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On Phonological Head and Stress Placement: from a variety of viewpoints

In the field of Morphology, most compounds in English are endocentric, and they have a head. In such compounds, the head element normally appears as the right-handmost constituent of the word. Therefore, Williams (1981) points out that in morphology, we define the head of a morphologically complex word to be the right-hand member of that word. This is called “The Right-Hand Head Rule” (RHR). This correctly predicts that, in most cases of English, the rightmost member of the word is the head of the word.

Firstly, this study suggests that I can introduce the notion “Phonological Head” to the field of phonology and explain stress placement or stress shift from a variety of viewpoints. According to Tzakosta & van de Weijer (2006), I will define “Phonological Head” as follows: Phonological Heads---different degrees of stress: accented syllables are heads while unaccented syllables are non-heads.

Furthermore, I will also introduce Phonological Sub-Head, Phonological Non-Head as well as Phonological Head, to explain stress shift by derivation such as (definite + ive)PW. As to the introduction for Phonological Sub-Head, this term is based on Morphological Sub-Head suggested by Namiki (1985). These heads can also indicate that there are differences between Compound Stress and Phrasal Stress, and exceptional examples for compounds which have afterstress.

Secondly, the fact that there is Phonological Head in the field of phonology is obviously explained by phonological phenomena of aphasia: in agrammatism, Phonological Words (Heads) are defined by the viewpoint of stress, that is, Phonological Words (Heads) bear stress and these items (N, V, A) tend to be maintained while Non-Phonological Words do not bear stress, that is, preposition, determiners and inflections indeed tend to be omitted in agrammatism,.

Thirdly, in Rhythm Rule in English, stress shift easily occurs with high frequency words, while stress shift does not easily occur with low frequency words. This is properly explained by restructuring of Phonological Words based on rate of (rapid) speech.

Fourthly, I can explain that the phenomena of phonology (for stress placement and stress shift) are based on the principle of “Adjacency”, and the differences of adjacency between words and suffixes are subject to stress shift.

In sum, I will indicate that defining Phonological Head (Word) which bears stress can explain a lot of phonological phenomena including stress shift and so forth.

References

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