

Book review

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Book title: *The Syntax of Adjectives: A Comparative Study*

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The main claim of Cinque's excellent monograph is that adjectives come in (at least) two flavours and are merged in at least two different positions. Adjectives merged into the NP-DP frame as APs are called Direct modification adjectives. They are merged into specifiers of dedicated functional heads in the extended projection of the Noun. Indirect modification adjectives, on the other hand, are really reduced relative clauses (RC) merged into a functional projection hosting only reduced relative clauses. Indirect modification adjectives are merged higher than the previously mentioned functional projections. The two types of adjectives are associated with clear interpretive and syntactic differences which Cinque all derives from the different point of merge and their different internal syntax. The typical/canonical adjectives are those merged as reduced RCs, while the special adjectives with various nonintersective and/or nonpredicative interpretations are merged as simple Adjective phrases (AP) lower in the structure.

Cinque starts the discussion on adjectives by showing how the N-raising analysis he proposed in Cinque (1994) to explain the difference between Italian and English adjectives cannot be adequate. One reason that comes out very clear from the second chapter relates to the well presented and abundantly documented difference between English and Italian adjectives. Whereas in English the prenominal adjectives are sometimes ambiguous (e.g. between the stage level and individual level interpretation), in Italian it is the postnominal adjectives that show parallel ambiguity in comparable cases, while the prenominal adjectives are never ambiguous. This could in principle still be modelled with noun-raising if the reading available for Italian prenominal adjectives would correspond to the one found with adjectives that are further away from the noun in English. But contrary to this prediction, as shown by Cinque, prenominal adjectives in Italian only have the reading that is found on adjectives closer to the noun in English.

So for example, as observed by Bolinger (1967) and many authors following him, English prenominal adjectives are ambiguous between the individual-level (i-level) and stage-level (s-level) reading, where i-level corresponds to an intrinsic/permanent property and s-level to a temporary property. Larson (1998) points out that the adjectives receiving the two different interpretations are clearly ordered with the i-level adjective appearing closer to the noun than the s-level adjective. This order is most clearly confirmed by the contrast in (1), due to Barbara Citko (reported in Larson 1998, Cinque's (i) from footnote 20 on page 119). While (1a) refers to intrinsically visible stars that happen to be invisible at the moment, say, due to cloudy skies, (1b) is not coherent under normal conditions (it refers to intrinsically invisible stars that are visible at the moment). The only possible combination of these two adjectives with the interpretation of (1a) in Italian is given in (2), showing that the prenominal adjective receives i-level interpretation while the postnominal receives s-level interpretation.

- (1) a. the invisible visible stars
b. * the visible invisible stars
s-level i-level

- (2) *le visibili stelle invisibili*¹
 the visible stars invisible
 i-level s-level
 “the invisible visible stars”

Italian

The argument presented here in a simplified version shows that a simple noun raising account cannot explain the difference in adjectival interpretation between English and Italian and a more complex analysis is sought for.

In chapter 2, Cinque goes through a number of interpretative differences observed between postnominal and prenominal adjectives in English in Italian, some known from the literature, some new. As he observes, English prenominal adjectives systematically show ambiguity between the so-called direct modification and indirect modification, while postnominal adjectives only have the indirect modification readings. In Italian the situation is reversed, postnominal adjectives are ambiguous between direct and indirect modification readings, while prenominal adjectives have only indirect modification readings.

In cases when an adjective is ambiguous, it is sometimes possible to have two adjectives of the same type modifying the same noun. One such case is given above in (1), another for the prenominal ambiguity between intersective and nonintersective adjectives in English is given in (3). As we have seen in (1), the adjective further away from the noun received the interpretation comparable to that of adjectives inside (reduced) RCs, while the adjective closer to the noun received the so-called direct modification interpretation. Similarly in (3), the adjective closer to the noun also acts as direct modifier and is interpreted “adverbially” as ‘dances beautifully’, while the adjective further away from the noun gets the intersective interpretation of a reduced RC ‘the one that is beautiful’.

- (3) She is a BEAUTIFUL beautiful dancer (ex. (47a), p. 19)

In Italian, where ambiguity between direct modification adjectives and reduced relative clauses is found postnominally, the order is reversed. This time it is the adjective on the right that gets the reduced RC interpretation, while the adjective on the left gets the “adverbial” interpretation. To put it differently, just like above, it is the adjective closer to the noun that acts as a direct modifier and the adjective further away from the noun that is interpreted as a reduced relative clause, (4).

- (4) un attaccante buono BUONO *Italian* (ex. (56a), p. 21)
 a forward good good
 ‘a good-hearted good forward’
 (*un attaccante BUONO buono)

The order across all presented ambiguities is consistently that given in (5a) for English (and Germanic more generally) and (5b) for Italian (and Romance more generally).

