciting*
4. Be graded: *busy – busier – the busiest, exciting – more exciting – the most exciting.*

In line with the above mentioned features, an elementary classification of adjectives is their distinction based on prototypicality whereby they can be 'central' or 'peripheral' (Quirk et al., 1972; Huddleston, 1984; Biber et al., 1999 in Marza, 2011). Central or prototypical ones have all the basic features, whereas the ones which do not and which can be either attributive or predicative are referred to as peripheral or non-central. Additionally, following mainly syntactic criteria, adjectives can be named using the terms *descriptive* and *limiting*. According to Curme (1965: 18) descriptive adjectives "express either the kind or condition or state of the living being or lifeless thing spoken of", and the author considers them to be so simple in nature that they do not form classes. They can furtherly be subdivided into two categories: *qualifying*, which express perceived qualities and *classifying*, which express permanent qualities of a noun.

As for the semantic categorization of adjectives, different authors taxonomize different classes (Lee, 1994; Hundsnurscher & Splett, 1982, ibid.). However, on the basis of their semantic features, the most representative taxonomy was given

by Dixon (2005, p. 84 ff.) who distinguishes 11 categories, which include: dimension, physical property, speed, age, colour, value, difficulty, volition, similarity, qualification and human propensity, the last two categories with a number of subtypes each. Despite the fact that other categorizations and functions of adjectives, or even their combinations, are also possible, the very notion that different authors rely on different criteria shows the diversity of possible approaches. However, we believe that no aspect is to be prioritized over the others, and a comprehensive approach to the word class would require the consideration of all the mentioned criteria.

Like other word classes adjectives can undergo word formation processes to create new lexicon, and apart from monomorphemic or simple adjectival lexemes (simplex adjectives), there are two basic types of word-formation in the English language and these include word-composition and word-derivation, or according to Cume (1965, p. 19):

- a) Compound adjectives
- b) Derivative adjectives.

Consequently, the vast majority of the vocabulary comprising the word class adjective is composed of compounds, derivatives or conversions. Considering the fact that word-composition is formation of new words by combining two or more stems which occur as free forms, compound adjectives (sometimes called compound modifiers or phrasal adjectives) are single adjectives containing two or more words operating together and modifying the same noun. As they are very often linked together with a hyphen or hyphens, they are sometimes referred to as hyphenated adjectives. Compounds are very common in English (Tahaineh, 2012, p. 1109), which can be supported by Cume (1965, p. 19) claiming that the modern adjectives in English have acquired a great facility to form compounds, and multiple words in different combinations contained in them function in a sentence as a separate lexical unit. The basic part of the compound (*determinatum*), which expresses a general meaning, is preceded by the determining one (*determinant*), which changes the modification by the basic part. According to the Longman grammar of spoken and written English (1999, p. 533f.), adjectival compounds can consist of:

1. Adverb + adjective: *politically-independent, critically-ill*
2. Adverb + *ed*-participle: *carefully-planned, well-organised*
3. Adverb + *ing*-participle: *constantly-changing, free-spending*
4. Reduplicative: *super-duper, easy-peasy*
5. Adjective + colour adjective: *dark-blue, grey-white*
6. Adjective + other adjective: *sectoral-zonal, infinite-dimensional*
7. Adjective + *ed*-participle: *ready-made, soft-textured*
8. Adjective + *ing*-participle: *biggest-selling, good-looking*

9. Noun + adjective: *iron-rich, life-long*
10. Noun + *ed*-participle: *poverty-stricken, US-oriented*
11. Noun + *ing*-participle: *confidence-boosting, law-abiding*
12. Adjective + noun: *big-name, large-scale*
13. Participle + adverbial particle: *boarded-up, paid-up*

As explained by Cume (1965, p. 19): "Similar to compound adjectives are derivative adjectives, i.e. adjectives formed by adding to a noun, an adjective, or a verbal stem a suffix, which in most cases was originally an independent word." Generally speaking, derivatives result from the most common word formation process called derivation or affixation, which is, according to Tahaineh (2012, p. 1108), achieved by means of a large number of small bits called affixes (prefixes and suffixes) which make a whole new word out of the word it attaches to, change the basic meaning of the word or the word class. Additionally, Urdogan (as cited in Dehham, 2016, p. 16) claims that "adjectival affixes are bound morphemes which, in contrast with free morphemes, cannot normally stand alone, but are typically attached to other forms."

