

A revisit to the [Num-Cl-Modifier-*de*-N]/ [Modifier-*de*-Num-Cl-N] variation in Mandarin Chinese

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This paper investigates the licensing condition of the [Num(eral)-Cl(assifier)-Mod(ifier)-*de*-N(oun)] / [Mod-*de*-Num-Cl-N] variation in Mandarin Chinese. It is observed that this variation represents a complex interface phenomenon in the nominal domain, which is subject to the semantic condition concerning the i(ndividual)-level/s(tage)-level nature of the modifier contained on the one hand, and the discourse-related condition concerning CONTRASTIVE TOPIC (CT) on the other. Based on this, at the syntax-semantics interface level, this paper proposes a division of the syntactic domain of adnominal modification to account for the discrepancy between i-level and s-level modifiers in terms of their capability in forming [Mod-*de*-Num-Cl-N] in the neutral context. In the meanwhile, at the syntax-discourse interface level, in light of the interface-induced analysis pursued by Neeleman & Van de Koot (2008) and Horvath (2010), it is claimed that the word order of [Mod-*de*-Num-Cl-N] could be adopted as a linguistic device to encode CT within the nominal domain in Mandarin Chinese, in which case the ordering of [Mod-*de*-Num-Cl-N] is licensed for the purpose of establishing a transparent mapping between syntactic configuration and information structure.

Keywords: word order, modifier, syntax-semantics interface, syntax-discourse interface, nominal phrase