

# Righthand Head Rule and the typology of word stress

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## abstract

It has been pointed out that there are languages that violate the Righthand Head Rule (RHR) for words and compounds (Williams (1981) among others). This paper argues that the languages violating RHR have righthand word-stress such as penultimate stress, which blocks head-final order in linearization. A stress-based theory of linearization (Tokizaki (2011), Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013b)) straightforwardly explains why RHR is observed in some languages and not in others. It is argued that we do not need morphological head parameters as well as syntactic head parameters.

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, I argue that the Righthand Head Rule (RHR) (Williams (1981) among others), which does not apply to some languages, can be done away with if we assume a stress-based theory of word order proposed by Tokizaki (2011) and Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013b). I argue that righthand word-stress (e.g. penultimate stress) blocks the righthand head (i.e. head-final) order in linearization of a constituent. Our stress-based theory of word order straightforwardly explains why RHR is observed in some languages but not in others. I argue that the order of a head and its complement is determined by phonological properties such as stress, and that we do not need to postulate morphological head parameters as well as syntactic head parameters (contra *der Beurden* (1988) and Lieber (1992)).

In section 2, we review the Righthand Head Rule and its exceptions reported so far, and discuss the morphological head parameter proposed in order to explain the exceptions. Section 3 explains the relation between RHR and word-stress location. We also consider why head-complement order is correlated with word-stress location. Section 4 concludes the discussion with a note on possible counterexamples in English.\*

## 2 The Righthand Head Rule and its exceptions

### 2.1 The Righthand Head Rule

There are a number of languages where the head of a word or compound is generally placed at its

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righthand position. Williams (1981) formulates this generalization as the Righthand Head Rule (RHR) (cf. Selkirk (1982); Di Sciullo and Williams (1987); Namiki (2001)).

- (1) a. [N [A kind] [N -ness]]  
 b. [N [A black] [N bird]]
- (2) a. [N [A *atarashi*] [N -sa]]  
           new           -ness  
 b. [N [A *kuro*] [N *kami*]]  
           black   hair

In these examples, the head of a constituent is defined as an element that decides the category of the constituent. In English, the suffix *-ness* is on the right and can be considered as an N, which decides the category of the whole word *kindness* as N as shown in (1a). In (1b), the noun *bird* is on the right and is the head of the compound noun. Similarly, Japanese observes the RHR: the nominal suffix *-sa* ‘-ness’ attaches to an adjective stem to make a noun as in (2a); the head noun *kami* is on the right in the compound noun in (2b). Other than English and Japanese, German, Dutch, Chinese and Korean are reported to obey RHR (Trommelen and Zonneveld (1986), Booij (2002)). Here I will not discuss Russian and Turkish, which have also been reported to obey RHR (cf. Ralli (2013: 109) and the references cited there; Tokizaki (2013: 295)).

## 2.2 RHR violated

The RHR correctly predicts the head position in words and compounds in a number of languages. However, it has been reported that RHR is violated in compounds and words in some languages, as shown in (3).

- (3) a. Italian (Scalise 1992)  
       [N [N campo] [A santo]]  
           field    holy  
       ‘cemetery’
- b. Tagalog (Lieber 1992)  
       [N [N matang] [N lawin]]  
           eyes    hawk  
       ‘keen eyes’
- c. Vietnamese (Lieber 1980)  
       [N [N nguòi] [v ở]]  
           person   be located  
       ‘servant’

- d. Maori (Bauer 1993)  
 [<sub>N</sub> [<sub>N</sub> roro] [<sub>N</sub> hiko]]  
 brain electricity  
 ‘computer’
- e. Samoan (Hoeksema 1984)  
 [<sub>N</sub> [<sub>N</sub> fale] [<sub>N</sub> oloa]]  
 building goods  
 ‘shop, store’
- f. Aghem (Bantu) (van Beurden 1988)  
 [<sub>N</sub> [<sub>N</sub> ndugho] [<sub>N</sub> finwɪn]]  
 house bird  
 ‘bird's nest’
- g. Swahili (Bantu) (Vitale (1981: 10), Lieber (2009: 179))  
 [<sub>N</sub> [<sub>N</sub> ku-] [<sub>V</sub> tafutwa]] kwa Juma  
 -ing- search for Juma  
 ‘the searching for Juma’

In these examples, the left noun is the head of the compound noun. It is clear that RHR is not a universal rule (cf. Scalise and Fábregas (2010) for an analysis of the MorBoComp database).

