

NOMINAL COMPOUNDS IN ENGLISH AND ALBANIAN: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *Compounding is an immensely productive word-formation process in both English and Albanian, and nominal compounds constitute the largest group of compounds in these two languages. This study examines some of the key features of nominal compounds in English and Albanian, such as the structure/types, spelling, meaning, pronunciation, and their plural forms, by applying a contrastive analysis approach, with the aim of emphasizing the differences and similarities between them. Research findings indicate that English and Albanian nominal compounds display certain differences with regard to their structure/types, with English showing a greater degree of flexibility in the types of combinations it allows, as compared to Albanian. Additionally, English nominal compounds allow combinations without a noun as a constituent element, while in Albanian nominal compounds, the presence of a noun as a constituent element is imperative. English and Albanian nominal compounds also display fundamental differences with regard to spelling and pronunciation. Similarities, on the other hand, concern, to some extent, their structure, as noun + noun combination is the most productive type in both languages, and the way they form their plural forms, because Albanian allows only the addition of appropriate plural endings to the second element of the compound, while English allows several alternatives. English and Albanian nominal compounds show significant similarities with regard to meaning, as there are endocentric, exocentric as well as copulative compounds in both languages. In Albanian, unlike English, acronyms and blends are also labeled as nominal compounds.*

Keywords: *nominal compounds; English; Albanian; differences; similarities;*

1. Introduction

Compounding is a highly productive word-formation process in both English and Albanian. Furthermore, according to Plag (169), compounding is the most productive word-formation process in the English language. It is generally defined as a process that involves the combination of two or more free morphemes that results in compounds (Mullany, Stockwell 7). Booij (93) argues that semantic transparency and versatility make it a very frequently used word-formation process in many languages. Nevertheless, compounds are not always semantically transparent, they may also be semantically opaque (Brinton 93), because English comprises a variety of structures treated as compounds, and there are disagreements concerning the delimitation of this class (Aarts 60). Conversely, Albanian nominal compounds, with very few exceptions, are semantically transparent.

In English, compounds are found in all word classes (Greenbaum 461), however, there are five main types, namely nominal, verbal, adjectival, prepositional and adverbial compounds (Aarts 61-65), whereas in Albanian, compounding can be used to form nouns, adjectives and a very limited number of verbs and adverbs (Jashari, Çitaku 22), thus, there are four types of compounds, namely nominal, adjectival, verbal, and adverbial compounds. Other parts of speech cannot be created via this process (Merkuri 52).

As nouns constitute the largest word class in most languages, including English and Albanian, and compounding is a tremendously productive process in forming new nouns in the respective languages, this study focuses on nominal compounds, the largest group of words formed through this process. The contrastive analysis approach is employed to examine some of the main features of nominal compounds in both English and Albanian, such as their structure/types, orthography, meaning, pronunciation and their plural forms, with the aim of highlighting the differences and similarities between this type of compounds in the respective languages. Therefore, two subsequent sections provide information on nominal compounds in English and Albanian separately, emphasizing their key features, and they are followed by the final section that elaborates on this type of compounds in the abovementioned languages by applying the contrastive analysis approach. *Oxford English Dictionary* (2025) and *Merriam Webster Dictionary* (2025), two of the most prestigious dictionaries of the English language, referring to British and American English respectively, as well as *Fjalor i Gjuhës Shqipe* (2006) (Dictionary of Albanian Language) are used to present the updated versions of nominal compounds in these two languages.

2. English nominal compounds

English nominal compounds are usually defined as combinations of two nouns or a noun and an adjective that function as single units. This is because the majority of English nominal compounds are formed in this manner. However, considering the propensity of English to create new words and the increasing number of nominal compounds, combinations of nouns with other parts of speech are also possible and very productive. In such combinations, the first element indicates the kind of person or thing, or the purpose they serve, whereas the second element usually defines the person or thing, telling us who or what it is (Herring 47). For example, the nominal compound *dining room* refers to a room used for dining.

Although the two-word combinations dominate the structure of English nominal compounds, there are a few nominal compounds that consist of only one letter of the alphabet and a noun, such as *U-turn* or *X-ray* (Kirkpatrick 87). A special group of nominal compounds are also those that consist of more than two nouns, used mainly in newspaper headlines (Parrot

15). Such structures, in which one noun is modified by other nouns in the combination, are used with the purpose of saving space in newspapers (Swan, Walter 197), e.g. *tennis table tournament*, *oil production cost*, *London tax increase shock*, etc.

