

A Study on the Form Class, Prosody, and Semantics of Modern Chinese clothing Compounds

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This paper examines modern Chinese clothing compound words within the framework of Generative Lexicon Theory, focusing on their prosodic mode, grammatical mode and the qualia role. The study finds that the N+N form class and 1+1 prosodic pattern are dominant, reflecting linguistic economy, where functional verbs are often implicit and modifiers are typically monosyllabic. Semantically, the pattern preference follows $X_{Telic+N} > X_{Formal+N} > X_{Constitutive+N}$, which can indirectly encode the inherent functional meaning of clothing items, either by foregrounding the situational context of use or by highlighting the materials that enable such function. The paper also proposes a referential semantic template by incorporating implicit predicates within these compounds.

Keywords: *clothing words, qualia structure, implicit predicates, compositional patterns*

1. Introduction

Clothing is an essential part of daily life throughout history, and clothing words are an indispensable part of the lexical system. Progress in society has given rise to a large number of different types and styles of clothing, and compound words used to refer to clothing are constantly being generated. Song Zuoyan (2016) pointed out that nouns referring to artifacts necessarily have functional meaning, which is their inherent meaning. Because artifacts are created for a certain purpose. For clothing compound words, clothing is created to be “worn”, thus clothing words are typical artifact words. However, the functional meaning of clothing words is not always fully explicit on the surface. For example, words like “羽绒服” (down jacket), “棉毛衫” (cotton sweater), “盔甲” (armor) highlight the material of the clothing on the surface; words like “晨服” (morning dress), “春装” (spring clothing) highlight the time of wearing; while “宇航服” (spacesuit), “雪地靴” (snow boots) highlight the scenario of wearing. This shows that even among clothing words, the

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aspects highlighted during word formation differ internally. Furthermore, even when highlighting the function of clothing, internal differences exist. For example, “登山服” (mountaineering suit) adopts a 2+1 prosodic pattern and a V+N form class pattern, while “球鞋” (sneakers) adopts a 1+1 prosodic pattern and an N+N form class pattern. The variety of clothing categories leads to a large, complex, and diverse set of related clothing words, with significant differences in their prosodic mode, grammatical mode and the qualia role.

Previous research has conducted in-depth studies on the diachronic evolution of clothing compound words and the semantic characteristics of clothing words in ancient Chinese (Yu Yunhai 1991; Gao Chunming 2001) but has not addressed the performance of clothing words in Modern Chinese. What characteristics do Modern Chinese clothing words exhibit in terms of prosodic mode, grammatical mode and the qualia role. In view of this, this paper intends to take Modern Chinese clothing compound words as the research object, exploring the internal semantic structural relationships of these compounds, as well as the influence of prosody and form class on their construction.

2. The Prosodic-Form Class-Semantic Compositional Tendencies of Chinese clothing Compound Words

This paper uses Su Xinchun's (2013) “Modern Chinese Classified Dictionary” as the main source of corpus data, collecting all words denoting clothing from the “Living Supplies” semantic category, resulting in a total of 460 clothing words. Among these, 393 are modifier-core compound words, constituting a very large proportion within the clothing words. We selected these 393 Chinese clothing compound words as the research object.

Prosodic mode, grammatical mode and the qualia role jointly constrain the composition of Chinese compound words. Among these, the classification of semantics is difficult to conduct due to its strong subjectivity and hard-to-measure standards. The qualia structure theory within the Generative Lexicon Theory can visualize abstract semantic relationships, providing a relatively objective analytical standard for semantic relations. It divides the semantic relations associated with nouns into four basic types: The Formal Role describes the attributes that distinguish an object within a larger cognitive domain (including orientation, size, shape, dimensionality); The Constitutive Role describes the relationship between an object and its constituent parts (including material, weight, parts, and components); The Agentive Role describes the purpose and function of the object; The Telic Role describes how the object comes into being or is produced. To judge

the relationship between the modifier and the core noun in clothing compound words, we analyzed these 393 clothing compound words from three dimensions: prosodic mode, grammatical mode and the qualia role. The specific analysis results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Data on Prosodic-Form Class-Semantic Patterning of Chinese Apparel Compound Words

