The syntax of nominal modification and complex noun phrases in Siwkolan Amis

[秀姑巒阿美語名詞修飾結構以及其複雜名詞組]

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This work investigates the syntax of nominal modification involving the linker a in Siwkolan Amis, one of the dialects of Amis, an Austronesian language spoken in Taiwan. Based on the two observed types of NP-ellipsis patterns and the formal licensing condition, I argue that Amis displays two types of modification. Modifiers in direct modification are functional heads projecting extended functional projections of NP, whereas those in indirect modification are modifier phrases base-generated at [Spec, ModP]. This distinction adds weight to J. Wu's (2003) view that relative clauses and description-denoting modifiers marked by -ay are clausal modifiers that have a full-fledged CP structure from a cartographic perspective. Furthermore, I argue that a projects the Modifier Phrase (ModP) and is a modificatory clitic endowed with a [+mod] feature that attaches to a head element moving from a lower head position to form a morphological word. Very much in line with Philip (2012), the proposed analysis suggests that a is endowed with an interpretative profile in marking a modification relation between an extended functional projection (a modifier phrase) and a dependent word (a modified noun) in the nominal domain. Issues involved in dealing with the structure of Amis complex noun phrases are discussed.

Keywords: Amis, modification, NP-ellipsis, linker, formal licensing, cartography

關鍵詞：阿美語、修飾結構、名詞刪除、繁詞、形式核可、製圖理論

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