2.1. The structure of nominal compounds

English nominal compounds can be formed through various combinations of nouns with other parts of speech. The most commonly used combinations include:

noun + noun - *newspaper, airplane, bookshelf, college library, town hall, package holiday*

adjective + noun - *software, highway, greenhouse, bluebird, fast food, small talk, common law*

verb + noun - *playground, flashlight, leapfrog, spoil-sport, passbook, paycheck, washroom,*

noun + verb - *sunrise, handshake, earthquake, bloodshed, waterfall, roleplay, haircut*

noun + gerund - *handwriting, sleepwalking, bookkeeping, copy-editing, data processing*

gerund + noun - *knitting needle, frying pan, fishing boat, swimming pool, waiting list*

poss. noun + noun - *bachelor's degree, bird's nest, child's play, lady's maid, housemaid's knee*

noun + prep. phrase - *sister-in-law, editor-in-chief, jack-in-the box, man-of-war, lady-in-waiting*

adverb/proposition + noun - *afterthought, bypass, influx, offspring, overcoat, underground*

verb + adverb/preposition - *fallout, leftover, makeup, takeout, grown-up, check-in, check-out*

adverb/preposition + verb - *input, output, intake, outburst, outlet, undercut, uproar*

Herring (49-50) also includes the following combinations:

noun + preposition - *passerby, hanger-on, listener-in, runner-up*

adjective + verb - *public speaking, dry cleaning*

This last combination is actually an adjective + gerund combination, otherwise the result of combinations would not be nominal compounds. However, they are not as productive as the other types.

Radford et al. (149) argue that verbs rarely participate in combinations that form compounds, and that certain examples are exceptions to this rule, but the examples above demonstrate the opposite.

Another interesting combination includes a letter + a noun, such as *T-shirt, V-chip, X-ray, U-turn*, etc. These nominal compounds challenge the

common structure of compounds because they do not comprise at least two bases. Nevertheless, nominal compounds of this type are continually being incorporated into the English vocabulary, and the tremendous advancement of technology has certainly contributed to this occurrence.

2.2. The spelling of nominal compounds

English nominal compounds may be spelled as:

- a) a single word - *headline, mastermind, smartphone, textbook, paperback*
- b) a hyphenated word - *well-being, sister-in-law, editor-in-chief, runner-up*
- c) two words - *common sense, search engine, high school, dining room*

Nominal compounds that are written as one word are referred to as closed compounds, those written with a hyphen are classified as hyphenated compounds, while compounds written as two words are called open compounds. There are a few nominal compounds that may be classified into any of the abovementioned groups because they may be written in three different forms, for example: *ice cream / ice-cream / ice cream* (Brinton, L., Brinton, D. 103). There are no grammar rules that would help English speakers avoid mistakes in writing compounds, and this poses a great challenge especially for non-native speakers of the language. Therefore, in cases of uncertainty concerning spelling, the most reliable approach is to consult a dictionary.

However, dictionaries can sometimes deepen the confusion because there are nominal compounds that are presented in two different forms in two different dictionaries. The reason is rather straightforward: it is attributed to the variety of English used. Therefore, closed compounds are preferred in American English, while hyphenated compounds are preferred in British English. Furthermore, the length of time a certain compound has been in the language may also influence its spelling, hence the nominal compound *policeman* has been in use much longer than the rather new nominal compound *police officer* that is currently spelled as two separate words, but it may eventually become a closed nominal compound (Meyer 179).

The following examples indicate some nominal compounds that are presented as hyphenated compounds in Oxford English Dictionary, which is a dictionary of British English, but the same ones are presented as closed or open compounds in Merriam Webster Dictionary, a dictionary of American English:

spoil-sport, make-up, pay-off, hand-out, weight-lifting, washing-machine, diving-board (Oxford English Dictionary)

spoilsport, makeup, payoff, handout, weight lifting, washing machine, diving board (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

There is a growing tendency among native English speakers to avoid hyphenated and open compounds where possible and use closed compounds

instead. However, closed compounds should be avoided if they affect the meaning, or make their recognition challenging, whereas in other cases, this should be a matter of the writer's choice. (Alexander 48). In general, short frequently used nominal compounds in a noun + noun combination that used to be hyphenated are now usually written as single words, whereas other combinations are typically acceptable when written as two separate words (Swan 200).

2.3. The meaning of nominal compounds

The meaning of English nominal compounds does not always derive from the meaning of their constituent elements. Therefore, knowing the meaning of the words that formed them does not automatically imply that we know the meaning of nominal compounds, because it is often unpredictable (Brinton L., Brinton D. 104).

