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SEMANTIC, DERIVATIONAL AND ORTHOGRAPHIC PECULIARITIES OF WORDS WITH ПОЛ-, ПОЛУ-

The writing of solid, hyphenated and separate words has been complex and controversial problem in course of the Russian language development. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the rules of using hyphen are based on different linguistic principles. For example, such word combinations as «половина города», «половина дома», «половина неба» tend to word compounding, e.g. «полгорода», «полдома», «полнеба». But spelling in words with «пол-» can differ: «полгруши», but «пол-яблока» – «пол спелого яблока»; «полмандарина», but «пол-апельсина» – «пол сладкого апельсина».

Spelling and word-forming peculiarities of lexemes with «пол-» («полу-») are stipulated by the morpheme semantic status – root or affix position or its meaning. Linguistic journals have written a lot about the nature of morpheme «пол-» («полу-»), but there are still more questions than answers. While some linguists consider «пол-» («полу-») to be a root morpheme, the others define its affixational nature. Modern linguistics witnesses the appearance of new point of view, according to which the morpheme «пол-» («полу-») is classified as a morpheme of a transitional type or affixoid. One cannot always justify the classification of «пол-» as a prefixoid, because this element has passed through the stage when it was formed from a separate word, then transformed from the component of a composite into an affix with a semiaffix status. It is necessary to mention that unlike genuine affixes the semiaffixes do not have the process of desemantization completed, they preserve the semantic connection with the independent words being the source of their creation. A semiaffix can be transformed into an affix only when it is desemantized completely having no connections with a correlating independent word. When hyphen is used, the root semantics is actualized in the prepositional elements. The writing of hyphenated words is a strict criterion of the root nature of these elements (as the first part of compound words). The words «пол-лимона», «пол-Москвы», «пол-Европы», «пол-Киева» and the like consist of two different words connected with a hyphen. Thus, the usage of hyphen is more justified in such words also formed from word-combinations as «полмандарина», «полведра», «полдома». This single rule can provide correct spelling, enable to preserve a capital letter and, what is more important, a uniform writing.