AGENTIVE AND NON-AGENTIVE ADJECTIVAL SYNTHETIC COMPOUNDS IN ENGLISH
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1. Introduction
This paper aims to examine the syntax of English synthetic compounds based on the passive participle. The study revolves around the following questions:
- Can synthetic -en compounds function as deverbal adjectives and/or eventive passives?
- Is the external argument licensed by adjectival synthetic -en compounds?
- Are all synthetic -en compounds syntactically eventive?

2. Theoretical background – Embick’s participle
Embick (2003) divides participles in English into three types: stative, resultative and eventive:

(1) a. The door is open.
   \[ \text{Asp} \quad \text{OPEN} \]
   (stative)

b. The door is opened.
   \[ \text{Asp} \quad \text{ed} \quad \text{vP} \]
   (resultative)

   \[ \text{DP} \quad \text{v} \quad \text{OPEN} \]

c. The door was opened (by John).
   \[ \text{Asp} \quad \text{ed} \quad \text{vP} \]
   (eventive)

\[ \text{[AG]} \quad \text{OPEN} \quad \text{DP} \]

The structure in (1a) is that of a simple adjective. The reason why vP is not present in this structure is that open expresses a state not linked to an event. The vP head is present (1b) indicating that opened denotes a state resulting from a prior event. The structure in (1c) is that of an eventive passive.

3. Synthetic -en compounds
Synthetic -en compounds are formed by merging nouns with passive participles of verbs. Semantically, the great majority of such compounds incorporate left-most elements which are in an agentive, instrumental or locative relation to the head participle.

(2) agentive: expert-tested, man-made, researcher-developed, student-written
(3) instrumental: pencil-drawn, computer-generated, chain-locked, radio-controlled
(4) locative: home-made, truck-delivered, studio-produced, farm-raised

4. The syntax of synthetic -en compounds
Synthetic -en compounds exhibit a number of features typical of adjectives. They are frequently found in the attributive position:

(5) a. student-written articles
   b. pencil-drawn pictures
   c. home-made clothes

They can appear as complements of copular verbs (seem, look, remain, etc.):

(6) a. This article looks student-written.
   b. The door remains chain-locked.
   c. The cake seems home-made.

Synthetic -en compounds can be found with modifiers pointing to the presence of the external argument:

(7) a. Everything seemed computer-designed by someone with no imagination.
   b. This picture looks pencil-drawn by an artist.
   c. The furniture looked (home)-made by an experienced carpenter.
   d. Carefully teacher-prepared materials.
   e. A deliberately blood-stained suit.
   f. A skillfully home-made cake.

There are a group synthetic -en compounds which do not allow the licensing of external argument modifiers.

(8) a. This film seems action-packed (*by a skilful director).
   b. The company is customer-oriented (*by the management).
   c. John’s condition is ageing-related (*by the doctor).
   d. A (*carefully) adult-themed book
   e. A (*skilfully) heart-shaped box
   f. A (*deliberately) battle-proven weapon.

Such compounds are interpreted as simple adjectives.

5. The internal structure of synthetic -en compounds

(9) stative (action-packed, goal-oriented, health-related, etc.)

\[ \text{aP} \quad \text{(categorizes the compound as an adjective)} \]

\[ \text{ed} \quad \text{vP} \quad \text{OPEN} \]

(10) resultative (student-written, pencil-drawn, home-made, etc.)

\[ \text{aP} \quad \text{(categorizes the compound as an adjective)} \]

\[ \text{PASS} \quad \text{(licenses the passivizing exponent)} \]

\[ \text{ed} \quad \text{VoiceP} \quad \text{(introduces ext.arg.)} \]

\[ \text{nP} \quad \text{vP} \quad \text{v} \quad \text{OPEN} \]

Deverbal -en compounds commonly function as eventive passives:

(11) a. This soup was expert-tested by John. (Di Sciullo 1992: 74)
   b. The antennas were computer designed by Custom Metalworks.
   c. The breakfasts were home-made by the host.

As eventive passives, synthetic -en compounds are headed by PASS (Alexiadou et al. 2014), with no aP present.

Not every deverbal -en compound can be selected by copular verbs and therefore function as an adjective.

(12) a. ??This soup seems expert-tested.
   b. ??The water looks truck-delivered.
   c. ??The data looks field-collected.

Comounds such as action-packed, in contrast to deverbal -en compounds, exhibit strongly adjectival features such as the ability to license very and accept the suffix -ness.

(13) a. very action-packed/family-oriented/ adult-themed/heart-shaped
   b. *very student-written/chain-locked/ pencil-drawn
   c. action-packedness, family-orientedness, health-relatedness, adult-themedness…

Adjectival synthetic -en compounds only occasionally accept modification with very:

(14) a. Egypt used to be a very state-controlled economy.
   b. The music sounds very computer-generated.
   c. The food tasted very home-made.

-ness suffixation is extremely rare with deverbal -en compounds:

(15) a. *student-writeness/pencil-drawnness computer-designedness
   b. (…) there’s something about the home-\[madness of it that makes my stomach feel like it’s rotting. (web example)\]

Additional evidence pointing to the non-eventivity of compounds of the action-packed type:

- They can only be derived from a limited number of roots (deverbal -en compound, on the other hand, are fully productive)
- They can be indiosyncratic (e.g. spellbound, crestfallen, gobsmacked)

6. Conclusions
- Synthetic -en compounds fall into two categories with respect to the ability to license the external argument.
- Deverbal -en compounds, with several exceptions, can form both resultative adjectives and verbal passives.
- The stative nature of compounds such as action-packed means that all synthetic compounds in English are deverbal in morphosyntactic sense.
- At least roots such as PACK, VORITY, RELATE, SHAPE can give rise to both deverbal and non-deverbal adjectives.

Selected references