The following affixes can be used to form adjectives:

1. Prefixes are morphemes added to the beginning of an adjective to form a new one, generally without altering the word class. However, the meaning changes, and the prefixes can express either negative or opposite meaning, or relations of time, place and manner: *a-, ab-, anti-, counter-, de-, dis-, hyper-, il-, im-, in-, inter-, ir-, micro-, mis-, mono-, neo-, non-, over-, pan-, post-, pre-, pro-, re-, sub-, self, trans-, un-, under-*. Distinction needs to be made between prefixes of typically English and foreign origin, mostly Latin (*de-, dis-, non-, post-, pre-, re-, sub- and trans-*) and Greek (*a-, anti-, auto-, hyper-, micro, mono-, neo- and pan-*). Some adjectives can have two forms but retain the same meaning (*non-scientific / unscientific*), whereas in some cases distinction must be made in meaning (*unused vs. misused*). Most adjectives formed with prefixes are written as one word, and sometimes a hyphen is used with prefix *non-*.

2. Suffixes are morphemes added at the end of an adjective, and some common ones in the English language include: *-able/-ible, -al/-ial/-tial, -ant/-ent, -ar/ary, -ate/-ete,-en, -esque, -ful, -ic/-ical, -ish, -ive/-ative, -less, -ly, -ous/-eous/-ious/, -ory, -some, -y*. Depending on the word class they are derived from and typical suffixes, derivative adjectives can be grouped into the following subcategories:

- a) Deverbal adjectives (V→A): *-able/-ible, -ent, -ive employable, respondent, communicative*
- b) Denominal adjectives (N→A): *-al, -less, -ful, -ous, -able, -ish, -y, -an, -ar: economical, ambiguous, German*
- c) Deadjectival adjectives (A→A): *-some, -ish, weakly, threesome, greenish*

In case where derivational morphological processing is not distinctly marked, i.e. when the lexeme is not linked with an affix, the so-called zero derivation or functional shift takes place, which is also referred to using a distinct term – conversion. Therewith, according to Quirk (in Hernández & Mendiluce Cabrera, 2005) the process is like deriving or transferring a word into another morphological category with a zero-affix creating a semantic dependence of one word upon another. This is a productive and easy way to create new words, in our case adjectives, by which the adjectival lexeme is converted to other open-form class. Especially common are de-adjectival verbs which for instance get the meaning of "to make (adjective)" like in *to black out*, *to open*, *to slow*. Another case is with 'partial conversion', i.e. conversions from noun to adjective and vice versa, which is considered rather controversial (ibid.), and it implies a process happening when "a word of one class appears in a function which is characteristic of another word class" (Quirk in Hernández & Mendiluce Cabrera, 2005). In most cases this is not to be understood as conversion but as an example of nominalization (*Chinese*), or adjectivization (*favorite*).

4 Method and hypotheses

This paper is the result of the scientific research in one segment of English applied linguistics. It represents a corpus-based approach and analyses the real language in the segment of English business magazines online. The cardinal importance of the corpus-based research lies in its ability to mirror the language phenomena in a completely objective way. The obtained results are in the case of corpus-based research scientifically proved and relevant, since they enable precise insights into the part of language in question. The corpus consists of the newspaper articles taken from the following business magazines online: *Entrepreneur*, *Forbes*, *Fortune* and *TheStreet*. The corpus containing 667 corpus findings builds a good foundation for the analysis of the word class adjective in this register of ESP. At the beginning of our research we formulated the following hypotheses:

1. There are more than 80% of attributive adjectives in the corpus when it comes to the syntactical position of the adjectives in corpus. We hypothesize this because there is a need in the register of Business English to describe processes and states.
2. Adjectives from the corpus tend to semantically belong to the Business English variety of ESP. We presuppose that the most frequent adjectives in this variety of ESP do not correspond to the most common ones in general English.
3. The most common derivational suffixes in the corpus of English business magazines online are: *-al*, *-ent*, *-ive*. We formulated this hypothesis according to the corpus findings from Longman grammar of spoken and written English

(1999, p. 531), which confirms the frequency of these suffixes in this order. We do not expect to get different frequency results in our research.

