

THE STRUCTURE OF MODIFICATION



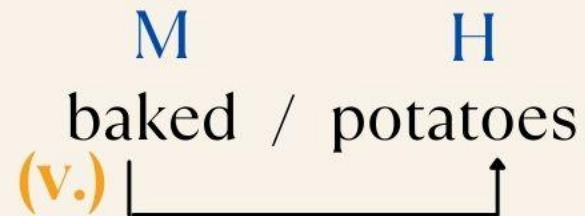
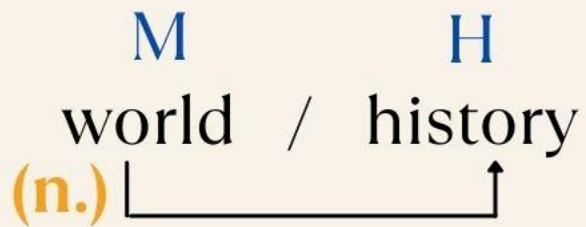
A structure of modification consists of a **head (H)** and a **modifier (M)**.

- 1 Noun or Noun Phrase as Head
- 2 Verb or Verb Phrase as Head
- 3 Adjective as Head
- 4 Adverb as Head
- 5 Prepositional Phrase as Head
- 6 Sentence as Head



1 Noun or Noun Phrase as Head

When noun appears as the head in the structure of modification, the modifier may be any of the **four parts of speech**: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.



1 Noun or Noun Phrase as Head (cont.)

M H
red / carpets
(adj.) ↑

H M
American / now
↑ (adv.)

1 Noun or Noun Phrase as Head (cont.)

- Modifiers which **precede** the head are called **pronominal modifiers**.
- They include noun determiners, adjectives, noun adjuncts, present participles, and past participles
- Those that **follow** the head are called **postnominal** modifiers and include adverbs, infinitives, infinitival phrases, present participial phrases, past participial phrases, adjective phrases, prepositional phrases and relative clauses.

Relative Clauses

There are **two types of relative clauses**:
restrictive clauses and non-restrictive
relative clauses.

Example(s): I wrote to ^H a friend ^M who now lives in California. (restrictive relative clause)

The diagram consists of a horizontal line with a vertical tick mark at the end of 'a friend' and another at the end of 'California'. A horizontal line connects these two tick marks, with an upward-pointing arrow from the center of this line to the space between 'a' and 'friend'.

I wrote to ^H Janet, ^M who now lives in California. (non-restrictive relative clause)

The diagram consists of a horizontal line with a vertical tick mark at the end of 'Janet' and another at the end of 'California'. A horizontal line connects these two tick marks, with an upward-pointing arrow from the center of this line to the space between 'Janet,' and 'who'.





2 Verb or Verb Phrase as Head

A verb or a verb phrase can function as a head in a structure of modification. Verb or verb phrase modifiers are not direct objects.

Example(s): John ate out.

*ate as a head/out as modifier

John ate rice.

**ate -- verbal element/rice -- direct object
a structure of complementation

2 Verb or Verb Phrase as Head (cont.)

They ^H talked / ^M about the accident.
↑ (prep. phrase)

Jane ^H stood on tiptoe / ^M so that she could see the tiger.
↑ (adv. cl.)

3 Adjective as Head

Apart from being modifiers, adjectives may function as heads in structure of modification and their modifiers can be nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.

Example(s):



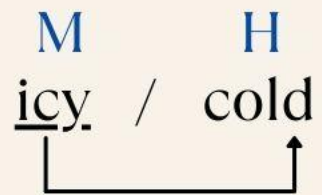
(only certain noun can function as adj. modifiers.)



(verbs which function as adj. modifiers.)

3 Adjective as Head (cont.)

M H
icy / cold



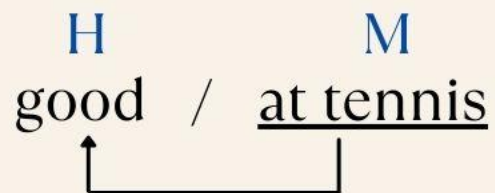
(adjectives which can function as adjective modifiers)

M H
unusually / smart



(the most common adj. modifiers are adverbs)

H M
good / at tennis



(prep. phrases are also among the most common modifiers of adjectives.)

4 Adverb as Head

When adverbs function as heads in structure of modification, they may be modified by intensifiers, other adverbs, nouns or noun phrases, and prepositional phrases.


