

THE DYNAMICS OF ENGLISH TERMINOLOGICAL COMPOUND LEXEMES AND THEIR SERBIAN EQUIVALENTS

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Abstract: This paper discusses the conceptual dynamicity of English compound lexemes and their Serbian equivalents as reflected in compound lexemes in traffic engineering. The morphological structure and semantics of compound lexemes are considered, as well as strategies for translating English metaphorical compound lexemes into Serbian. The analysis reveals that Serbian cannot cope with the dynamic nature of traffic engineering terminology in English, and that Anglicisms, synonyms of different polysemous terms and vague conceptual determinations are characteristic of Serbian terminological equivalents.

Keywords: English metaphorical compound lexemes, Serbian equivalents, traffic engineering, translation patterns and strategies

1. Introduction

Rapid developments in various professions and sciences are one of the key characteristics of the 21st century. Novel special terms are created to express new concepts. Scientific and technical writing tends to be precise and concise. Conciseness can be achieved by using compound lexemes. Sag et al. (2002), for instance, suggest the term multiword expressions. In the *Online Dictionary of Language Terminology (ODLT)*, compound nouns are determined as phrases regarded as nouns. English has the capacity for forming compounds, i.e., compound lexemes. They can be defined as lexemes which are felt to be single terms, though made up of two or more parts (see Jespersen 1942:134; Marchand 1969:11). Almost all parts of speech can be combined to compose a compound lexeme. Eckersley and Eckersley (1970:21) claim that the most frequent patterns in English compound nouns are NOUN + NOUN or GERUND + NOUN. The following compound lexemes, employed in different fields of traffic engineering, illustrate such combinations: *transmission link* (“prenosna veza”), *bullet train* (“brzi voz”), *petrol engine* (“benzinski motor”), *information centre* (“informacioni centar”), *traffic volume* (“intenzitet saobraćaja”), *trunk call* (“međumesni razgovor”), and *cycling-club* (“biciklistički klub”), *interlocking system* (“signalno-sigurnosni sistem”), *loading rates* (“utovarni kapacitet”), *reciprocating engine* (“klipni motor”), *advertising mail* (“reklamna pošta”), etc. A compound lexeme can be written as separate words, one word or a hyphenated word, as shown in *electric starter* (“elektro-pokretač”, “anlaser”), *hovercraft* (“lebdeće plovilo”) and *take-off* (“poletanje”). Compound lexemes may have a meaning that is different from the separate word meanings (e.g. *honey-combing* = “prazan skladišni prostor”), or a meaning that is the same as the sum of meanings of its components (e.g. *high-speed trains* = “vozovi velikih brzina”).

The aim of this paper is to show the conceptual dynamicity of English compound lexemes and their Serbian equivalents as reflected in compound lexemes in traffic engineering, to discuss their morphological structure and meanings, and to formulate strategies for translating English metaphorical compound lexemes into Serbian specialised terms. To achieve this, we analyse compound lexemes used in relevant British and American sources.

2. The Rationale and Corpus

This paper aims to examine morphological structure of compound lexemes as used in traffic engineering and to reveal their meanings in both English and Serbian. The second objective of this investigation is to develop strategies which may help us translate English compound lexemes into their Serbian equivalents as special terms more easily and more precisely. The study is intended as a potential contribution to the standardisation of metaphorical compound lexemes in Serbian.

The corpus is built from 170 compound lexemes that are in use in different fields of traffic engineering, such as telecommunications and postal traffic, air and road traffic, waterways and railways traffic engineering, and logistics (combined transport / intermodal transport). The compound lexemes considered here have been randomly chosen from authentic texts and the examples have been taken from three textbooks written by the author of this article (see References below), as well as from a dictionary contained in *English in Transport and Traffic Engineering* (Dimković-Telebaković 2009a:369-411).

3. Analysis, Results and Discussion

This study incorporates two phases. In the first phase, we examine the morphological structure and semantics of the compound lexemes under scrutiny, whereas in the second phase translation patterns characteristic of terminological compound lexemes are considered.

