

## How Do Phrasal and Lexical Modification Differ? – Contrasting Adjective-Noun Combinations

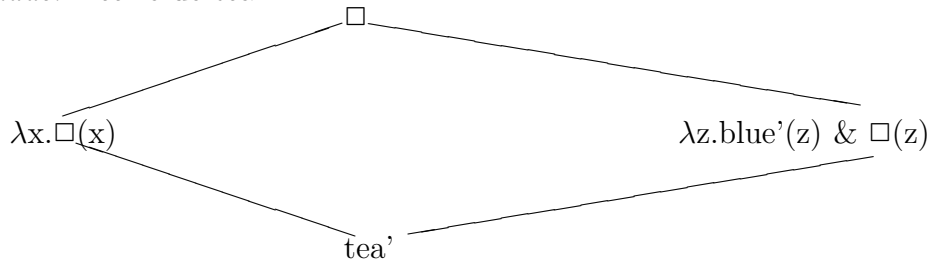
### 1 Introduction

Examples like German *wilde Ehe* ('concubinage') challenge the split between the naming function of compounding as opposed to the descriptive force of syntax (cf. Call for Papers). However, contrasting AP+N and A+N constructions in German, I argue for crucial differences in the compositional mechanisms at stake: Whereas in case of phrasal AP+N the complex meaning is computed by functionally applying the meaning of A to the meaning of N, in case of A+N compounds the meaning of N is associated with A via a lexical morpho-semantic interface rule introducing a free variable. This analysis provides evidence for a principled split between syntactic and lexical modification responsible for the correlation between syntax and „describing“ on the one and morphology and „naming“ on the other hand.<sup>1</sup>

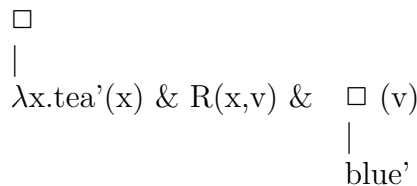
### 2 Analysis and Data

Combining Egg's (2004) underspecified semantic representations (consisting of  $\lambda$ -term-fragments, unknown parts of them called 'holes' (=  $\square$ ) and dominance relations correlating fragments and holes) with Maienborn's (2003) split between internal and external modification, I will show that compositional rules map phrasal AP+N to representations as (1a), A+N counterparts though to (1b):

(1) a. *blauer Tee* 'blue tea':



b. *Blautee* 'blue-tea':



The free R-relation in (1b) allows for a flexible meaning contribution of A in case of A+N; the dominance relations enforce identifying the properties A and N with the topmost

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<sup>1</sup>Being aware of a significant overlap, I argue for a basic form-function fit making A+N more suitable to „naming“ than AP+N.

hole as an integrated whole. For AP+N however, both fragments are independent while their semantic relation is fixed due to direct functional application.

These ingredients account for constraints on comparatives in A+N compounds, cf. (2), near equivalence of AP+N and A+N in case of descriptive A and subtle contrasts in negative contexts and with „incompatible“ attribution, cf. (3).<sup>2</sup> Further evidence for the proposed split is drawn from the observation that A+N compounds prosodically prefer end-stressed A.<sup>3</sup>

- (2) #Billigerwein (vs. Billigwein / Billigstwein)  
cheaper-wine (vs. cheap-wine / cheapest-wine)
- (3) a. Dies ist kein Blautee / #kein blauer Tee, obwohl er blau ist.  
this is not blue-tea / not blue tea, although it blue is
- b. Dies ist ein roter Blautee / #ein roter blauer Tee.  
this is a red blue-tea / a red blue tea

Returning to the question at the outset, I argue that „naming“ necessarily involves an integrative force readily available in case of A+N. „Describing“ on the contrary corresponds to a bipartite processing at hand in the given AP+N computation.<sup>4</sup>

## References

- Egg, Markus (2004). Anti-Ikonizität an der Syntax-Semantik-Schnittstelle. *Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 25: 1-38.
- Fleischer, Wolfgang & Irmhild Barz (1992). *Wortbildung der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Maienborn, Claudia (2003). Event-internal modifiers: Semantic underspecification and conceptual interpretation. In *Modifying Adjuncts*, Ewald Lang et al. (eds.), 475-509. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter.
- Motsch, Wolfgang (1999). *Wortbildung in Grundzügen*. Berlin & New York: de Gruyter.

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<sup>2</sup>I chose a non-existent combination in order to avoid effects triggered by lexicalisation. Due to existent forms like *Grüner Tee / Grüntee* (‘green tea’, ‘green-tea’) analogies to lexicalized AP-N vs. A-N are balanced.

<sup>3</sup>See Motsch (1999), Fleischer & Barz (1992) for these characteristics.

<sup>4</sup>Note that this account leaves room for „naming“ via syntax: If integration is accomplished independently, syntactical units can also function as „names“. Form and interpretation of A+N however prefigure that function.