### 2.3 Morphological parameter?

The question is how can we deal with the languages violating RHR. One could make Lefthand Head Rule (LHR) for these languages. Then, we need a morphological head parameter, which is proposed by der Beurden (1988), in addition to syntactic head parameter (cf. Hoeksema (1992)). The morphological head parameter together with syntactic head parameter allows us to make distinction between languages about the head position in words, compounds and phrases. For example, Tagalog has the same parameter value head-initial for words and phrases; Japanese has a head-final value for both words and phrases; English has a head-final value in words and compounds (e.g. *kindness*; *blackbird*) but a head-initial value in phrases (e.g. *eat bread*). However, setting a morphological parameter and its value for a language does not give us any reason why some languages have the same value for words and phrases while some languages have different values for words and phrases. We should look for a better explanation of the variation.

In addition to cross-linguistic variation, there can also be variation in a language. Gafos (1992) argues that Greek has both righthand head compounds and lefthand head compounds, as shown in (4) and (5).

(4) a. *katsiko-klephtis*

goat-stealer

'goat stealer'

b. *klephto-kotas*

stealer-chicken

'chicken stealer'

(5) a. *hiono-nero*

snow-water

'iced water'

b. *nero-hiono*

water-snow

'iced water'

A compound in (4a) observes RHR with the head *klephtis* on the right while (4b) has a similar head word *klephto* on the left and violates RHR. Moreover, in (5) the same words can be ordered in righthand head order as in (5a) and in lefthand head order as in (5b). These examples cannot be explained by setting a value of morphological head parameter as either right or left in a language like Greek. Moreover, we cannot ascribe the word order difference to lexical idiosyncrasy because the head words (and the other words) are similar or the same in both word orders. If parameters allow one of the values but not both, it is not possible to explain the Greek data in (4) and (5). On the other hand, Ralli (2012: 110) argues that the canonical position of the head in Greek compounding must be that at the right side. It is necessary to investigate Greek compounding in more detail.

## 2.4 Head-modifier parameter (Lieber 1992)

Lieber (1992) adds another parameter head-modifier (HM) to head-complement parameter in phrases (HC) and RHR/LHR in words. She argues that languages choose values for these parameters as in (6), where I show the data of head-modifier order and RHR/LHR but omit the data of head-complement order for the reason of space.

(6) Order between Head and Spec/Modifier/Complement

Tagalog:	HC	HM	LHR (compounds/words)	
		<i>libro-ng nasa mesa</i>	<i>matang lawin</i>	<i>manga-awit</i>
		book LK on table	person-song	person-song
			'singer'	'singer'
French:	HC	HM	LHR (compounds)/RHR (words)	
		<i>mot vrai</i>	<i>timbre poste</i>	<i>voy-eur</i>
		true word	stamp postage	watch-er

English:	HC	MH		RHR (compounds/words)
			<i>true <u>word</u></i>	<i>postage <u>stamp</u> watch-<u>er</u></i>
Dutch:	HC/ CH	MH		RHR (compounds/words)
			<i>cultureel <u>akkoord</u></i>	<i>diep<u>zee</u> weef-<u>sel</u></i>
			cultural accord	'deep sea' 'texture'
Japanese:	CH	MH		RHR (compounds/words)
			<i>kuroi <u>kami</u></i>	<i>kuro-<u>kami</u> atarashi-<u>sa</u></i>
			black hair	black-hair new-ness

Although Lieber's parameterization of orders is interesting, several questions arise. First, how can we explain the difference between Tagalog (consistent head-initial in compounds and words) and French (head-initial in compounds but head-final in words), both of which have head-initial order in head-complement (HC) and in head-modifier (HM) pairs? Second, do children need to learn a head-directionality parameter for each category in morphology and syntax? If so, language acquisition requires a lot of processes. Instead of setting parameters for different categories, I will try to derive the values of head-directionality parameters from the word-stress location in the language.