Qualia Structure	N+N			V+N			A+N			amount	Proportion
	1+1	2+1	1+2	1+1	2+1	1+2	1+1	2+1	1+2		
Telic	74	12	4	38	23	/	1	/	/	152	38.7%
Constitutive	61	38	7	/	/	/	/	/	/	106	27%
Formal	42	17	/	10	7	/	50	3	3	132	33.5%
Agentive	/	/	/	1	2	/	/	/	/	3	0.8%
Total	177	67	11	49	32	/	51	3	3	393	100%
	255			81			57				

From the perspective of form class patterning, N+N is the most dominant patterning mode in Chinese clothing compound words, with 255 instances, accounting for 64.9% of the total. From the perspective of prosodic patterning, the 1+1 mode is the dominant patterning mode for Chinese clothing compound words, with 277 instances, accounting for 70.5% of the total. From the semantic perspective, the modifier acting as the Telic Role of the core noun is the most frequent, with 152 instances, accounting for 38.7% of the total. Modifiers acting as the Formal Role number 132, accounting for 33.5%, and those acting as the Constitutive Role number 106, accounting for 27%. Only 3 as the Agentive Role. From this, it appears that $N_{\text{single/Telic}}+N$ is the dominant patterning mode for Modern Chinese clothing compound words.

The word-formation tendency for clothing compound words is $X_{\text{Telic}}+N > X_{\text{Formal}}+N > X_{\text{Constitutive}}+N$. However, the data statistics show that the word-formation power of these three patterning modes is relatively strong. So, how do these different compositional modes display the inherent functional meaning possessed by pure artifact clothing? clothing compound words also exhibit trisyllabic 1+2, 2+1 prosodic patterns and V+N, A+N form class patterns. Although the proportion is small, they should not be ignored. What causes these differences in prosody and form class? We will reclassify the qualia structure represented by the modifiers in clothing compound words, thereby obtaining the semantic characteristics of the sub-semantic categories of Telic, Constitutive, and Formal roles, and attempt to explain why the 1+1 prosodic structure is the dominant patterning mode for

Chinese clothing compound words, exploring the deep cognitive motivations behind the phenomenon.

Zhu Yan (2004) divided predicates in the semantic structure of compounds into autonomous predicates and non-autonomous predicates. The semantic features of autonomous predicates are [+autonomous][+action]. Among non-autonomous predicates, there is a type called relational predicates, which express abstract relationships between things, with semantic features [-autonomous][+relation]. Relational predicates almost never appear on the surface form of compounds. She divided relational predicates into 11 subcategories, including existential relational predicates, possessive relational predicates, similarity relational predicates. We found that clothing compound words often imply relational predicates or autonomous relational predicates. In order to clarify the different semantic patterns of clothing compound words, we will, when analyzing each sub-semantic category, supplement the implicit predicates within the clothing compound words to restore referential and imitable semantic patterns.

3. Analysis of the X+N Compositional Patterns in Chinese clothing Words

3.1. Analysis of the $X_{Telic}+N$ Patterning Mode

3.1.1. *Characteristics of Form Class and Prosody in $X_{Telic}+N$*

Statistical analysis of the data shows that $X_{Telic}+N$ is the most numerous and is the dominant patterning mode for Modern Chinese clothing compound words. Within $X_{Telic}+N$, X_{Telic} is primarily realized by N. clothing compound words with the $N_{Telic}+N$ pattern number 90, accounting for 35.2% of the total $N+N$ instances. Among these, 74 are in the 1+1 prosodic pattern. clothing compound words with the $V_{Telic}+N$ pattern come next, totalling 51 instances. Among these, 38 are in the 1+1 prosodic pattern, and 23 are in the 2+1 prosodic pattern. It is noteworthy that although the number of V acting as the Telic Role is not as high as that of N, the proportion of $V_{Telic}+N$ within the total $V+N$ word-formation count is very large, accounting for 75.3% of $V+N$ formations. This indicates that V has a strong tendency to serve as the Telic Role. Furthermore, adjectives almost never serve as the Telic Role. The tendency for different parts of speech to serve as the Telic Role is $N > V > A$. The Telic Role primarily describes the purpose and function of the entity denoted by the core noun, and verbs are often considered to have a declarative function. But in

