
Prosodic constraint on prenominal modification

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It has been argued that the head of a prenominal modifier must be adjacent to the head noun (Grosu & Horvath 2006, Haider 2010).

- (1) a. a [baby [sleeping [on the sofa]]] (English)
 b. *a [[sleeping [on the sofa]] baby]
- (2) a. ein [[[in Saarbrücken] wohnhafter] Professor] (German)
 a in Saarbrücken living professor
 b. *ein [[wohnhafter [in Saarbrücken]]] Professor]

However, the head-to-head adjacency condition cannot be assumed in the minimalist framework with no linear order in syntactic derivation. Moreover, the adjacency condition wrongly rules out head-initial phrasal compounds in English and German and head-initial modifiers in Russian.

- (3) a. [[over-[the-fence]]] gossip] (English)
 b. der [Fit-[statt-fett']]-Bürowettbewerb
 'the fit-over-fat office contest' (German)
- (4) [[gotovyi [na vse]]] student
 ready on everything student
 'a student ready for anything' (Russian)

Instead of the adjacency condition, we propose a prosodic constraint to the effect that the modifier and the noun it modifies cannot be separated by a prosodic boundary. In (1a) and (2a) the noun phrase has no prosodic boundary between the modifier and the head it modifies because of its uni-directional branching structure (Tokizaki 1999). We argue that a phrasal compound may not have a prosodic boundary at its right edge and that the proposed constraint may be relaxed in languages without determiners, such as Russian (cf. Bošković 2008).

References: • Bošković, Ž. (2008): What will you have, DP or NP? *NELS* 37, 101-114. • Grosu, A. & J. Horvath (2006) Reply to Bhatt and Pancheva's "Late Merger of Degree Clauses": The Irrelevance of (Non)conservativity. *Linguistic Inquiry* 37, 457-483. • Haider, H. (2010) *The syntax of German*. CUP.

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