### 3 RHR and word-stress location

#### 3.1 Order and word-stress location

In this section, I argue that the order of head and its complement is correlated with the word-stress location in the language (cf. Tokizaki (2011), Tokizaki (2013) and Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013b)). The correlation is illustrated in (7), where I use the terms Lefthand head (L) and Righthand head (R) for head-initial and head-final, respectively.

(7) Head position in VP, NP, compound and word (Left/Right)

	<u>VP</u>	<u>NP</u>	<u>Cmp</u>	<u>Wrđ</u>	<u>Languages (word-stress location)</u>
a.	R	R	R	R	Korean (L-edge), Japanese (pitch)
b.	L/R	L/R	R	R	German (R-oriented), Dutch (R-oriented), Chinese (tone)
c.	L	L/R	R	R	English (R-oriented)
d.	L	L/R	L/R	R	Greek (antepenultimate)
e.	L	L	L	R	Romance (R-edge)
f.	L	L	L	L	Bantu (R-edge), Tagalog (pen), Samoan (pen*), Vietnamese (tone), Maori (unbounded)

Here, I show the word order in VP as an example of phrases larger than NP (for other word orders, see Tokizaki (2011) and Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013b)). I follow the typology of stress location by Goedemans and van der Hulst (2005a, b; 2013a, b). Right-oriented stress means that the language has the weight-sensitive stress system, which assigns the main stress to one of the last three syllables (antepenult, penult or ultimate) in a word. Right-edge stress means that the language assigns main

stress to one of the last two syllables (penult or ultimate). Left-edge stress assigns main stress to one of the first two syllables (initial or second). Unbounded stress means that stress can go to any heavy syllable in a word. Penultimate stress is a fixed stress system. Roughly, we can make a left-to-right order of word-stress locations in (7) as in (8).

(8) a. weight-sensitive stress:

left-edge (first or second) < right-oriented (antepenultimate, penultimate or ultimate) <  
right-edge (penultimate or ultimate)

b. fixed stress:

antepenultimate < penultimate

We can argue that consistently righthand-head (head-final) languages in (7a) have lefthand stress such as left-edge (see Lee (1990) for Korean), and that consistently lefthand-head (head-initial) languages in (7f) have righthand stress such as penultimate and right-edge. We can observe that languages with both righthand-head and lefthand-head orders have rather middle stress location such as right-oriented stress as in (7b) and (7c). Crucially, English (7c) and Romance languages (7e) can also be distinguished by their stress locations, namely right-oriented stress and right-edge stress.

We still need to distinguish English (7c) from German/Dutch (7b), both of them are reported to have right-oriented stress in Goedemans and van der Hulst (2005b; 2013). It seems to be possible to argue that English has lost the original Germanic stem-initial stress more than German and Dutch have. This is the point we need more discussion.

Some notes are necessary for (7). Samoan in (7f) is reported to have penultimate stress in most stems (Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992: 28)). Vietnamese in (7f) does not have stress, but its neighboring language Khmer has ultimate stress. In fact, languages in Austro-Asiatic family to which Vietnamese belongs, except for the genus Munda (e.g. Mundari (right-edge stress), have ultimate stress (Semerai, Halang, Sedang, Khasi, Khmer and Khmu') (Goedemans and van der Hulst 2005a; 2013a). Chinese in (7b), which has righthand-head order in nominal phrases but lefthand head order in the other phrases, is controversial with respect to the presence of stress (see Duanmu (1990)), but Tokizaki (2014) argues that Chinese has left prominence in noun phrases and right prominence in the other phrases (cf. Tokizaki and Nasukawa (2014)). Japanese in (7a) is problematic if we assume the standard view of Japanese, which claims that Japanese has no stress but pitch accent (cf. Kubozono (2011)). I argue that Japanese has some strength in the word-initial position (Tokizaki (2011; to appear a), cf. Duanmu (2008) for a similar idea that Japanese has two types of accent). If this analysis is on the right track, Japanese conforms to the generalization that languages with lefthand word-stress have righthand head order.

The remaining problem of this analysis is provided by Maori in (7f), which is reported to have unbounded weight-sensitive stress (Goedemans and van der Hulst (2005; 2013)) and consistent

lefthand head order. The unbounded stress can occur at any heavy syllable in a word, and it is difficult to regard it as lefthand or righthand stress. In fact, the stress system of Maori is controversial (cf. Harlow 2007: 81-85). We need to investigate the stress system of Maori more in detail.