3.1. The Morphological Structure and Semantics of Compound Lexemes

This section opens with an analysis of some binominal compound lexemes used in traffic engineering and continues with the exploration of structures containing more than two components. To understand the meanings of compound lexemes, one may begin at the end (from the head word) and then work backwards (to the modifier word(s)). The following examples, taken from Dimković-Telebaković (2012:38), demonstrate this:

a foot brake = a brake which is operated by foot = nožna kočnica
a transmission link = a link used for transmission = veza koja se koristi za prenos,
prenosna veza
a satellite communication = communication via a satellite = komunikacija preko
satelita
a communication satellite = a satellite used for communication = satelit koji se
koristi za komunikaciju
a car battery = a battery for a car = akumulator za kola
a battery car = a car driven by batteries = kola koja pokreće akumulator
a gas turbine = a turbine which works by gas = turbina koju pokreće gas
turbine gas = gas found in or produced by a turbine = gas koji proizvodi turbina
a car radio = a radio for a car = radio za kola
a radio car = a car with a radio = kola s radijom

Based on these examples, one may conclude that English binominals, i.e., compound nouns N + N are morphologically transformed in Serbian into: ADJ + N (the head word), or N (the head word) + Relative Clause, or N (the head word) + PP. It is significant to point out here that the use of relative clauses in Serbian equivalents is a characteristic of Slavic languages. We introduce in this paper the term *descriptive semantisation* to denote that the meaning of a Serbian equivalent is expressed by a relative clause. Descriptive semantisation is typical of Serbian but not of English.

Table 1 shows that, apart from the above mentioned patterns, the English pattern of N + N may result in N, or in N + N, or in N + ADJ + N, or in ADJ + N + N, or in ADJ + N + PP in Serbian, as demonstrated in the following examples: *purchase order* → “narudžbenica”, *call transfer* → “preusmeravanje poziva”, *traffic density* → “gustina saobraćajnog toka”, *approach control* → “prilazna kontrola letenja”, and *conveyor belt* → “pokretna traka za prevoz materijala ili ljudi”. The ideal translation of an English compound lexeme is one word.

As to the English pattern of Gerund + N, it may have N, or N + PP, or N + N, or N + N + N, or N + N + PP, or ADJ + N structures in Serbian, as in *forwarding agent* → “špediter”, *running track* → “pruga za saobraćaj vozova”, *running seed* → “brzina kretanja”, *stalling speed* → “brzina gubitka uzgona”, *bleeping sound* → “zvuk obaveštenja o zelenom svetlu”, *reciprocating engine* → “klipni motor”, respectively. The pattern of N + Gerund in English results in N + N, or in N + PP, or in N + N + PP, or in ADJ + N, or in ADJ + ADJ + N in Serbian, as illustrated in Table 1. Table 1 also comprises combinations of ADJ + N, V + N, Particle + N, V + Particle, Particle + V, Particle + Gerund and Gerund + Particle in English and their corresponding Serbian patterns.

Examples in Table 1 show that English compound lexemes can contain nouns, gerunds, adjectives, verbs and particles as their constituents. Serbian equivalents, on the other hand, reveal that they are often made up of nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases and relative clauses, but do not contain verbs. Identical structures occur only with N + N and ADJ + N patterns. Table 1 also illustrates that nouns in English compound lexemes can be translated as adjectives in Serbian (e.g. *buffer coating* = “zaštitni sloj”), and that there are Anglicisms used in Serbian, such as “input” (*input*), “autput” (*output*), “overdrajv” (*overdrive*) and “daunlo(u)dovanje” (*downloading*). One can notice that, along with these Anglicisms, synonymous words such as “ulaz”, “izlaz”, “štedna brzina” and “preuzimanje podataka sa Interneta” also occur in Table 1, as well as the synonymous terms “pista” and “poletno-sletna staza - PSS” (*runway*), the polysemous words “prekid” and “ventil” (*cut-off*) and a Serbian term with vague meaning “komutacioni centar” (*switching centre*). They all cause terminological uncertainty and inaccuracy, and make the standardisation of Serbian terms under discussion difficult.