4. The frequency of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives is higher compared with the one in the register of academic writing. Although there is a high frequency of these forms in the mentioned corpus, we assume that the frequency of these forms in the corpus of English business magazines online is even higher due to the increased need to express gradation in Business English.

5 Research and discussion

A total of 410 sentences comprised the corpus containing 7.679 words, what makes 18.7 words a sentence. There are 667 adjectives in the corpus and 8.7% of the words in the corpus belong to the word class adjective. If we take into account the information in OED, which states that there are about 25% of adjectives in English vocabulary, the frequency of this word class in this register of ESP is much reduced.

The syntactical part of the analysis represents the analysis of the adjective position in the sentence. It showed the following results:

Tab. 1: Adjectives in the English business magazines online according to their position

Adjective position	Number of corpus findings	Percentage (%)
Attributive	559	83.8
Predicative	91	13.6
Postposed	17	2.6
Totally	667	100

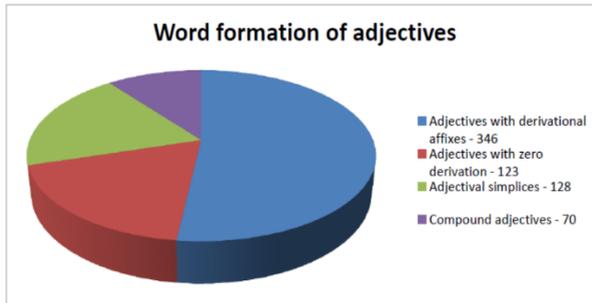
The obtained results confirm our first hypothesis in which we put forward that the number of attributively used adjectives make out more than 80% of the adjectives in the corpus.

According to the same source (OED) these are the most common English adjectives: *good, new, first, last, long, great, little, own, other, old, right, big, high, different, small, large, next, early, young, important, few, public, bad, same, able*. The following table shows the most frequent adjectives in the corpus of English business magazines online:

Tab.2: The most frequent adjectives in the English business magazines online

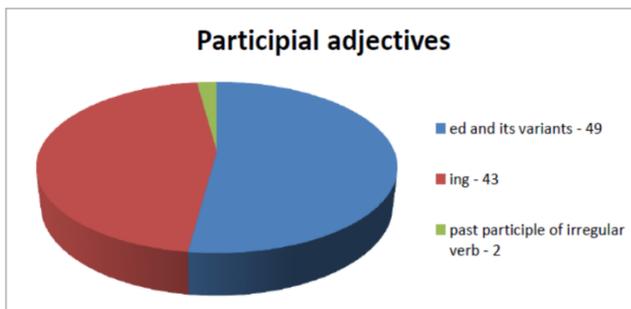
Adjective	Number of corpus findings
financial	18
new	12
same, small	9
Chinese, major, willing	8
average	7
high, large, next , retained, simple	6
easy, free, great, last, little , real, strong	5
best, competitive, former, hard, long-term, north, successful, total, wealth-building, worth	4
American, annual, big, domestic, extra, favourable, last, mutual, own, past, patient, stock-screening, wrong	3
branded, Buffett-based, exclusive, future, commercial, compound, difficult, emerging-markets, full-year, international, low, negative, past, personal, popular, positive, public, realistic, serious, short-term, solid, spending, 10-year, upscale, wealthy, winning	2