the large number of $N_{\text{Telic}}+N$ patterns within $X_{\text{Telic}}+N$ clothing compound words, how does N_{Telic} describe the purpose and function?

$N+N$ compounds often imply a predicative component; they are the result of nominalizing a declarative event and then further simplifying it. Therefore, to correctly understand $N+N$ compounds, it is necessary to activate and restore the implicit predicate (Yuan Yulin, 1995). To address the issue of “predicate implication” in $N_{\text{Telic}}+N$ clothing words, we supplemented the $N+N$ structure clothing compound words. If the implied predicate serves as the Telic Role of the core noun, then we can judge that the pre-core N serves as the Telic Role. However, the Telic Role can be divided into two types: one is the direct Telic Role, where the entity denoted by the core noun is the direct object of the activity expressed by the Telic Role, manifested in the fact that this noun can typically serve as the object of its Telic Role verb. The direct function of clothing compound words is relatively singular. For example, the direct function of “毛衣” (sweater), “皮鞋” (leather shoes), is “to wear,” which can be restored to verb-object phrases like “穿毛衣” (wear sweater), “穿皮鞋” (wear leather shoes). The other is the indirect Telic Role, where the entity denoted by the noun is not the direct object of the activity expressed by the Telic Role, but rather assists in completing the activity expressed by the Telic Role. We find that clothing compound words often have an indirect Telic Role. For example, “冰鞋” (ice skates) are shoes used for “溜冰” (skating). “Skating” is the indirect Telic Role of “shoes”, because “鞋”(shoes) are not the object of “溜冰” (skating), but the tool used for “溜冰”(skating). Based on this, we can understand how $N+N$ compounds describe declarative events by supplementing the implicit predicate in $N_{\text{Telic}}+N$. Linguistic expression seeks the most economical means; as long as the meaning can be clearly expressed, the functional verb need not appear in the surface form (Li Jiapan 2024). Therefore, N_{Telic} holds the greatest advantage within $X_{\text{Telic}}+N$.

$N+N$ Compound words with attributive structure may have multiple semantic interpretations. $V+N$ Compound words with attributive structure play a compensatory role in resolving the semantic interpretation difficulties of $N+N$ Compound words with attributive structure (Meng Kai 2018). The $V_{\text{Telic}}+N$ compositional pattern can better state the function of the core noun, hence the $V_{\text{Telic}}+N$ patterning mode constitutes a very large proportion within the $V+N$ patterning modes and also holds a certain proportion within $X_{\text{Telic}}+N$. The main grammatical function of adjectives is modification and limitation. The only $A_{\text{Telic}}+N$ patterning mode clothing compound word is “安全帽” (safety helmet), where the modifier “安全” (safe) is a stative adjective. Unlike qualitative adjectives, stative adjectives exhibit a descriptive pragmatic function (Lin Huang 2002). “安全” (safe) as a stative adjective, has descriptive semantic features, describing that the

function of wearing the helmet is to protect safety, thus it can also be considered a word of the $X_{\text{Telic}+N}$ patterning mode.

3.1.2. Sub-semantic Categories of $X_{\text{Telic}+N}$ and Their Formation Mechanisms

To refine the function of the nominal core in clothing words, we divided $X_{\text{Telic}+N}$ into three sub-semantic categories: Wearing Activity, Wearing Style, and Wearing Method.