Table 1. English compound lexemes containing two components and their Serbian equivalents

ENGLISH COMPOUND LEXEMES		SERBIAN EQUIVALENTS	
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>
N + N	aircraft	N	letilica
	purchase order		Narudžbenica
	automobile show	N + N	izložba automobile
	call transfer		preusmeravanje poziva
	transmission losses	N + PP	gubici pri prenosu

	fuel tank		rezervoar za gorivo
	turbine gas	N + Relative Clause	gas koji proizvodi Turbina
	traffic density	N + ADJ + N	gustina saobraćajnog toka
	airliner	ADJ + N	linijski avion
	berth line		operativna obala
	approach control	ADJ + N + N	prilazna kontrola Letenja
	conveyor belt	ADJ + N + PP	pokretna traka za prevoz materijala ili ljudi
Gerund + N	forwarding agent	N	špediter
	steering wheel		volan
	running track	N + PP	pruga za saobraćaj Vozova
	running speed	N + N	brzina kretanja
	stalling speed	N + N + N	brzina gubitka uzgona
	bleeping sound	N + N + PP	zvuk obaveštenja o zelenom svetlu
	landing gear	ADJ + N	stajni trap
	leading edge		napadna ivica
	switching centre		komutacioni centar
N + Gerund	fuel savings	N + N	ušteta goriva
	weight saving	N + PP	ušteta u težini
	data broadcasting	N + N + PP	prenos podataka u digitalnom obliku
	buffer coating	ADJ + N	zaštitni sloj
	copper wiring		bakarni vodovi
	honey-combing	ADJ + ADJ + N	prazan skladišni Proctor
ADJ + N	residential street	N + PP	ulica sa stambenim zgradama
	cancelled flight	ADJ + N	otkazan let
	optical fibre		optičko vlakno
	automated storage		automatsko skladištenje
(AmE)	central office		telefonska centrala
	staggered crossing	ADJ + N + PP	pešački prelaz sa središnjim razdelnim ostrvom
V + N	breakwater	N	lukobran
	runway		pista, PSS
	tow-boat		Potiskivač
Particle + N	bypass	N	obilaznica
	down-link	N + PP	veza prema dole
	up-link		veza prema gore / ka satelitu
V + Particle	take-off	N	poletanje
	slow-down		smanjenje (brzine)
	dropoff		Smanjenje
	breakup		Prekid
	cut-off		prekid; ventil

	cut-out	ADJ + N	automatski prekidač
Particle + V	input	N	ulaz, input
	output		izlaz, output
	throughput		Pretovar
	overhaul	ADJ + N	generalna opravka
	overdrive		štedna brzina, overdrajv
Particle + Gerund	offloading	N	istovarivanje
	overtaking		Preticanje
	downloading	N + N + PP	preuzimanje podataka sa Interneta, daunlo(u)dovanje
	undercoating	N + PP + PP	premaz za zaštitu vozila od korozije
Gerund + Particle	taking off	N	poletanje
	taxiing up		Rulanje

If there are more than two components making up an English compound lexeme, such as N + N + N or N + GERUND + N, the corresponding Serbian equivalents may have the pattern of N (the head word) + PP, as shown in:

a freight transport system = a system for transporting freight = sistem za prevoz tereta
a material handling device = a device used for handling materials = uređaj za
rukovanje materijalom

The pattern of N + N + N in English may have ADJ + (ADJ) + N + N structure in Serbian, whereas English ADJ + N + N structure may remain the same in Serbian, as illustrated by examples below:

ground transmission system = kopneni (pružni) sistem prenosa
electronic data interchange = elektronska razmena podataka