### 3.2 Why are order and word-stress location correlated?

We have seen that the position of morphosyntactic head correlates with the word-stress location. In this section, let us consider why this is the case in the world's languages. We proposed a stress-based theory of word orders in Tokizaki (2011) and Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013b), which discussed orders of affix-stem, noun-genitive, adposition-object, verb-object and adverbial subordinator (complementizer)-clause (cf. Tokizaki (2013) for compounds). We showed that languages with lefthand word-stress tend to have head-final order while languages with righthand word-stress tend to have head-initial order. Moreover, we showed that the number of languages with head-initial order increases as the constituent gets larger. For example, affix-stem order (head-initial) is seen in a limited number of languages in the world (e.g. Bantu and Oceanic) (known as suffix preference (cf. Hawkins and Cutler (1988); Hawkins and Gilligan (1988); Asao (2015))) while adverbial subordinator (complementizer)-clause order (head-initial) is seen in quite a number of languages (Dryer (2005; 2015)).

From the result of these studies, we can expect that the same tendency is observed in VPs, NPs (modifier-noun), compounds, words (affix-stem). We can see that this is generally the case in (7). As the word-stress location moves rightward, more categories have the lefthand head order. For example, languages with lefthand stress such as Korean and Japanese have consistent head-final order in VP, NP, compound and word as in (7a) while languages with righthand stress such as Bantu and Tagalog have consistent head-initial order as in (7f). Languages in (7b), (7c), (7d) and (7e) show a gradual shift from righthand head order to lefthand head order starting from the largest constituent VP and ending in the smallest constituent word (cf. Tokizaki and Kuwana (2013a)).

I have argued that the correlation between order of constituents and word-stress location can be ascribed to the mechanism of stress assignment to a structure. Cinque (1993), generalizing Chomsky and Halle's (1968) Nuclear Stress Rule and Compound Stress Rule, proposes a rule that assigns the main stress to the most deeply embedded element in a syntactic structure. For example, in a VP consisting of a verb and a noun, stress falls on a noun, which is assumed to be the most deeply embedded element in the VP (e.g. [<sub>VP</sub> *eat* [<sub>NP</sub> [<sub>N</sub> *fish*]]]) assuming the X-bar theoretic structure with non-branching nodes). Assuming the bare phrase structure in the minimalist framework, Tokizaki (2015) and Tokizaki (to appear b) propose to replace Cinque's rule with a metrical rule Set Strong, which assigns a label Strong to a set when it is merged with a terminal (e.g. [<sub>w</sub> *eat* {<sub>s</sub> *fish*}], *fish* as a single-membered set (cf. Kayne (2008))). This analysis correctly predicts the fact that stress falls on the complement rather than the head in a constituent. I also argue that the word-stress location

matches the main stress location in phrases. Then, lefthand word stress goes well with lefthand phrasal stress, which matches lefthand complement (i.e. head-final order and righthand head). Languages with righthand word-stress cannot have lefthand complement, which would receive stress by Set Strong resulting in lefthand stress in phrases and words. As a result, these languages have righthand complement and righthand stress in phrases and words, violating RHR. Thus, we can explain the correlation between the position of morphosyntactic head and the word-stress location in terms of the nature of stress assignment to a hierarchical structure.

#### 4 Conclusion

So far I have argued that the righthand head rule (RHR) for words and compounds is violated in languages with righthand word stress such as penultimate and right-edge stress. I have shown the data of these languages and argued that word-stress location correlates with the order of head and complement in words and phrases. The correlation is due to the general pattern of stress on the complement, which can be captured by Set Strong assigning a label Strong to a set rather than a terminal. The analysis presented here is successful in explaining languages violating RHR as well as languages obeying RHR.

To conclude, RHR is a generalization about languages with head-final order in smaller categories such as words and compounds. These languages have stress rather on the left than on the right of a word. Languages with righthand stress do not obey RHR because the stress location prefers head-initial (lefthand head) order in words and compounds. It is important to note that we do not need morphological head parameters as well as syntactic head parameters if the correlation between word order and stress location is universal.