The following nominal compounds are typical examples of compounds whose meaning is impossible to predict from the meaning of their constituent elements:

hothouse - a heated building made of glass where plants that require special conditions are grown, and not just any hot house

hot dog - a grilled sausage sandwich, a very popular kind of food in the USA, and not a type of dog

bigmouth / *big mouth* - a talkative, conceited, and gossipy person, and not a person with a big mouth, or a type of mouth

redneck (mainly American) - a working-class white person from rural areas, and not a person with a red neck, or a type of neck

highbrow - a person who pretends to be of superior culture or learning, and not a person with high brows, or a type of brows

bigwig - an important person, and not a person with a big wig, or a type of wig (mainly humorous, also derogatory)

According to their meaning, compounds are classified into endocentric compounds and exocentric compounds. Thus, a compound is semantically endocentric if its meaning is derived from the meaning of its central constituent, or the head, whereas exocentric compounds, on the other hand, do not derive their meaning from the central constituent, but from all constituents in combination (O'Grady, Archibald 114). For example, the nominal compound *lifeboat* is an endocentric compound because it refers to a type of boat, and its meaning derives from the meaning of its head *boat*, whereas *hot dog* is an exocentric compound because it refers to a kind of food, and its meaning does not derive directly from the meaning of its constituent elements. The majority of English nominal compounds are endocentric compounds.

2.4. The pronunciation of nominal compounds

Stress is the most reliable criterion to distinguish nominal compounds from sequences of words, such as noun phrases, in which the same words are used. As a rule, in most English nominal compounds the stress usually falls on the first element, whereas noun phrases receive the stress on the second element (Aarts 60). E.g.

Compounds	Noun phrases
' <i>blackbird</i> (a species of bird) black)	<i>black</i> 'bird (a bird that is black)
' <i>greenhouse</i> (a building for delicate plants) green)	<i>green</i> 'house (a house that is green)
' <i>blackboard</i> (a board for writing on) black)	<i>black</i> 'board (a board that is black)

Nevertheless, there are several exceptions to this rule.

1) The second element is stressed in nominal compounds that include proper nouns and titles: *Secretary* 'General, *Mount* 'Rushmore (Herring 52).

2) Both elements are stressed in nominal compounds when (Thomson, Martinet 23-24):

a) the second element belongs to the first element: *picture frame*, *church bell*, *shop window*

b) the first element indicates the place of the second element: *corner shop*, *countryman*

c) the first element indicates the time of the second element: *dawn chorus*, *summer holiday*

d) they are place names: *London Airport*, *Leicester Square*, *Waterloo Bridge*

e) they include the noun *road* as the second element: *Oxford Road*, *King's Road*, *Canterbury Road*

However, the noun *street* as the second element in nominal compounds is not stressed: *Oxford Street*, *Baker Street*, *Bond Street* (Alexander 47).

There is another way except stress that helps us identify compounds and not confuse them with phrases, and that is the insertion of a modifying word between the two bases. If the insertion results in a sequence of words that makes no sense, the sequence is a compound (Lieber 43). For example, *apple pie* is a nominal compound because the insertion of a modifier like *delicious* results in *apple delicious pie* that makes no sense.

2.5. The plural of nominal compounds

The plural of English nominal compounds depends largely on the type of their constituent elements (Kirkpatrick 88). Most English nominal compounds form the plural by adding the plural ending

-s or **-es** to the last element of the compound: *birthday* / *birthdays*, *footprint* / *footprints*, *raindrop* / *raindrops*, *bus stop* / *bus stops*, *bank account* / *bank accounts*, *checkup* / *checkups*, *downfall* / *downfalls*, *heartbeat* / *heartbeats*, *inroad* / *inroads*, *penknife* / *penknives*, *matchbox* / *matchboxes*, *butterfly* / *butterflies*, etc.

Several English nominal compounds form the plural by adding the regular plural ending

-s or **-es** to the first element (Leech, Svartvik 246): *notary public* / *notaries public*, *listener-in* / *listeners-in*, *looker-on* / *lookers-on*, *passer-by* / *passers-by*, *grant-in-aid* / *grants-in-aid*, etc.

Nominal compounds in which one of the elements is the noun *man* or the noun *woman* pluralize both elements (Leech, Svartvik 246): *manservant* / *menservants*, *woman doctor* / *women doctors*, *gentleman farmer* / *gentlemen farmers*, etc.

Some English nominal compounds allow two plural forms, i.e. they either pluralize the first or the second element. They are the nominal compounds that consist of a noun and a postmodifying adjective, and those that end in *in-law*: *attorney general* / *attorneys general* / *attorney generals* / *court martial* / *courts martial* / *court martials*, *poet laureate* / *poets laureate* / *poet laureates*, *daughter-in-law* / *daughters-in-law* / *daughter-in-laws*, etc., although the latter is informal (Greenbaum 105).

It is noteworthy that nominal compounds in which the first element is the irregular noun *foot* or the irregular noun *tooth* pluralize only the second element, while the first one remains unchanged: *footstep* / *footsteps*, *footnote* / *footnotes*, *toothpick* / *toothpicks*, *toothbrush* / *toothbrushes*. Conversely, if the irregular noun *foot* is the second element of the nominal compound, in American English, the compound may take two plural forms, while in British English, it may take only one plural form: *tenderfoot* / *tenderfoots* or *tenderfeet* (Merriam Webster Dictionary), *tenderfeet* (Oxford English Dictionary).

