

This study investigates the distribution of compounds in four registers of contemporary British English: newspaper reporting, fiction, radio broadcasting, and face-to-face conversation. The studied corpus totals 64000 words and comprises thematically comparable samples of the registers in question. The analysis focuses on the incidence and distribution of compound types and subtypes in the four sub-corpora. The classification is primarily form-based and concerns such criteria as word class, spelling form and the syntactic relation between the compounds'elements. The results of the classification are substantiated with quantification and interpretation of the data.

The research reveals great differences in both density and diversity of cases in individual registers. Specifically, we notice contrastive tendencies in the two written and two spoken registers.