Table 2 contains examples which demonstrate these patterns, as well as some other structures. Thus, the pattern of ADJ + N + N in English may also result in N + PP in Serbian, as in *widescreen monitor* = “monitor sa širokim ekranom”, or in N + ADJ + N (e.g. “elektronika visokih učestalosti”) or in ADJ + N (e.g. “mikrotalasna tehnika”), or in ADJ + ADJ + N (e.g. “laki šinski prevoz”). The pattern of N + N + N (e.g. *air humidity levels* = “nivoi vlažnosti vazduha”) has the same pattern in Serbian, or N + ADJ + N and N + ADJ + N + PP, as in “tehnika optičkih vlakana” and “skladištenje rasutog tereta po nivoima”. Table 2 also reveals that the English N + ADJ + N structure may become Serbian ADJ + N + PP pattern, or N + Gerund + N → N + N + PP or N + PP, or ADJ + Gerund + N → N + ADJ + N + N, or ADJ + N + Gerund → N + ADJ + N, or Number + ADJ + N and Number + N + N → N + Prep + Number + N, or Number + N + N → ADJ + N, and V + V + N → ADJ + N. In order to clarify the meaning of a compound lexeme, an element can be inserted into a Serbian equivalent. Such an example is “kopneni (pružni) sistem prenosa” or “skladištenje rasutog tereta po nivoima”. Although it is not often the case, we can come across identical morphological structures in the two languages, as in N + N + N, N + Prep + N and ADJ + N + N patterns. Examples such as “elektronika visokih učestalosti” and “mikrotalasna tehnika” illustrate the existence of synonymy in the language of telecommunications traffic.

Table 2. Three-element English compound lexemes and their equivalents in Serbian

ENGLISH COMPOUND LEXEMES		SERBIAN EQUIVALENTS	
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>
N + N + N	air humidity levels	N + N + N	nivoi vlažnosti vazduha
	fibre optics technology	N + ADJ + N	tehnika optičkih vlakana
	bulk floor storage	N + ADJ + N + PP	skladištenje rasutog tereta po nivoima
	cab display equipment	N + PP	pokazivač u kabini Mašinovođe
	ground transmission system	ADJ + (ADJ) + system	kopneni (pružni) prenos
N + ADJ + N	bucket continuous unloader	ADJ + N + PP	vedrični istovarivač neprekidnim dejstvom
N + Gerund + N	conveyor handling system	N + N + PP	sistem transportera za prenošenje robe
	data processing system	N + PP	sistem za obradu podataka
N + Prep + N	kilometres per hour	N + Prep + N	kilometara na čas
ADJ + Gerund + N	fast handling system	N + ADJ + N + N	sistem brzog rukovanja robom
ADJ + N + N	heavy volume traffic	N + PP	saobraćaj s velikim opterećenjem
	widescreen monitor		monitor sa širokim ekranom
	long-range flights		letovi s velikim doletom
	high-frequency electronics	N + ADJ + N	elektronika visokih učestalosti,
		ADJ + N	mikrotalasna tehnika
	deadweight tonnage	ADJ + N + N	puna nosivost broda
	electronic data interchange		elektronska razmena podataka
	electronic navigation aids	ADJ+ADJ+N	elektronska navigaciona Sredstva
	light rail transit		laki šinski prevoz
ADJ + N + Gerund	local loop unbundling	N + ADJ + N	rasnopljavanje bakarnih petlji
Number + ADJ + N	four-engined aircraft	N + Prep + Number + N	avion s četiri motora
Number + N + N	two-engine airplane		avion s dva motora
Number + N + N	two-way traffic	ADJ + N	dvosmerni saobraćaj
V + V + N	would-be aviator	ADJ + N	budući avijatičar

Table 3 presents more complex compound structures. Patterns with numbers in English usually contain PP in Serbian, as shown in Number + N + N + N + N and Number + N + N + ADJ + ADJ + N structures, as well as in Number + Number + N + N + ADJ + N pattern. Examples given in Table 3 confirm that English compound lexemes can take nouns, adjectives,

gerunds, numbers, particles and prepositions. Table 3 also illustrates that English compound lexemes, having four and more elements, do not have identical morphological structures in the two languages, and that the synonymous terms “ravni vagon” and “plato-vagon”, as well as “redundovanje/dupliranje pojedinih sistema” are used in Serbian.