3. Albanian nominal compounds

Albanian nominal compounds are defined as the union of two stems, in which one of them (the supporting stem, usually the second) grammatically defines the whole compound, while the other (or others, when there are more than one) is neutralized of its grammatical meanings (Merkuri 52).

Albanian nominal compounds can be simple compounds consisting of two stems, and compounds that also add nominal suffixes, mainly gerundial nouns resulting from a phraseological construction of verb + noun + the suffix **-je** (Newmark et al. 175). According to the type of syntactic relations among their constituent elements, they are classified into coordinate and subordinate

compounds (Agalliu et al. 148). A special type of Albanian nominal compounds are also abbreviations.

3.1. Coordinate compounds

Coordinate compounds constitute a rather small group of Albanian nominal compounds, but their number is constantly increasing, and they are modeled mostly according to the types used in colloquial speech (Agalliu et al. 148). Coordinate compounds such as *deledash* (hermaphrodite), *gushtovjeshtë* (August and the beginning of fall), *thashetheme* (rumor), *hyrje-dalje* (coming and going), *prijtje-përcjellje* (welcoming and seeing off), and *vajtje-ardhje* (going and coming), belong to colloquial speech (Dhrimo et al. 97). Nevertheless, some of them are also used in standard language along with other coordinate compounds, such as: *marrëdhënie* (relationship), *veshmbathje* (clothing), *dritëhije* (light and shadow), *juglindje* (southeast), *veriperëndim* (northwest), *shurdhmemec* (deaf and dumb), *ngarkim-shkarkim* (loading and unloading), etc.

A few of this type of nominal compounds employ a combining vowel “o” or “a” between the stems (Newmark et al. 175): *gushtovjeshtë* (August and the beginning of fall), *peshkaqen* (shark), *dredhalesh* (wool twister), *dashamir* (well-wisher), *dashakeq* (evil-wisher).

3.2. Subordinate compounds

Subordinate compounds are nominal compounds in which one element is always subordinated to the other, and they constitute the majority of Albanian nominal compounds.

There are several types of subordinate compounds (Agalliu et al. 148):

1. Noun + noun - This is the most productive type and it includes the following combinations or subtypes:

a) Noun + deverbal agentive noun formed with the suffix **-(ë)s**

bukëpjekës (baker, bread+baker), *gjellëbërës* (cook, dish+maker), *pijeshitës* (bartender, drink+seller), *këpucëbërës* (shoemaker), *rrobaqepës* (tailor, clothes+sewer), *flakëhedhëse* (flamethrower), etc. Most of these nouns designate people of different professions.

b) Noun + deverbal gerundial formed with the suffixes **-je** or **-im**

mikpritje (hospitality), *besëlidhje* (pledge, faith+binding), *gjakderdhje* (bloodshed, blood+spilling), *armëpushim* (armistice, arms+stopping), *dëmshpërblim* (compensation, damage+payment), *letërkëmbim* (correspondence, letter+exchange), etc.

c) Noun + any noun

pikëpamje (viewpoint, point+view), *ditëlindje* (birthday, day+birth), *rrugëdalje* (solution, exit, road+exit), *vendbanim* (residence, place+living), *vetëbesim* (self-confidence, self+believing), *vargmal*

(mountain range, chain+mountain), *luledielli* (sunflower, flower+sun), *gjeldeti* (turkey, rooster+sea), etc.

Some place names, such as *Balldren* (the forehead of the deer), *Qafështamë* (neck of the clay pitcher), *Qafëkrrabë* (neck of the hook), etc., have also been formed in this manner. In most nominal compounds of this subtype the second element of compound acts as the modifier of the first, and they comprise the largest group of Albanian nominal compounds (Dhrimo et al. 98).

Nominal compounds in which the first element acts as the modifier of the second are less numerous: *atdhe* (fatherland), *mëmëdhe* (motherland), *babagjysh* (grandfather, father+grandfather), *nënëgjyshe* (grandmother, mother+grandmother), *udhëkryq* (crossroad, road+cross), *hekurudhë* (railroad, iron+road), *kinooperator* (cinema operator), *postkomandant* (post commander), etc. This group also includes some hyphenated nouns: *qytet-muze* (museum city), *qytet-hero* (heroic city), *shtëpi-muze* (museum house), *vinç-urë* (traveling crane, crane+bridge), *vagon-cisternë* (tank car), etc.

2) Adverb + noun - In most nominal compounds with this combination the noun implies some action, whereas the adverb serves as the modifier: *bashkëbisedim* (conversation), *bashkëveprim* (coaction), *bashkëbisedues* (co-speaker), *bashkëpunëtor* (coworker), *drejtshkrim* (orthography), *keqkuptim* (misunderstanding), *mirëkuptim* (understanding, good will), etc. In some other nominal compounds of this type, the noun does not imply an action: *bashkëshort* (spouse), *bashkatdhetar* (fellow countryman), *bashkudhëtar* (fellow traveler), etc.