As shown in Table 2, the word-formation tendency for the sub-semantic categories of $X_{\text{Telic}+N}$ is: Wearing Activity > Wearing Style > Wearing Method. Why are the sub-semantic categories of the Telic Role divided into these three? Why is the word-formation tendency of the sub-semantic categories for the clothing core component as shown above? We will analyze the classification criteria for these three semantic categories and the cognitive motivations behind them separately.

Table 2. Data on Sub-semantic Categories of $X_{\text{Telic}+N}$

Qualia Structure	Sub-semantic Category	amount	Proportion	Example Words	Total
Telic role	Wearing Activity	93	61.7%	登山鞋 (climbing boot) 球衣 (football suit) 泳装 (swimsuit)	152
	Wearing Style	47	30.5%	王冠 (imperial crown) 童装 (children's wear) 军服 (military uniform)	
	Wearing Method	12	7.8%	披巾 (shawl) 围巾 (scarf) 套袖 (sleeve cover)	

The X_{Telic} in the “Wearing Activity” category indicates the purpose for wearing the apparel. This type of X_{Telic} is always the indirect Telic Role of the core noun. Some words in the “Wearing Activity” category present the activity denoted by the Telic Role on the surface in a verb-object form, such as “登山服” (mountaineering suit), “滑雪衫” (ski jacket), thereby displaying the complete semantics on the surface. However, most only present the action or the object involved in the activity on the surface, such as “球服” (sports uniform), “冰鞋” (ice skates). We believe this is because the action involved in the activity for such words is often the only collocation for the activity's object. For example, the action related to “球”(ball) can only be “踢” (kick), so “球服”(sports uniform) can only be the clothing worn when “playing” 球(ball). The action related to “冰” (ice) can only be “滑” (skate) so “冰鞋” (ice skates) can only be the shoes worn for the activity of “溜冰” (skating).

Therefore, even if the predicate is implied, such words can still convey meaning clearly without being uninterpretable, while also conforming to the principle of linguistic economy. Additionally, there is a type of word that only presents the action involved in the activity on the surface, such as “跑鞋” (running shoes), “跳” (jumping shoes). These words only present the action involved in the activity, “跑” (run) and “跳” (jump), on the surface. This is because the X_{Telic} for such “Wearing Activity” words are all intransitive verbs, which cannot be followed by an object to present the entity involved. Therefore, they can still be considered as presenting complete activity information, and the word meaning can be understood without supplementing implicit information.

As artifacts, apparel has certain functions. Therefore, function, when selected as a semantic information for lexicalization, must have priority. Furthermore, since the direct function of apparel is relatively singular, apparel compound words tend to present the indirect function on the surface to indicate the purpose of wearing the apparel. The information presented by such words is relatively complete, and the action or object of the activity is highlighted, hence they are prioritized during word formation. The „Wearing Activity” category implies the relational predicate “in order to...”. The semantic pattern of this category can be summarized as “为了(V)X_{功用}而穿的N” (N worn in order to (V) X_{Telic}), For example, “泳衣” (swimsuit) is clothing worn in order to swim.

The “Wearing Style” category apparel words all have the N+N patterning mode, such as “学生装” (student attire), “藏袍” (Tibetan robe), “球服” (prison uniform). The implied predicate is “wear”, serving as the direct Telic Role of the core noun. It is precisely due to the singularity of the direct Telic Role in apparel compound words that it is not explicitly released, thus forming the 1+1 N+N modifier-core structure. Although the surface information presented by “Wearing Style” words is less, it implies a lot of content. Words like “王冠” (crown), “童装” (children's clothing) name the clothing based on different wearers. But these words superficially indicate the user of the garment, while actually indirectly indicating the style, size, fashion style (Song Zuoyan 2023). The N_{Telic} denoting “Wearing Style” does not merely refer to the entity of the wearer but refers to the various attributes implied by the entity serving as the wearer. For example, “童装” (children's clothing) indicates that the applicable user of the apparel is children, which indirectly indicates that this type of apparel has features such as small size, cute colors, cute patterns. “僧袍” (monk's robe) indicates that the applicable user is monks, which indirectly indicates that this type of apparel has features like plain colors, loose fit. Noun attributives tend to express more essential attributes of the core noun; they do not simply add a single attribute to the concept denoted by a

