Fulang Chen
University of Toronto

Chinese truck-drivers in Distributed Morphology

The Distributed Morphology (DM) framework postulates a Y model of word formation by a theory of late insertion. Acategorial roots (√) and category defining heads (n°, v°, a°) are hierarchically arranged by syntactic principles and operations, prior to Vocabulary Insertion at PF and semantic interpretation at LF (Halle & Marantz 1993). Harley (2008) proposes a DM analysis of English synthetic nominal compounds, such as truck-driver, according to which non-head nouns incorporate into the acategorial root of the head noun, prior to its own incorporation into its category defining n° head (a roll-up incorporation). The current study provides a DM account for Chinese synthetic nominal compounds, in which non-head nouns do not incorporate into the acategorial root of the head noun, instead, it is the encompassing root that incorporates into the category defining n° head (a pied-piping incorporation).
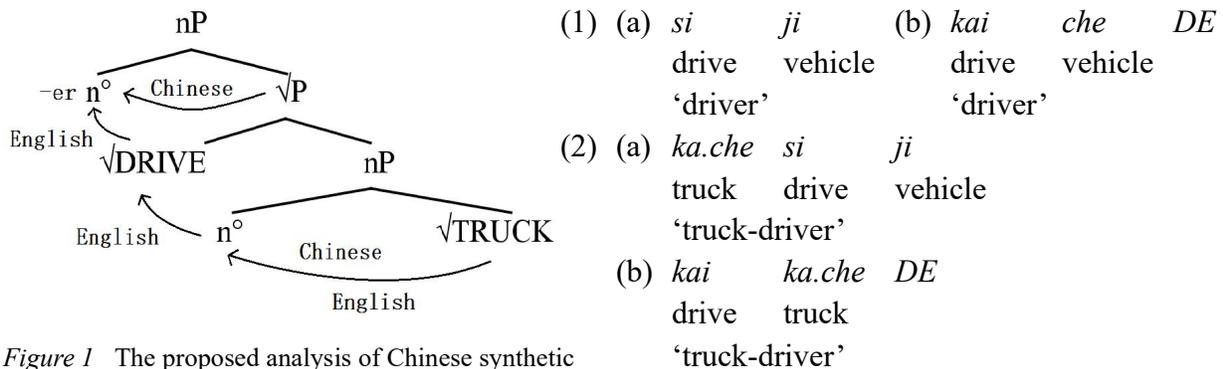

(1) (a) *si   ji*   (b) *kai   che   DE*
        drive   vehicle   drive   vehicle
        'driver'   'driver'

(2) (a) *ka.che   si   ji*
        truck   drive   vehicle
        'truck-driver'

    (b) *kai   ka.che   DE*
        drive   truck
        'truck-driver'

Figure 1 The proposed analysis of Chinese synthetic nominal compounds with comparison to English.

In Chinese, "driver" is expressed either as a synthetic nominal compound, *si ji* (1a), or a nominal phrase, *kai che DE* (1b). While *si* and *ji* are considered bound morphemes that are used in combination with other morphemes in restricted contexts such as compounding constructions, both *kai* and *che* are free morphemes that are used individually in phrasal constructions. Generally speaking, each synthetic nominal compound has a corresponding *DE* construction, but not vice versa. The *DE* particle has been analyzed as various functional heads within a nominal phrase, such as CL° (Cheng & Sybesma 2009), D° (Simpson 2002), C° (Lin 2010), or MOD° (Rubin 2003). From a DM perspective, since *DE* is an inserted Vocabulary Item at PF, the morpho-syntactic analysis of *DE* need not be homogeneous. The current study proposes that *DE* be analyzed as a n°, and *DE* constructions be analyzed as the "deep structures" from which the corresponding synthetic nominal compounds are derived. Specifically, it is proposed that synthetic nominal compounds are the suppletive forms of *DE* constructions, with suppletion always taking place in the highest incorporated structure within an nP, namely, n° and its sister √P. This analysis predicts that *si ji* is inserted to a non-terminal node as an indivisible unit, therefore, *si* or *ji* alone should not be subject to modification. On the other hand, *kai* and *che* are subject to modification, because both of them are terminal nodes in the "deep structure"/*DE* construction. This prediction is affirmed by the difference in the forms of "truck-driver", as *ji* cannot be replaced with *ka.che* (2a), whereas *che* is replaced with *ka.che* (2b).

In conclusion, the current study contributes a pied-piping analysis to the cross-linguistic generalization of compounding structures and a non-terminal analysis of suppletion to DM.

Fulang Chen
University of Toronto

References

Cheng, L. L. & Sybesma, R. (2009). DE as an underspecified classifier: first explorations. *Universiteit Leiden* (for Noam Chomsky).

Halle, M. & Marantz, A. (1993). Distributed Morphology and the Pieces of Inflection. In K. Hale & S. J. Keyser (Eds.), *The View from Building 20*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 111-176.

Harley, H. (2008). Compounding in distributed morphology. To appear in R. Lieber and P. Stekauer, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Compounds.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lin, L. (2010). The DE-marked Modification Structure in Mandarin Chinese. In L. E. Clemens & C. L. Liu (Eds.), *proceedings of the 22nd North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL-22) & the 18th International Conference on Chinese Linguistics (IACL-18).* Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 254-270.

Rubin, E. (2003). The structure of modifiers. Ms. University of Utah.

Simpson, A. (2002). On the status of 'modifying' *DE* and the structure of the Chinese DP. *On the formal way to Chinese languages*, eds. Sze-Wing Tang and Chen-Sheng Liu. CSLI.