3) Pronoun/Nominal + noun - In this type of nominal compounds, the first element modifies the second: *vetëbesim* (self-confidence), *vetëmohim* (self-denial), *vetëmbrojtje* (self-defense), *vetëshërbim* (self-service), *dyluftim* (duel), *tremujor* (quarterly), etc.

4) Noun + adjective - This combination forms place names, such as *Buzëmadh* (big lips), *Gruemirë* (good woman), *Gurakuq* (red stone), *Gurazi* (black stone), *Kryezi* (black head), *Qafëzezë* (black neck), and the common nouns *lulëkuqe* (poppy, red flower) and *gushëkuq* (robin, red throat) (Nushi 98).

5) Verb + noun - This is a very popular, but not a very productive type: *vëmendje* (attention), *thithlopë* (toad), *thirravajë* (complaint), etc. The nominal compound *ujëvarë* (waterfall) is formed via a noun + verb combination.

3.3. Shortened nominal compounds (abbreviations)

A special type of nominal compounds in Albanian are compounds formed by joining the shortened versions of words referred to as abbreviations, a word that derives from Latin “*brevis*” (short) (Agalliu et al. 151). They are usually the names of organizations, political parties, state agencies, public institutions, enterprises, and certain countries.

There are two types of abbreviations:

1) Abbreviations formed by joining the initial syllables of words - *Migjeni* (Millosh Gjergj Nikolla), *Asdreni* (Aleksandër Stavri Drenova), *Mapo* (Magazina popullore/ people’s store), *profarma* (prodhime farmaceutike/ pharmaceutical products), etc. In the final example, the first syllable of the first element is joined with two first syllables of the second element. There are very few abbreviations of this type in Albanian.

2) Abbreviations formed by joining the capitalized initial letters of words - *OKB* (Organizata e Kombeve të Bashkuara/ United Nations Organization), *ATSH* (Agjensia Telegrafike Shqiptare/ Albanian Telegraphic Agency), *KE* (Komisioni Evropian/ European Commission), *NBSH* (Ndërmarrja Bujqësore Shtetërore/ National Agricultural Enterprise), etc. The majority of abbreviations in Albanian belong to this type, and they are pronounced as sequences of letters of the alphabet, with the stress on the end of the sequence: *SMT* (së-më-të), *NBSH* (në-bë-shë), etc. They are all feminine nouns: *SMT-ja*, *NBSH-ja*, *ATSH-ja*, *KE-ja*, etc.

Other abbreviations are formed by pronouncing the whole sequences of letters as words: *FUD* (Forcat ushtarakodetare/ Naval Military Forces), then some abbreviations from other languages, mainly English: *NATO*, *UNESKO*, *SEATO*, etc. When nouns of this type end in a consonant, they are masculine and take masculine case endings: *FUD-i*. When they end in a vowel, they are feminine and take feminine case endings: *NATO-ja* (Newmark et al. 178).

There are some abbreviations that mix the two types, such as: *NILGR* (nil-gë-rë), *NTAP* (në-të-ap), *NTAU* (në-të-au), *NTUS* (në-të-us), etc., whose gender is determined by the pronunciation of the last part of the word (Agalliu et al. 152). Thus, if the end of the word is pronounced as a sequence of letters, the noun is feminine (*NILGR-ja*), otherwise it is masculine (*NTUS-i*).

4. A contrastive analysis of English and Albanian nominal compounds

English and Albanian nominal compounds display differences and similarities that concern some of their main features, such as structure/types, meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and plural forms. Therefore, each of these characteristics will be dealt with in the following paragraphs.

Structure/types - In principle, both English and Albanian nominal compounds are defined as nouns comprising a minimum of two bases, which may belong

to different parts of speech. Both languages allow different types or combinations in nominal compounds, but in English, the combinations are more numerous due to its flexibility and ease in forming new words. Thus, while English allows a wide range of combinations that include nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, as well as possessive nouns, prepositional phrases and gerunds, Albanian is more limited in this regard. Thus, in Albanian, nominal compounds consisting of combinations with nouns and prepositional phrases or possessive nouns are nonexistent. The same applies to a special type of English nominal compounds that include the combination *letter + noun* (*X-ray*, *U-turn*, *T-shirt*, etc.). Such compounds are not allowed in Albanian because they violate one of the main criteria used to distinguish nominal compounds from other structures in the language.

However, unlike English, Albanian allows the combination *pronoun/numeral + noun* in forming nominal compounds, although cases of such a combination are rather rare (Beci 39). It is noteworthy that the only pronoun used in this combination is the pronoun *vetë* (self). There is a considerable number of nouns in English that are also formed from the combination of the word *self* + a noun, such as *self-confidence*, *self-service*, *self-interest*, *self-denial*, etc., but according to *Oxford English Dictionary*, they have been formed via derivation, by combining the prefix *self* + a noun, and not via compounding. Nevertheless, the word *self* has several functions. It may function as a noun, a pronoun, an adjective, a verb, and a combining form (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), therefore combinations of *self* + a noun are generally considered nominal compounds. Furthermore, according to König (112), combinations of *self* + a noun in which *self* serves as an intensifier are referred to as reflexive nominal compounds.