core component but use the overall attributes of the entity denoted by this noun to modify and limit the core noun (Ke Hang 2012). This viewpoint explains why the “Wearing Style” category also has a relatively high word-formation count: because N_{Telic} here does not refer to the entity of the wearer but refers to the various types of attributes implied behind the wearer. It is the result of classifying, explaining, limiting, and refining the core component in terms of essential attributes or overall attributes (Meng Kai 2018). However, for language users, understanding the various attributes implied behind such words requires certain background knowledge; otherwise, misunderstandings may occur. Therefore, its word-formation count is less than that of the “Wearing Activity” category. The “Wearing Style” category words do not imply a relational predicate internally, only an autonomous predicate “wear”. Therefore, we can restore their semantic pattern to “X 功用穿的 N”(N worn by X_{Telic}).

The “Wearing Method” category apparel words are all V+N modifier core structures. Song Zuoyan (2002, 40), when studying V+N modifier-core compounds, pointed out that there is a type of $V_{\text{Telic}}+N$ whose semantics is “V 着用的 N” (N used by V-ing), explaining how the thing is used, not what it is used for. We believe that $V_{\text{Telic}}+N$ modifier-core compounds denoting wearing methods precisely fit this criterion. The V_{Telic} in this category explains the method of wearing the apparel, not the purpose of wearing it; it is a supplement and refinement of the direct function of apparel words. For example, “披巾” (shawl) is a textile worn by “披”(draping), “围裙” (apron) is a skirt worn by “围”(wrapping around). However, for most apparel compound words, there is no need to further specify the wearing method, and “Wearing Method” highlights the process of wearing, which is difficult to observe. Therefore, the “Wearing Method” category has the fewest words. We adopt the criterion proposed by Song Zuoyan (2002, 40), namely “V 功用着穿的 N” (N worn by V_{Telic}) as its semantic pattern.

3.2. Analysis of the $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$ Compositional Mode

3.2.1. Characteristics of Form Class and Prosody in $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$

Within $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$, apparel nouns with the $N_{\text{Formal}}+N$ pattern total 59, accounting for 44.7% of $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$ apparel words. Apparel nouns with the $A_{\text{Formal}}+N$ pattern total 56, accounting for 42.5% of $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$ apparel words, but constituting 98.2% of the A+N pattern. This shows that A has a very strong tendency to serve as the Formal Role. Apparel words with the $V_{\text{Formal}}+N$ pattern number only 17, accounting for 12.8% of the $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$ pattern, indicating that V has a very weak tendency to serve as the Formal Role. It is noteworthy that although the number of A serving as the Formal

Role is slightly less than that of N serving as the Formal Role, the proportion of N serving as the Formal Role within the total N+N word-formation count is only 23%, far lower than the proportion of A serving as the Formal Role within the total A+N word-formation count. Thus, the tendency for A to serve as the Formal Role is the strongest. The tendency for different parts of speech to serve as the Formal Role is $A > N > V$. We believe this is the result of bidirectional selection between the Formal Role and the functions of form classes. The main grammatical function of adjectives is modification and limitation, and the Formal Role primarily shows the characteristics that distinguish the entity denoted by the core noun from other objects. A_{Formal} are basically all qualitative adjectives, forming a 1+1 prosodic pattern with the core noun, accounting for 88.9% of the total $A_{\text{Formal}}+N$. Qualitative adjectives describe the attributes of entities, are typical members of the adjective class, and can better outline the attribute differences of the core noun (Zhang Guoxian 2006). X_{Formal} , as a prompt feature, selecting nouns with referential function and adjectives with descriptive function can better highlight the characteristics of the entity itself than selecting declarative verbs.

