Syntax-driven semantic composition: Combination

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Principle of Compositionality

The meaning of an expression is a function of the meanings of its parts and the way they combine.

→ combinatory process

→ Combinations = syntactic structure

process vs. structure

Ruled out: ((black machine) coffee)

black, coffee, machine

a b c

1. ((black coffee) machine) — (a b c) ((a b) c)
2. (black (coffee machine)) — (a (b c))
3. ~~(black coffee machine)~~ X due to A1

Assumptions

1. Combine two items at most — in a single step.
2. Combine only adjacent items.

a b c d

1. → first combine b and c.
   → Then combine the result with d
   → Then combine the result with a.

(a ((b c) d))

2. → i. first combine a and b
   → ii. Then combine c and d
   iii. combine the result of i with that of ii.

((a b) (c d))

n combinations

3. i. comb. c and d.
   ii. " a and b
   iii " pi with pii

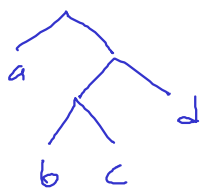
((a b) (c d))

a b c d

(b c)

((b c) d)

(a ((b c) d))



a b c d