Table 3. English compound lexemes containing four and more components and their Serbian equivalents

ENGLISH COMPOUND LEXEMES		SERBIAN EQUIVALENTS	
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>
N+ADJ+N+N	fibre optic transmission systems	N+N+ADJ+N	sistemi prenosa optičkim vlaknima
ADJ+N+N+N	high-rack storage system	ADJ+ADJ+N	visokoregalni skladišni System
ADJ+N+Gerund +N	conveyorised barge loading system	N+PP	potisnica sa sopstvenim utovarnim sistemom
ADJ+ADJ+N+N	covered dry cargo barge	ADJ+N+PP	pokrivena potisnica za suvi rasuti teret
Number+N+ADJ + N	one-way circular intersection	ADJ+ADJ+N	jednosmerna kružna Raskrsnica
Gerund+Particle+ ADJ+N	doubling-up partial systems	N+ADJ+N	redundovanje/dupliranje pojedinih sistema
N+N+ADJ+N+N	railroad flat bed car	ADJ+N	ravni vagon, plato-vagon
ADJ+ADJ+N	streamlined low-drag vehicle	ADJ+N +PP +N	aerodinamično vozilo s malim čeonim otporom
ADJ+Number +N +N	four three-ton lorries	Number+N+N	četiri kamiona trotonca
Number+N+N +N+N	thousand horse-power unit power	ADJ+N+PP	pogonska jedinica od hiljadu konjskih snaga
Number+N+N +ADJ+ADJ+N	160 km/h maximum average speed	ADJ+ADJ+N +PP	maksimalna prosečna brzina od 160 km na čas
ADJ+N+N+N +N	peak-hour city traffic congestion	N+PP+PP	zакrčenost u gradskom saobraćaju u vršno vreme
Number+Number +N+N+ADJ+N	two 60-passenger fire-resistant lifeboats	Number+N+ PP+ADJ+PP +N+PP	dva čamca za spasavanje otporna na vatru kapaciteta po 60 putnika
Prep+N+Number +N+N	cross-country thousand mile motorways	N+N+Prep+ +Number+ N+Rel. Clause	mreža autoputeva od 1000 milja koja povezuje različite delove zemlje

The English phrase compound lexemes presented in Table 4 contain verbs and conjunctions, apart from nouns, prepositions and adjectives, whereas their Serbian equivalents are not made up of verbs and conjunctions, but contain PPs. Serbian equivalents can have elements which are not part of English compound lexemes, as shown by “ustupanje prvenstva na ulazu u raskrsnicu” and “preslušavanje između dva vlakna”, where “prvenstvo” and “dva” are such components.

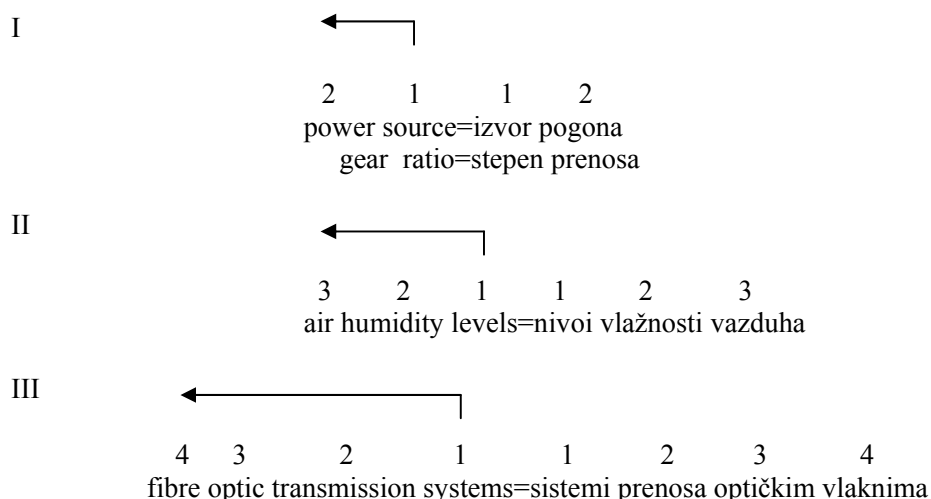
Table 4. English phrase compound lexemes and their corresponding forms in Serbian

ENGLISH PHRASE COMPOUND LEXEMES		SERBIAN EQUIVALENTS	
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Structure</i>	<i>Examples</i>
N+Prep+N	yield-at-entry	N+N+PP+PP	ustupanje prvenstva na ulazu u raskrsnicu