Example(s):

	M		H	
	<u>rather</u>	/	quickly	(intensifiers)
	└──┬──┘		└──┬──┘	


	M		H	
	<u>unbelievably</u>	/	well	(adverbs)
	└──┬──┘		└──┬──┘	

4 Adverb as Head (cont.)

M H
inches / away (nouns)



M H
two minutes / before (noun phrases)



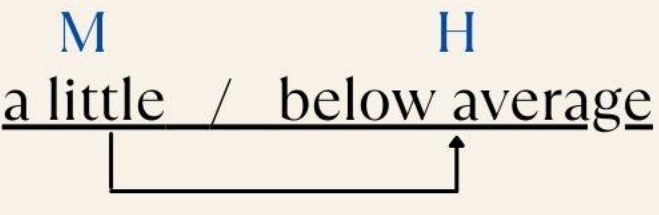
H M
outside / in the dark (prep. phrases)



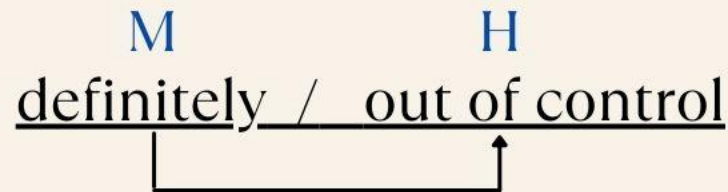
5 Prepositional Phrase as Head

Prepositional phrase may function as heads whose modifiers can be intensifiers, adverbs, or noun phrases.

Example(s): a little / below average (intensifiers)



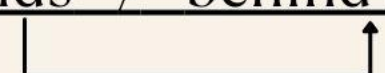
definitely / out of control (adverbs)






5 Prepositional Phrase as Head (cont.)

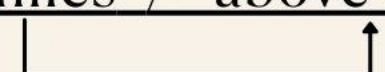
M H
seconds / behind schedule




(nouns)



M H
fifty miles / above the sea level



(noun phrases)



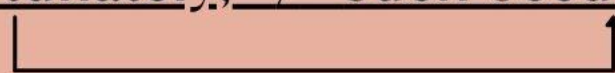
6 Sentence as Head

When sentences appear as heads of structures of modification, they may be modified by adverbs, phrases (prep. phrases, present participial phrases, past participial phrases, or infinitival phrases), and subordinate clauses.

Example(s):


M H

Fortunately, / such occurrences are rather rare. (adverbs)




M H

According to the records, / the fellow has been in the prison five times. (prep. phrase)




6 Sentence as Head (cont.)

H M
He was in the garden, / watering the plants.

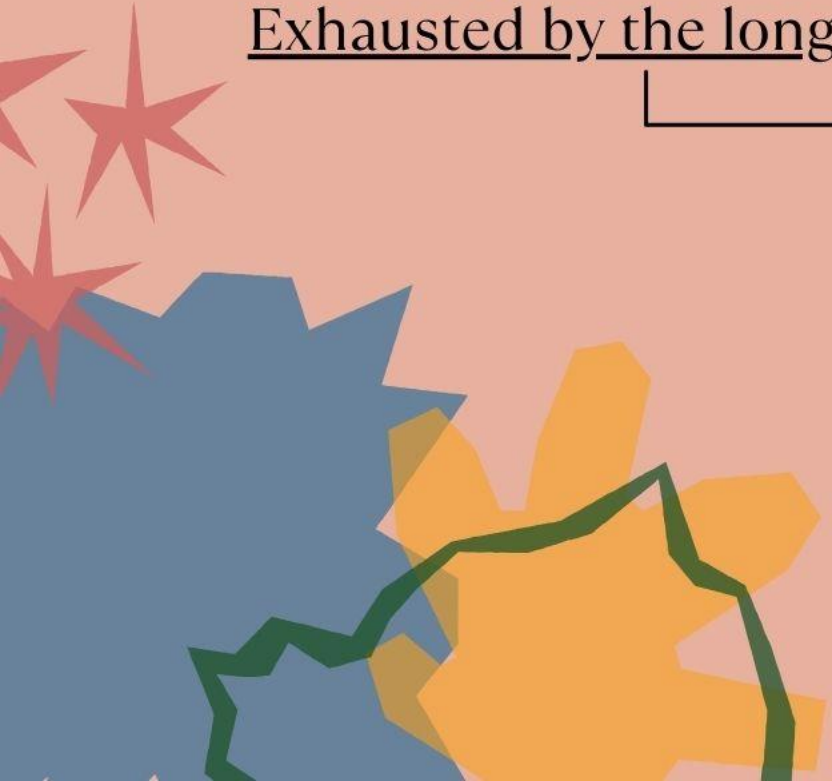


(present participial phrase)

H M
Exhausted by the long trip, / Tom took a nap.



(past participial phrase)



Reference

Jotikasthira, P. (2014). Introduction to the English Language : System and Structure. Bangkok: Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