Focusing on the cross-linguistic variation about the head position in words and phrases, I have not discussed the existence of counterexamples in languages observing RHR. For example, English has a number of prefixes that can be the head of a word: [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>V</sub> en-] [<sub>N</sub> rage]], [<sub>A</sub> [<sub>A</sub> a-] [<sub>N</sub> fire]], [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>V</sub> be-] [<sub>N</sub> head]]. These prefixes are exceptions to RHR because the lefthand element determines the category of the whole word (cf. Williams (1981: 249), Anderson (1992: 312)). However, considering their etymology, these prefixes are not problematic for the analysis presented here (cf. Maylor 2002: 194). The structures of *enrage* and *afire* originally were [<sub>PP</sub> [<sub>P</sub> en-] [<sub>N</sub> rage]] and [<sub>P</sub> [<sub>P</sub> a-] [<sub>N</sub> fire]] with a prefix 'in' from Old French. The other case *behead* has appeared in Old English, which allowed some types of prefixes such as *ge-*, *for-* and *be-*. That is, the stress location of Old English was stem-initial rather than word-initial. Thus, it is not surprising that these words with lefthand head are allowed in English. Of course, we need more investigation to establish the historical correlation between word order and stress location, which I will leave for future study.

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## 右側主要部規則と語強勢の類型論

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### 要旨

語や複合語では右側に主要部があるとする右側主要部規則 Righthand Head Rule (RHR) には、例外となる言語が存在する。この論文では、RHR に従う言語は語の左に強勢を持ち、例外となる言語が語の右側に強勢を持つことを指摘する。さらに、語強勢の位置が複合語や句の強勢位置と段階的に対応することを述べ、強勢が主要部ではなく補部に置かれるという一般化により、語強勢が左にある言語は、語や複合語や句の右に主要部を持ち、語強勢が右にある言語は、語や複合語や句の左に主要部を持つということを主張する。この語強勢と語順の相関関係の一部を捉えたものが右側主要部規則と言える。

第2日：6月12日（日）

研究発表Ⅱ [地下2階] ..... 10:30-11:45

A会場 B202教室 司会：吉村 あき子（奈良女子大学）

4 (10:30-11:05) 眼前描写文における事態の予測可能性  
—フランス語の (VOILA) 「名詞句+関係節」の分析をもとに  
津田 洋子（京都大学研修員）

5 (11:10-11:45) 多義語としての助詞「なんか」の意味分析—カテゴリーの観点から—  
滝 理江（名古屋大学大学院生）

B会場 B203教室 司会：岸本 秀樹（神戸大学）

4 (10:30-11:05) 中間構文のパラドクスと Smuggling 移動による分析  
玉元 孝治（金武町教育委員会）

5 (11:10-11:45) 虚辞のラベル問題と文主語構文の一致について  
本田 隆裕（神戸女子大学）

C会場 B209教室 司会：菊田 千春（同志社大学）

4 (10:30-11:05) 統語的複合語「V-かける」の二義性について  
板東 美智子（滋賀大学）・日高 俊夫（九州国際大学）

5 (11:10-11:45) 統語的複合動詞「V-切る」における意味構造と統語  
日高 俊夫（九州国際大学）

D会場 B210教室 司会：田中 真一（神戸大学）

4 (10:30-11:05) 現代ウイグル語の弱化母音の唇音化と語彙層について  
菅沼 健太郎（九州大学）

5 (11:10-11:45) 右側主要部規則と語強勢の類型論【招聘発表】  
時崎 久夫（札幌大学）

研究発表Ⅲ [地下2階] ..... 13:00-14:15

A会場 B202教室 司会：佐野 まさき（立命館大学）

6 (13:00-13:35) 否定極性表現シカ・誰モの統語的位置  
井戸 美里（筑波大学大学院生／学術振興会特別研究員）

7 (13:40-14:15) Does Subject-Drop Make Clausal Embedding Harder to Learn?  
Preliminary Evidence from Japanese Parental Speech【招聘発表】  
藤井 友比呂（横浜国立大学）・神山 隆仁（横浜国立大学）・時崎 久夫（札幌大学）

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