3.2.2. Formation Mechanism and Sub-semantic Categories of $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$

To refine the form of the nominal head in apparel words, we also divided it into sub-semantic categories, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Data on Sub-semantic Categories of $X_{\text{Formal}}+N$

Qualia Structure	Sub-semantic Category		amount	Proportion	Example Words	Total
Formal role	Apparel Properties	Shape Features	70	53.8%	长袍 (long gown) 连裆裤 (child's pants no slit) 瓜皮帽 (skullcap resembling the rind of watermelon)	130
		Apparel Color	6	4.7%	素装 (Plain wear) 红装 (red wear) 黄袍 (Yellow robe)	
	wearing location	Body Space	22	16.9%	胸衣 (corsage) 手套 (glove) 下装 (lower garment)	
		Wearing Time	16	12.3%	晨服 (Morning dress) 休闲服 (Casual wear) 春装 (spring clothing)	
		Wearing Scenario.	16	12.3%	太空服 (space suit) 雪地靴 (snow boot) 便服 (casual wear)	

$X_{\text{Formal}}+N$ has sub-semantic categories divided into Apparel Properties and Wearing Location. The Apparel Properties semantic category can be further divided into Shape Features and Apparel Color. Wearing Location can be further divided into Body Space, Wearing Time, and Wearing Scenario. The word-formation tendency is Apparel Properties > Wearing Location.

“Apparel Properties” refers to the inherent characteristics of the apparel itself. The $A+N$ form constitutes the majority. Observation reveals that the A_{Formal} here are all qualitative adjective components, and A_{Formal} exhibits obvious semantic opposition or relativity, such as “long-short, upper-lower, large-small,” etc. Therefore, such words often appear in pairs or groups. For example, if there is “长袍” (long gown), there must be “短袍” (short gown); there is “大褂” (long gown), also “小褂” (short jacket); there is “上装” (upper garment), also “下装” (lower garment); there is “素装” (plain attire), also “红装” (red attire). Furthermore, the few $V_{\text{Formal}}+N$ words also show some semantic opposition or relativity, such as “连裆裤” (pants with connected crotch) and “开裆裤” (open-crotch pants), “套衫” (pullover) and “开衫” (cardigan). Clear semantic opposition/relativity makes the distinctive features very strong, hence the word-formation ability of this category is also stronger. There is also a special type of apparel compound word denoting “Apparel Properties,” where X_{Formal} is borne by N , all being metaphorical $N+N$ compounds, such as “灯笼裤” (harem pants, lit. lantern pants), “瓜皮帽” (skullcap, lit. watermelon rind hat), “斗笠” (bamboo hat, conical hat). These are all metaphors based on the similarity in the external form of the apparel, with the former morpheme as the base. For these, the implicit similarity relational predicate “向...一样” (like...) can often be supplemented. We can mark the semantic pattern of $N_{\text{Formal}}+N$ as “像 N_{Formal} 一样的 N ” (N that is like N_{Formal}).

“Wearing Location” expresses the space, time, or range where the subject exists while wearing the apparel. The $N_{\text{Formal}}+N$ form constitutes the majority. Among these, “Wearing Scenario” refers to the specific location where the apparel is worn, “太空服(space suit) is clothing worn in space. “Wearing Time” refers to the time when the apparel is worn, “晨服 (morning dress)” is clothing worn in the morning, “春装(spring clothing)” is clothing worn in spring. The “Body Space” subcategory has modifiers that are nouns denoting body parts, indicating the body part where the apparel is worn, “胸衣(corsage)” is clothing worn on the 胸(chest), “手套 (glove)” is a warming implement worn on the 手(hands). The Wearing Location category can all be supplemented with the implicit existential relational predicate “