The above shown results confirm our second hypothesis that adjectives from the corpus tend to semantically belong to the Business English variety of ESP. In contrast to the allegations from OED there are only nine adjectives which are the same among the most common 25: *great, high, large, last, little, new, next, same, small*. The following among the most frequent adjectives can be semantically related to Business English variety of ESP: *annual, average, branded, Buffett-based, commercial, competitive, domestic, emerging-markets, financial, long-term, major, short-term, spending, stock-screening, 10-year, upscale, wealth-building, wealthy, worth*. The great majority of the most frequent adjectives are adjective simplices and adjectives with derivational suffixes. Apart from these frequent adjectives, there are many adjectives that occur in the corpus only once, but are strongly semantically related to the Business English variety of ESP: *compounding, economic, financing, fiscal, lending, lucrative, marketed, rental, taxable*. There are many compound adjectives strongly related to the Business English variety of ESP in the corpus, such as: *brand-damaging, Buffett-inspired, Buffett-like, Chinese-traded, debt-free, exchange-traded, high-scoring, lower-return, more-expensive, multi-billion, no-name, Peter Lynch-based, smaller-scale, state-chartered, two-income*.



Graph 1. Word formation of adjectives in English business magazines online

When it comes to word-formation-related patterns of the adjectives in the corpus, the results presented in Graph 1. show that the most frequent type of adjectives belongs to the adjectives with derivational affixes (51.8%), followed by adjectival simplices (19.2%), adjectives with zero derivation (18.4%) and compound adjectives (10.6%). The most common adjectives with derivational affixes are: *financial, Chinese, easy, competitive, successful, total, American, annual, domestic, favourable*. The most common adjective simplices are: *new, same, small, high, large, next, simple, free, great, last, little, real, strong*. The most common adjectives with zero derivation are: *willing, major, average, retained, north, own, spending, winning*. The most common compound adjectives in the corpus are: *long-term, wealth-building, stock-screening, Buffett-based, emerging-markets, full-year, short-term, 10-year*. Adjectives in the corpus with zero derivation are derived from the following word classes: nouns (25 adjectives), adverb (1 adjective) and the majority of such adjectives are derived from verbs and occur in the form of participial adjectives:



Graph 2. Participial adjectives in English business magazines online

g2

There are 94 participial adjectives in the analysed corpus. The most frequent are the past participle forms of the regular verbs, such as: *flavored, focused, inspired, retained* (52%). In the second place, there are 43 participial forms ending in *-ing*, such as: *looming, rising, spending, staggering* (46%). Finally, there are two past participles of irregular verbs with passive meaning: *driven, lost* (less than 2%).

Tab. 3: Frequency of derivational suffixes in English business magazines online

Adjectival suffix	Number of corpus findings
-al / -ial	72
-ive	27
-y	20
-able / -ible	17
-ent	14
-ic	11
-ical	10
-ous/-eous/-ious	10
-ful	6
-less	3
-ate	3
-ish	1

Other derivational suffixes were not found in the corpus. The above given results do not confirm our third hypothesis, in which it was proposed, that the most frequent derivational suffixes in the corpus of English business magazines online were: *-al, -ive, -ent*. According to the results obtained from the corpus, the English business magazines online do not use much prefixation in its word formation – there are only 11 corpus findings with prefixes *auto-, im-, in-, inter-, micro-, non-, un-*: *autoimmune, immediate, inevitable, intangible, international, microscopic, non-addictive, undying, unattainable, unexciting, unproven*.

There are 70 compound adjectives in the corpus. They can be divided into the following groups according to their composition:

It is important to point out that there are several compound-word patterns that do not occur in the corpus, such as reduplicatives (*teensy weensy, okey-dokey*), adjective + ing-participles (*good-looking, long-lasting*), participle + adverbial particles (*blown-out, left-over*).