In English, the *adjective + noun* combination is very productive, as it results in a considerable number of nominal compounds. In Albanian, on the other hand, this combination, which applies the reverse order *noun + adjective*, results in very few nominal compounds, since it is mainly used to form adjectival compounds. For example, the nominal compound *lulëkuqe* (poppy) is formed from the noun *lule* (flower) + the adjective *kuqe* (red), whereas the same combination, *noun + adjective*, is also used to form the adjectival compound *zemërmadh* (big-hearted), from the noun *zemër* (heart) + the adjective *madh* (big).

The same applies to *verb + noun* and *noun + verb* combinations in Albanian which include very few nominal compounds, while in English, *verb + noun* combinations are among the most productive. For example, *vëmendje* (attention), formed from the verb *vë* (put) + the noun *mendje* (mind), and *thithlopë* (toad), formed from the verb *thith* (suck) + the noun *lopë* (cow), referring to a large toad once believed to suck milk from cows, apply the *verb + noun* combination. *Ujëvarë* (waterfall), on the other hand, formed from the

noun *ujë* (water) + the verb *varë* (hang), is the only nominal compound formed from the *noun* + *verb* combination ((Dhrimo et al. 99).

English includes nominal compounds formed from combinations of adverbs/prepositions and nouns, while in Albanian, few adverbs are used in forming nominal compounds, although the number of nominal compounds of this type is not insignificant. Furthermore, prepositions are not employed as constituent elements in Albanian nominal compounds (Nushi 98).

It is noteworthy that, unlike English, where nominal compounds may be formed even without nouns as constituents from combinations such as *verb* + *adverb/preposition*, *adverb/preposition* + *verb*, or *adjective* + *verb*, in Albanian, there are no nominal compounds without nouns as constituents. Therefore, it is mandatory that at least one element in nominal compounds is a noun.

Nevertheless, despite the differences, English and Albanian nominal compounds also share some structural similarities. One of the structural similarities concerns the fact that in both languages, *noun* + *noun* combinations are the most frequent combinations and, consequently, they result in the largest number of nominal compounds. The following examples indicate some English nominal compounds and their Albanian counterparts formed via the *noun* + *noun* combination: *fatherland* / *atdhe*, *motherland* / *mëmëdhe*, *southeast* / *juglindje*, *northwest* / *veriperëndim*, then *birthday* / *ditëlindje* (day+birth), *sunflower* / *luledielli* (flower+sun), *viewpoint* / *pikëpamje* (point+view), *crossroad* / *udhëkryq* (road+cross), *seashore* / *bregdet* (shore+sea), etc. As indicated by the translations provided in parentheses, some of these Albanian nominal compounds have the constituent elements written in reverse order.

Another similarity concerns some names of professions: *shoemaker* / *këpucëbërës*, *stone carver* / *gurskalitës*, *watchmaker* / *orëndreqës*, etc., which are formed from a *noun* + *deverbal agentive noun with the suffix -(ë)s* combination in Albanian, and a *noun* + *verb* + *-er* combination in English. They share the same structure, although this is not acknowledged by Albanian grammarians. In Albanian, compounding generally implies the union of two stems without suffixes (Çeliku 358), and such a union results in simple compounds. The addition of suffixes to the union indicates a mixed type of compounding because it combines two word-formation processes, namely compounding + derivation that Albanian allows in forming compounds, and the majority of Albanian nominal compounds formed in this manner have the following structure *noun* + *verb* + *-je*: *frymëmarrje* (breathing, breath+taking), *kryengritje* (rebellion, head+raising), *dorëheqje* (resignation, hand+removal), *këmbëngulje* (insistence, foot+implanting), *kokëçarje* (headache, head+splitting), *marrëveshje* (agreement, take + ear + -je) (Agalliu et al. 151). The final example employs the reverse order: verb + noun + *-je*. Nominal

compounds that result from such a mix may be called mixed or complex compounds.

There is a considerable number of English nominal compounds that are formed in this manner, i.e. by adding a suffix to two free bases (noun + verb + -er): *songwriter*, *bookkeeper*, *babysitter*, *lawmaker*, *typewriter*, etc.

In both languages, combinations with the noun *head* (krye) as the first element of compounds are very productive, e.g.

English: *headphone*, *headpost*, *headrace*, *headrest*, *headpiece*, *head register*, *head restraint*, etc.

Albanian: *kryevepër* (masterpiece, head+work), *kryeinfermier* (head nurse), *kryeartikull* (leading article), *kryeqytet* (capital city), *kryellogaritar* (chief accountant), etc.