在 ...上/时/中” (on/at/in...), thus marking the semantic pattern of this category as “在 X 时/上/中穿的 N_{Formal} ”。(N worn at/on/in X_{Formal}). Semantically, X_{Formal} denoting Wearing Location restricts the temporal, spatial, or situational range of N, explaining the attributes that distinguish N from other objects within a larger cognitive domain. However, we believe that the distinctiveness of „Wearing Location” is not as strong as that of “Apparel Properties”. This is because apparel appearing in the same space, time, or range often represents a broad category of clothing, not distinguishing subcategories. For example, “太空服” (spacesuit) includes a helmet and other equipment worn in space. “春装” (spring clothing) includes overcoats, skirts, sweatshirts, and other various garments that can be worn in spring. Therefore, we believe its distinctiveness is lower than that of the Apparel Properties category, and its word-forming ability is also weaker than that of the “Apparel Properties” category.

3.3. Analysis of $X_{\text{Constitutive}}+N$ Patterning Mode

Within $X_{\text{Constitutive}}+N$, the Constitutive Role is only realized by N, totaling 107 instances. Among these, 62 have a 1+1 prosodic pattern, and 37 have a 2+1 prosodic pattern. This is because the N denoting the Constitutive Role are sometimes monosyllabic, “皮” (leather), “钢” (steel), “毛” (fur), and sometimes disyllabic, “牛仔” (denim), “羽绒” (down), “羊毛” (wool). Among these, monosyllabic Constitutive Roles hold the advantage. We divided the modifiers serving as the Constitutive Role in the “ $X_{\text{Constitutive}}+N$ ” pattern into two sub-semantic categories, as shown in the table.

Table 4. Data on Sub-semantic Categories of $X_{\text{Constitutive}}+N$

Qualia Structure	Sub-semantic Category	amount	Proportion	Example Words	Total
Constitutive role	Apparel Material	83	79%	蓑衣 (straw raincoat) 牛仔装 (denim outfit) 铁甲 (iron armor)	106
	Apparel Part	23	21%	龙袍 (dragon robe / imperial robe) 钉鞋 (spiked shoes) 平底鞋 (flat shoes)	

The Constitutive Role can be divided into Apparel Material and Apparel Part, with the word-formation tendency being Apparel Material > Apparel Part.

“Apparel Material” expresses the texture and main raw material of the apparel. The Telic Role is the core role; the Formal Role, Constitutive Role, and Agentive Role all serve the Telic Role (Song Zuoyan, 2016). We believe that the realization of certain apparel functions requires the use of different apparel materials. For example, “棉毛衫” (cotton sweater), “羽绒服” (down jacket), “呢子大衣” (woolen overcoat) – their materials reflect the function of keeping warm. “铁甲” (iron armor), “钢盔” (steel helmet), reflect the function of protection. Therefore, the “Apparel Material” category holds an advantage in serving as the Constitutive Role for apparel words. Such words can be supplemented with the instrumental relational predicate “利用” (using), expressing the instrumental relationship between the event and the thing. Their semantics can be restored to “利用 X_{构成}制作的 N”, (N made using X_{constitutive}), “牛仔衣” (denim clothes) is clothing made using denim fabric. “铁甲” is armor made using iron.

The “Apparel Part” category expresses the prominent parts of the apparel. The relationship between the N_{constitutive} denoting “Apparel Part” and the apparel as a whole is sometimes not very close. Therefore, the complete word meaning cannot be fully inferred from the word-formation morphemes themselves; language users need to supplement background knowledge beyond the constituent components to generate the complete meaning. Otherwise, it may lead to misunderstanding of the word meaning. For example, “大檐帽” (peaked cap, lit. large-brimmed hat) superficially means a hat with a large brim, but actually refers to a type of hat with a large, flat top worn by military personnel, police, or certain law enforcement personnel. This meaning is difficult to infer solely from the word-formation morphemes; background information must be added to generate the complete meaning. Another example is “蟒袍” (the imperial robe is adorned with python patterns), which refers to “the formal attire worn by ministers in the Ming and Qing dynasties, embroidered with golden pythons.” Superficially, one cannot tell that “蟒袍” specifically refers to the formal attire worn by ministers; similarly, background information needs to be added to generate the complete meaning. Precisely because of this, the “Apparel Part” category does not have the word-formation productivity of the “Apparel Material” category. Words in the “Apparel Part” category can be supplemented with possessive relational predicates like “包含”

(contain), “有” (have). Their semantic pattern is “包含(有)N 构成的 N” (N containing (having) N_{constitutive}), “龙袍” (dragon robe / imperial robe), means “a robe having a dragon (pattern)”, “钉鞋” (spiked shoes), means “shoes having spikes/nails”.