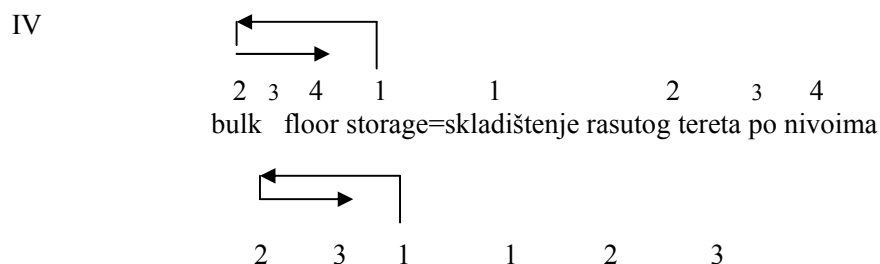
N+Prep+N+N	door-to-door service	N+Prep+N+Prep+N	usluga od vrata do vrata
	point-to-point rates	N+N+PP	cena karata za kretanje s usputnim stajanjem
N+Prep+N+Prep+N	fibre-to-fibre cross talk	N+Prep+Number+N	preslušavanje između dva vlakna
ADJ+N+Prep+N	mean-time-to-repair	ADJ+N+N	srednje vreme opravke
V + Conj + V	cut and fill	N	zasek

3.2. Some Strategies for Translating Specialised Terms and Possible Translation Patterns

The aim of the second phase of this analysis was to set translation patterns and strategies for translating specific terms in the field of traffic engineering. (Some of the examples below are from Dimković-Telebaković 2009b). Taking into consideration the meanings of compound lexemes, we have established the following patterns:

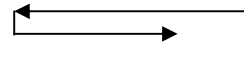


The examples in I, II and III show that the components of compound lexemes are mirrored in the two languages. We start at the end and then work backwards. In other words, 21 → 12, 321 → 123, 4321 → 1234.



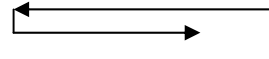
shipping line colours=amblem brodske kompanije

V



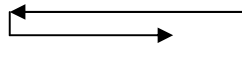
2 3 4 5 1 1 2 3 4 5
floor-to-ceiling height = visina od poda do tavanice

VI



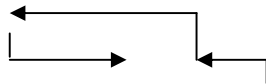
2 3 o(mitted) 4 1 1 2 3 o 4
Low-Earth-Orbit Satellite=satelit s malim orbitama

VII



2 3 4 5 6 1 1 2 3 4 5 6
250-to-350 seat airliner=avion linijske plovodbe sa 250 do 350 sedišta

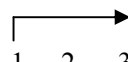
VIII



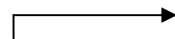
3 4 5 6 7 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17 t axle weight limits=ograničenja težine od 17 tona po osovini

In Serbian, patterns IV, V, VI, VII and VIII have inserted elements, prepositions, and pattern VI contains an omitted component, a noun. To create Serbian equivalents, we begin at the end of the English compound lexemes, work backwards and move on to the last element. Therefore, we obtain the following patterning: 2341 → 1234, 231 → 123, 23451 → 12345, 23o41 → 123o4, 234561 → 123456, and 3456721 → 1234567.

IX

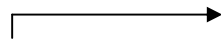


1 2 3 1 2
two-way traffic=dvosmerni saobraćaj



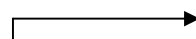
1 2 1 2
semiconductor technology=poluprovodnička tehnika

X



1 2 3 1 2 3
transverse propulsion unit=poprečna pogonska jedinica

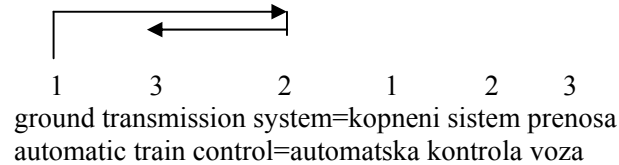
XI



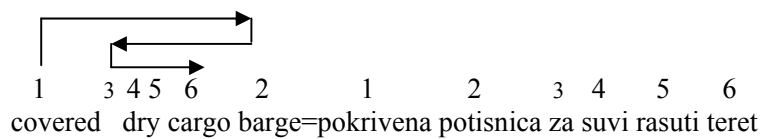
1 2 3 1 2 3
high-rack storage system=visokoregalni skladišni sistem

Patterns IX, X and XI keep the same order of compound components, starting from the fore end of compound lexemes, which can be represented as 123 → 12, 12 → 12, 123 → 123, and 123 → 123.