Spelling - Spelling is most likely a feature of nominal compounds in which English and Albanian nominal compounds display essential differences. English allows three different ways of spelling compounds: as single words (*masterpiece*, *sandcastle*), as hyphenated words (*horse-riding*, *sister-in-law*), and as two separate words (*safety belt*, *human shield*), and the latter is precisely the spelling that makes it challenging for non-native English speakers to distinguish nominal compounds from noun phrases.

In Albanian, on the other hand, this issue does not pose any trouble at all because spelling is the main criterion that distinguishes nominal compounds from noun phrases. The majority of Albanian nominal compounds are written as single words (*zanafillë* / origin, *botëkuptim* / worldview, *punëdore* / embroidery), very few of them are hyphenated, and they are mostly part of colloquial speech (*hyrje-dalje* / coming and going, *pritje-përcjellje* / hello and goodbye), but also include a few new ones that belong to standard Albanian (*qytet-muze* / museum city, *qen-ujk* / wolfdog), and a few that are used only in literature, as a form of poetic expression (*fjalë-flamur* / word+flag, *flamur-gjak* / flag+blood, *rrufe-shkabë* / lightning+eagle) (Agalliu et al. 149), whereas there are no Albanian nominal compounds written as separate words. Therefore, it is highly unlikely for foreign learners of Albanian to confuse nominal compounds with noun phrases.

Meaning - In most English and Albanian nominal compounds the meaning can be easily deduced from the meaning of their constituent elements:

English: *waterfall*, *popcorn*, *blood test*, *birth control*, *painkiller*, *headline*, *wallpaper*, etc.

Albanian: *drejtshkrim* / orthography, *vëmendje* / attention, *vargmal* / mountain range, *mirëmbajtje* / maintenance, *udhëkryq* / crossroad, *kryeartikull* / leading article, *vajgur* / kerosene, etc.

However, there are some English nominal compounds, such as *bigwig*, *bigmouth*, *high neck*, *hot dog*, etc., whose meaning is idiosyncratic, and not easily predictable. The same applies to some Albanian nominal compounds

such as *deledash*, *gushtovjeshtë*, *peshkagen*, *thithlopë*, etc. English and Albanian nominal compounds of this type are referred to as exocentric compounds because their meaning does not derive from the meaning of their constituent elements. Conversely, the majority of English and Albanian nominal compounds are endocentric compounds because their meaning derives from the meaning of their main constituent element or head.

There is a group of English nominal compounds labeled copulative compounds, in which both elements are equally important in the sense that both of them contribute to the meaning of compounds, and none of them is semantically prevalent or subordinate to the other, such as *scientist-explorer*, *poet-translator*, *hero-martyr*, *singer-songwriter*, etc. (Plag 187). In Albanian, nominal compounds that share these characteristics are referred to as coordinate compounds: *hyrje-dalje*, *vajtje-ardhje*, *pritje-përcjellje*, *kafë-restaurant*, *ngarkim-shkarkim*, etc.

Pronunciation – As a general rule, English nominal compounds take the stress on the first element, and this indicates that they are “institutionalized” units (Carter, McCarthy 320). Noun phrases, on the other hand take the stress on the last element, with the exception of cases in which contrast is being conveyed (Carstairs-McCarthy 60). Therefore, stress is the most reliable means to distinguish nominal compounds from noun phrases, especially when they consist of the same elements (Greenbaum 459). Grammarians generally recommend two criteria for this purpose: stress and meaning (Carstairs-McCarthy 60). However, meaning is not a reliable means because the meaning of compounds is not always predictable, and neither is spelling because of the open compounds.

Unlike English nominal compounds, Albanian nominal compounds almost always take the stress on the second element: *rrugëdalje* / solution or exit, *rrafshnaltë* / upland, *bukëpjekës* / baker, *peshëngritje* / weight lifting, *grupmoshë* / age-group, etc.

Plural – The majority of English nominal compounds and almost all Albanian compounds form the plural by adding the respective plural endings to the second element.

English: *landmarks*, *networks*, *masterminds*, *footnotes*, *toothpicks*, *sandboxes*, etc.

Albanian: *ujëvara* / waterfalls, *grupmosha* / age-groups, *vendbanime* / residences, *ngarkim-shkarkime* / loadings and unloadings, *peshkagënë* / sharks, etc.

Some Albanian compounds that end with the suffix **-je**, maintain the same form in both the singular and plural number: *marrëveshje* / agreement, *pikëpamje* / viewpoint, *hyrje-dalje* / coming and going, *vajtje-ardhje* / going and coming, etc. (Fjalor i Gjuhës Shqipe)

The main difference between English and Albanian nominal compounds concerns the pluralization of the first element of compound. None of the Albanian nominal compounds forms the plural by adding the appropriate plural ending to the first element, while this is acceptable in English: *fathers-in law*, *passers-by*, *lookers-on*, etc. Some English nominal compounds may also pluralize both elements: *manservant* / *menservants*, and with some others it is possible to pluralize one or the other element as both options are correct: *attorney general* / *attorneys general* / *attorney generals*. This characteristic is not shared by Albanian nominal compounds either.

