

Kolloquium Slawistische Linguistik
Institut für Slawistik der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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Head-final constraint on modifiers: A view from Slavic

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Wo? Dorotheenstr. 65, Raum 5.57

Abstract

Modifiers in many languages are subject to a well-known constraint that disallows them to be not head-final, whence the ungrammaticality of, e.g., English “a proud of his son father”. Although there are several accounts available in the literature that attempt to derive this constraint (e.g., Escibano 2004, Sheehan to appear), none of them appears to be fully satisfactory in terms of data coverage given that the head-final constraint does not always apply both within an individual language (cf., e.g., “an easy to read text” in English) and cross-linguistically, as a number of languages do not seem to obey to it. Interestingly, several Slavic languages are among them (Bulgarian, Polish, Russian), whereas some other Slavic languages require their pre-nominal modifiers to be head-final (Czech, Serbo-Croatian). This talk will present the first results of an ongoing large-scale typological study of the head-final constraint with a particular emphasis on Slavic and, based on this, some initial ideas for a possible analysis of this constraint.