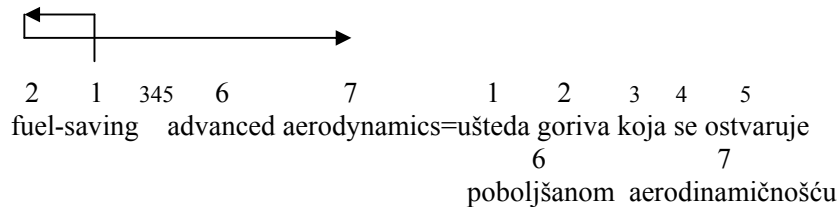
XII



XIII

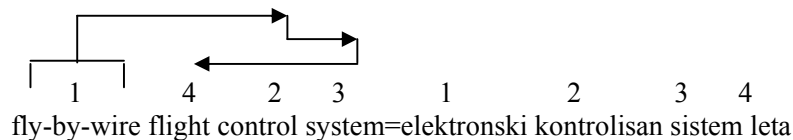


XIV

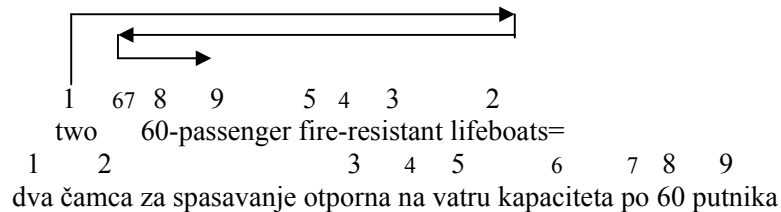


Patterns XIII and XIV in English do not contain all the elements which occur in Serbian with 13452 → 123456 and 2134567 → 1234567 patterns. XII has 132 → 123 pattern.

XV



XVI



XVII



The English patterns XV, XVI and XVII are even more complicated. XV consists of 1423 patterns, and XVI and XVII have 167895432 and 45123 patterns, respectively. Their Serbian translation patterns show that certain elements are added, such as “na” and “kapacitet po” in XVI, and “za” in XVII. It is essential to point out that the patterns are set based on compound lexeme meanings.

4. Conclusion

This paper points to the fact that a great number of special terms are constantly being invented in the 21st century. To meet the requirements of language economy, specialised terms should be precise and concise. Precise terms express the exact meaning of concepts, and conciseness is achieved in the best way if one concept is represented by one word. One of the characteristics of English is the formation of compound lexemes. They have the capacity for conveying meanings precisely and concisely. To reveal the meanings of 170 compound lexemes employed in traffic engineering fields, we analysed their morphological structure in both English and Serbian. Phrase compound lexemes are found to be typical of English.

The results of this study show that the two languages do not share the same morphological patterns in most cases. English binominals are, for instance, morphologically represented in Serbian equivalents in the following way: the head word is followed by a genitive or a prepositional phrase, or a relative clause, or it is preceded by an adjective. Compositional differences between the two languages and the conceptual dynamicity of English compound lexemes cause the occurrence of descriptive semantisation, terminological synonymy, as well as vague terms in Serbian.

In order to establish strategies for translating English compound lexemes into Serbian equivalents, we looked at English compound lexemes made up of two and more than two elements in particular. It has been shown that one may start at the end of a compound lexeme and then work backwards, or may begin at the end, work backwards and then towards the end of a compound lexeme, or may start from the beginning of a compound lexeme and work forwards, or begin from the fore end of a compound lexeme, move forward, and then work towards the beginning of a compound lexeme. The examples in XIV and XVII illustrate that it is possible to start from the second element in an English compound lexeme and work either to the left or to the right to create the corresponding Serbian translations. The patterns established also demonstrate that some Serbian equivalents have elements (mostly prepositions) that do not appear in the corresponding English compound lexemes (normally nouns), or that sometimes elements contained in English compound lexemes are omitted in Serbian. The analysis concludes that, when translating specialised compound lexemes, one should take into consideration their meanings as the most prominent feature.

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