4. Conclusion

This paper has studied the prosodic, form class, and semantic characteristics of Modern Chinese apparel compound words during their formation. It found that apparel compound words tend to select the N+N form class pattern and the 1+1 prosodic pattern. For apparel compound words, apparel is created to be “worn”; they are typical artifact words, and functional meaning is their inherent meaning. However, the present study finds that, in clothing compounds, a considerable proportion of attributive elements realize the Formal and Constitutive roles of the head. Du Tengting (2024), when studying occupational compound words, pointed out that when Formal and Agentive Roles serve as modifiers, they indirectly express the vague function of the occupation through location, tool. We agree with this view and find that apparel compound words exhibit the same characteristic, when Formal and Constitutive Roles serve as modifiers in apparel compound words, they are also indirectly expressing the functional meaning of the apparel. The Formal Role indirectly expresses the function by highlighting the locative scenario where the function of wearing occurs, and the Constitutive Role indirectly expresses the function by highlighting the material required to realize the apparel's function. There are two reasons why apparel compound words tend to select the N+N form class pattern and the 1+1 prosodic pattern. First, the principle of linguistic economy causes the N_{Telic}, which serves as the Telic Role, to often implicitly contain the verb expressing the function of the head noun. Second, the entity referred to by the nominal morpheme acting as the modifier within the word can itself be indicated through a monosyllabic form.

Table 5. Analysis of Sub-semantic Categories and Semantic Patterns of Chinese Apparel Words

Qualia constructure	Sub-semantic Category	referential semantic patterns	Example Words	Semantic pattern example
Telic role	Wearing Activity	为了(V) X 功用而穿的 N (N worn for the purpose of V-ing X)	潜水服 (diving suit)	为了潜水而穿的衣服 (clothing worn for diving)
	Wearing Style	X 功用穿的 N (N worn by/for X)	童装 (children's clothing)	儿童穿的衣服 (clothing worn by children)
	Wearing Method	X 功用着穿的 N (N worn in X manner)	披衣 (draped garment)	披着穿的衣服 (clothing worn by draping)
Formal role	Apparel Properties	X 形式的 N (N with X property)	短袍 (short gown)	短的袍子 (a short gown)
	wearing location	在 X 形式时/上/中穿的 N (N worn on/in/at X)	胸衣 (bodice)	在胸上穿的衣服 (clothing worn on the chest)
Constitutive role	Apparel Material	像 X 形式一样的 N (N resembling X in form)	瓜皮帽 (skullcap; lit. watermelon-rind hat)	像瓜皮一样的帽子 (a hat resembling awatermelon rind)
	Apparel Part	利用 X 构成制作的 N (N made using X)	皮鞋 (leathershoes)	利用皮制作的鞋子 (shoes made using leather)

This paper has conducted a detailed analysis of the word-formation situation of modifier-head structure apparel compound words and reclassified the qualia structure represented by the modifiers in apparel compound words, thereby obtaining the sub-semantic categories of Telic, Constitutive, and Formal roles. Furthermore, by supplementing implicit predicates and relational predicates, it has restored referential semantic patterns for apparel compound words belonging to different sub-semantic categories, as shown in Table 5. Standardizing the sub-semantic categories and supplementing implicit semantic information in different form-meaning patterning modes of apparel compound words can help construct regular semantic patterns, serving as a reference for standardizing the inclusion and definition of words in language dictionaries.

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