However, both English and Albanian include nominal compounds that have only singular forms.

English: *fast food*, *tissue-paper*, *first aid*, *pocket money*, etc.

Albanian: *gushtovjeshtë* / August and the beginning of fall or late summer, *atdhe* / fatherland, *mëmëdhe* / motherland, *vetëvendosje* / self-determination, *vetëbesim* / self-confidence, etc. (Fjalor i Gjuhës Shqipe)

On the other hand, *headquarters* is plural in form, but singular or plural in construction (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Abbreviations – In English, compounding, as a major word-formation process, does not include acronyms and blends because they are formed by employing two different minor word-formation processes. Unlike compounds, acronyms (UNESCO), initialisms (BBC), blends (*brunch* from breakfast + lunch), and clippings (*dorm* from dormitory) are insignificant in morphology because the meaning of the new words does not differ from the meaning of longer units from which they are formed (Haspelmath, Sims 40).

Albanian, on the other hand, includes both acronyms and blends within the group of nominal compounds, and these nouns are labeled as shortened nominal compounds or abbreviations. In Albanian, unlike English, blends are formed by joining only the initial syllables of words, whereas acronyms are formed by joining the capitalized initial letters of words. If acronyms are not pronounced as words, but as sequences of letters of the alphabet, they are called initialisms (Finegan 48). This way of forming new words was not very productive in Albanian. However, the number of acronyms has increased significantly in recent years. Blends, on the other hand, are restricted to a very small group of nouns, although blending has become a remarkably popular process in forming new children's names by combining the initial syllables of their parents' names: *Anda* (Anisa + Dardan), *Roel* (Robert + Eleonora), *Mirsa* (Mirlinda + Sandër), *Siar* (Sidrit + Arjeta), etc. (Çanta 119).

5. Conclusion

Nominal compounds constitute a considerably large group within the word class of nouns in both English and Albanian. Therefore, this study aimed to shed some light on the nominal compounds in the respective languages by

employing the contrastive analysis approach. It tackled their main features, such as structure/types, meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and plural, by first analyzing them separately and subsequently presenting a contrastive analysis of these features, with the aim of highlighting their differences and similarities.

Research findings indicate that English and Albanian display considerable differences in the types of combinations employed to form nominal compounds, with English being more open to new combinations, and Albanian being rather inflexible in the types of combinations it allows. Therefore, the combinations of nouns with adjectives and verbs are among the most productive in English, while in Albanian, they comprise a rather insignificant number of nominal compounds. The same applies to combinations with prepositions that Albanian does not allow. It is noteworthy that in Albanian nominal compounds, nouns are obligatory elements, in the sense that one of the elements must be a noun. English nominal compounds, on the other hand, allow combinations without a noun as a constituent. Nevertheless, English and Albanian nominal compounds also share some similarities with regard to their structure. Thus, the most productive combination or type in both English and Albanian is the noun + noun combination, and it comprises the largest group of nominal compounds in both languages.

English and Albanian nominal compounds are very similar with regard to their meaning. In both languages, the majority of nominal compounds are endocentric and derive their meaning from the meaning of their constituent elements. However, both languages also include exocentric compounds, in which the meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of their constituent elements. They also share a group of nominal compounds called copulative compounds in English, referred to as coordinate compounds in Albanian.

English and Albanian nominal compounds show significant differences with regard to their spelling and pronunciation. Thus, in English, nominal compounds may be written in three different forms, as single words, as hyphenated words, and as two separate words, while in Albanian, the majority of nominal compounds are written as single words, only a few nominal compounds are hyphenated, and they cannot be written as two separate words. Thus, in Albanian, spelling is the most reliable means used to distinguish nominal compounds from noun phrases.

Albanian nominal compounds, with very few exceptions, carry the stress on the second element, while English nominal compounds carry the stress on the first element of the compound. Therefore, considering the fact that nouns phrases in English usually receive the stress on the second element, stress remains the most reliable means used to distinguish nominal compounds from noun phrases.

Even though both languages form the plural of compounds by adding the appropriate plural endings to nominal compounds, the difference lies in the fact that in Albanian, only the second element of the compound may take the plural ending, whereas in English, there are variations.

In sum, nominal compounds are a rather remarkable group of nouns in both English and Albanian, but research on this group of nouns in Albanian is rather scarce, particularly in terms of contrastive analysis with their counterparts in other languages. Therefore, this study might be useful for foreign learners of English and Albanian as well as for researchers who can contribute with further research in this area.

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