

This is based on the guy's assumption of one having complement, the other attribute

In 188b he can be from England, but teaching math.

Complement is sister to N-bar, attribute sister to N-bar. see #164, p 209

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(I leave you to work out for yourself which of our rules in (164) apply to generate each of the structures in (188).) Now, the analysis in (188) has a certain amount of semantic plausibility. After all, if we accept the claim (made earlier) by Hornstein and Lightfoot (1981a, p. 21) that 'each N-bar specifies a semantic property', then from the fact that (188) (a) contains only one N-bar [English teacher], it follows that (188) (a) will attribute only one semantic property to the person concerned, namely that (s)he teaches English. By the same token, the fact that (188) (b) contains two N-bars [English teacher] and [English teacher], entails that (188) (b) will attribute two semantic properties to the individual concerned, namely (i) that (s)he teaches English, and (ii) that (s)he is English.

However, the proposed analysis also has independent syntactic support. Well, I won't bore you with a whole battery of syntactic arguments in support of our analysis. Let's just look at one such argument, relating to word-order facts. Consider a sentence such as the following:

- (189) I think it would be crazy to employ [a French English teacher]
- Just think about what (189) means: does it mean (190) (i) below, or (190) (ii) below?
- (190) (i) I think it would be crazy to employ a French person to teach English
- (ii) I think it would be crazy to employ an English person to teach French

Well, I think it's pretty clear that the NP [a French English teacher] can only be interpreted along the lines of (190) (i) as 'a French person who teaches English', and not along the lines of (190) (ii) as 'an English person who teaches French'. But if you think about it, that's exactly what our analysis in (188) predicts. For, as we have noted many times, our rules specify that Complement always come closer to their Heads than Attributes. Attributes always come closer to their Heads than Complements. This means that when we have a prenominal Attribute and a prenominal Complement associated with the same Head Noun, they will occur in that order.

Attribute + Complement + Noun

(191) *2* Then, in a sequence such as [French English teacher], since English is closer to the Head Noun teacher, it must be a Complement, and since French is further away from teacher, it must be an Attribute. Hence, we necessarily predict the only possible interpretation for [a French English teacher] is 'a French person who teaches English who is French'. So our analysis not only has semantic support, but is also supported by independent syntactic evidence.

But what if some stress marking is then added to this prenominal structure?

support of the structural ambiguity represented in (188) above. For, just as differences of syntactic structure correlate with differences of semantic structure (i.e. meaning), so too we might expect them to correlate with phonological differences. And this is precisely what we find. For if you think about it, you'll realise that the phrase [an English teacher] has two different stress patterns, namely those represented in (192) below (where the syllables receiving primary stress are CAPITALISED):

- (192) (i) an ENGLISH teacher
- (ii) an ENGLISH TEACHER
- And if you think even harder, you'll realise that the two different stress patterns correspond to the two different interpretations in (184) above: that is, (192) (i) means 'someone who teaches English', whereas (192) (ii) means 'a teacher who is English'.

Now, why should the two different stress patterns in (192) be associated with two different meanings? Well, let's assume that just as each N-bar in a sentence is a semantic unit (recall Hornstein and Lightfoot's (1981a, p. 21) observation that 'each N-bar specifies a semantic property'), so too each N-bar is a phonological unit. More specifically, let's assume that the rule for primary stress assignment in English is along the lines given very informally in (193) below:

(193) Assign a separate primary stress to each separate N-bar (i.e. appropriate syllable of an appropriate word in each N-bar)

If we look at the two structures assigned to [an English teacher] in (188), we see that the N-bar constituents which each contains are as in (194):

- (194) (a) an [N' English teacher] (= Complement = 'someone who teaches English')
- (b) an [N' English [N' teacher]] (= Attribute = 'someone who is English')

And our Stress Rule (193) above will accordingly assign primary stress to the first syllable of the word English in (194) (a), but to the first syllable of the word teacher in (194) (b). Thus, it is the phonological facts provide strong independent support for our analysis of the structural ambiguity of [an English teacher] in (188) above. So, it's not too far off to say that our analysis of structural ambiguity is based on the fact that each N-bar is a semantic unit.

You should now be able to tackle exercises 10.

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