Tab. 4: Compound adjectives according to their composition

Compound composition	Number of corpus findings	Examples
adverb + adjective	1	more-expensive
adverb + ed-participle (past participle)	2	well-advised, well-known
adverb + ing-participle	4	all-encompassing, hard-working, high-scoring
adjective + colour adjective	1	all-white
adjective + adjective	1	second-biggest
adjective + ed-participle (past participle)	2	newfound, tight-packed
noun + adjective	9	Buffett-like, debt-free, energy-efficient
noun + ed-participle (past participle)	10	Buffett-inspired, Chinese-traded, self-made
noun + ing-participle	11	award-winning, brand-damaging, wealth-building
adjective + noun	22	full-year, long-time, lower-return

There are seven multi-word adjectives in the corpus too: *all-in-one*, *build-on-request*, *lower-cost-of-living*, *once-red-hot*, *one-size-fits-all*, *subtle-yet-keen*, *up-and-coming*.

Tab. 5: Adjectives according to their grade of comparison

Grade of comparison	Number of corpus findings	Percentage (%)
Positive	619	92.8
Comparative	28	4.2
Superlative	20	3

The greatest number of adjectives in our corpus are in the positive degree. The following adjectives from the corpus appear in the comparative, i.e. the superlative degree: *better* (x2), *cheaper*, *earlier*, *more elongated*, *more-expensive*, *faster*, *hotter*, *larger* (x3), *later*, *lower* (x3), *lower-cost-of-living*, *lower-return*, *narrower*, *more powerful*, *more realistic*, *second-biggest*, *smaller* (x2), *smarter*, *stronger*, *trickier*, *weaker*, *younger*; *the best* (x2), *the biggest* (x6), *the greatest*, *the*

hardest, the largest (x2), the latest, the nearest, the most prominent, the simplest, the smallest, the youngest, the wealthiest, the worst. Our fourth hypothesis predicted that the frequency of comparative and superlative forms is higher than the one in the register of academic writing. Longman grammar of spoken and written English (1999, p. 524) quotes the following frequency of adjectives: comparative – 3200 corpus findings per million words (0.32%) and superlative – 800 corpus findings per million words (0.08%). Our corpus contains 28 comparatives on 7679 words (0.36%) and 20 superlatives (0.26%). It means that our fourth hypothesis proved to be true due to the considerable need to express gradation and mutual ratios between various categories in Business English.

6 Concluding remarks

This paper presents the results of detailed research of the word class adjective in English business magazines online. The empirical research was carried out on texts chosen from four business magazines online: *Entrepreneur*, *Forbes*, *Fortune* and *TheStreet*. There are 667 corpus findings, the number that enables a comprehensive linguistic analysis. At the beginning of the research we put forward four hypotheses:

1. There are more than 80% of attributive adjectives in the corpus when it comes to the syntactical position of the adjectives in the corpus. The hypothesis was confirmed with 83.8% of attributively used adjectives in the corpus.

2. Adjectives from the corpus tend to semantically belong to the Business English variety of ESP. This hypothesis was confirmed out of two reasons: Firstly, the most common adjectives from the corpus from English business magazines online only partly overlap with those from general English, as presented in the Oxford English Dictionary. Secondly, there are numerous semantically Business-English-related lexemes in the corpus, which additionally confirm the second hypothesis.

3. The most common derivational suffixes in the corpus of English business magazines online are: *-al*, *-ent*, *-ive*. This hypothesis was not confirmed. The most common derivational suffixes in English business magazines online are: *-al / -ial*, *-ive*, *-y*.

4. The frequency of comparative and superlative forms of adjectives is higher compared with the one in the register of academic writing. We put it forward since we believe there is a high frequency of these forms in the corpus of English business magazines online due to the strong need to express gradation and mutual ratios between various categories in Business English. The hypothesis was confirmed, as can be seen from the results shown below:

Tab. 6: Frequency of comparatives and superlatives in the corpora of academic writing and English business magazines online

Grade of comparison	Corpus of academic writing (occurrences per million words)	Percent	Corpus of English business magazine online (occurrences per million words)	Percent
Comparative	3200	0,32	3600	0,36
Superlative	800	0,08	2600	0,26

The results acquired indicate further possibilities of scientific research into various aspects of word class adjective in Business English, as well as the possibility of comparative analysis of the obtained results with other registers of ESP.

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