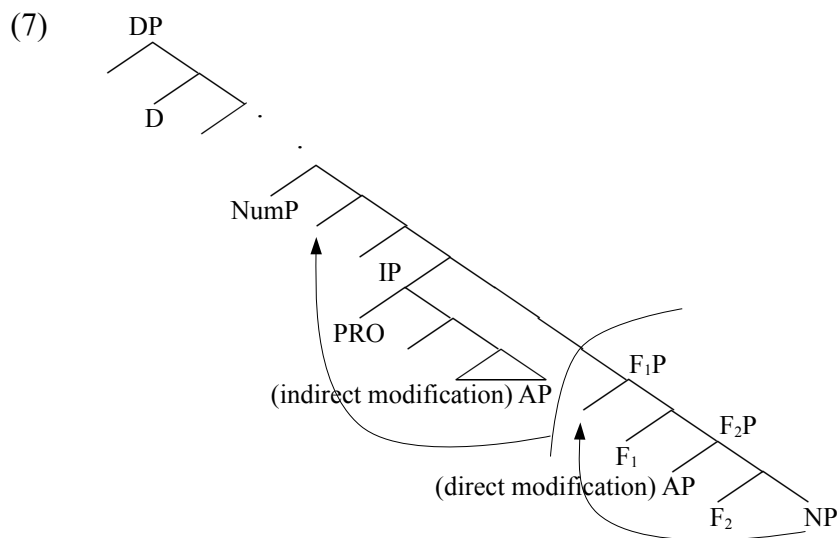
- (5) a. indirect (or reduced RC) modification > direct modification > N *English*
 b. N > direct modification > indirect (or reduced RC) modification *Italian*

Postnominal adjectives in English and prenominal adjectives in Italian show no ambiguity. In English all postnominal adjectives are reduced relative clauses, while in Italian all prenominal adjectives are direct modifiers; the entire noun phrase thus has the order in (6):

- (6) a. indirect mod. > direct mod. > N > indirect mod. *English*
 b. direct mod. > N > direct mod. > indirect mod. *Italian*

¹ Cinque reports these interpretations for each individual adjective, (his (3) and (4) on page 7). According to some speakers, this example with both adjectives would only be acceptable in the context of a poem.

Cinque argues this difference in the order of two types of adjectives can be most successfully analysed if we posit the structure in (7) and assume the following derivation for each language. To get the two prenominal adjectives in English, nothing has to move, but to get the postnominal reduced RCs, the constituent containing the noun and the direct modification adjectives (F₁P in (7)) has to move to a position higher than the reduced RCs (and lower than NumP). This movement is optional in English, but obligatory in Italian. Additionally, in Italian the NP alone optionally moves inside the constituent that moves up to the projection dominating the reduced RCs (that is, inside the F₁P in (7)). This move derives the optionally postnominal direct modification adjectives. In structure (7) (modelled on Cinque's (22) on page 55), IP stands for the reduced relative clause, while F₁P and F₂P for two of the series of functional projections that host direct modification adjectives.



Both types of adjectives have more than a single projection that hosts them, which means that different types of indirect modification adjectives are potentially ordered just like different types of direct modification adjectives.

The argumentation of the main points is both extensive and convincing, so instead of reviewing them in detail, I will rather devote some time to an extension and possible slight modification of Cinque's proposal. In footnote 1 on page 131, Cinque mentions the possibility that the adjectives *possible* and *wrong* (in their indirect modification reading) are actually located even higher than NumP in English. I would like to argue that there is indeed another position for a group of adjectives that is higher than NumP.

Possible and *wrong* are not the only two adjectives that can appear to the left of cardinal numbers in English. Such adjectives are also adjectives that express some sort of location/position like *left*, *right*, *upper*, *lower*, *northern*, *western* etc., (8). These adjectives are located to the left of numbers also in Slovenian, (9). Using ordinal numbers with these adjectives is not always good, but at least in some cases, these adjectives appear to be located even higher than the ordinal numbers, just like the adjectives *possible* and *wrong* mentioned by Cinque, (10).

- (8) a. the left three books
b. the upper three books

- (9) a. leve tri knjige *Slovenian*
left three books

- b. zgornje tri knjige
upper three books

- (10) a. leve prve tri knjige *Slovenian*
left first three books

- b. the upper first three columns (ex. found on the internet)

When these adjectives are used to the right of the numeral or in predicative positions, they receive a different interpretation, which is not positional/locational, (11). So for example, when the Slovenian *desni* is used after the numeral, it is interpreted as 'right-wing', while *levi* can be interpreted as 'left-wing' but also as 'unimportant', (12). The two interpretations of *levi* seem to be located in different positions since there is an ordering restriction between the two adjectives. When both are used in the same noun phrase as in (12c), the adjective meaning 'right/left-wing' is located closer to the noun.

- (11) a. three left books
= three books that were left (behind)
b. three right books
= three books that are appropriate in some sense
c. You are right.
- (12) a. trije desni politiki *Slovenian*
three right politicians
'three right-wing politicians'
b. trije levi politiki
three left politicians
'three left-wing politicians'/'three unimportant politicians'
c. trije levi desni politiki'
three left right politicians
'three unimportant right-wing politicians'

Positional/locational adjectives (*left, right, upper, lower ...*) cannot be used postnominally in English, which means they behave like direct modification adjectives, (13). They also cannot be used in predicative positions, which is exactly what one would expect of direct modification adjectives, as shown in (14) for Slovenian.

- (13) a. *the three books right
b. *this book is left/right (on the relevant reading)
- (14) a. *Te knjige so leve. *Slovenian*
these books are left
intended: 'These books are to the left.'
b. *Ta tri drevesa so desna.
these three trees are right
intended: 'These three trees are to the right.'

On the other hand since they appear high inside the DP frame, apparently higher than both cardinal and ordinal numbers, presumably somewhere around the position where finite restrictive relative clauses are merge as assumed by Cinque in e.g. example (14) on page 64, and argued by Cinque (in preparation), they should pattern with indirect modification adjectives, i.e. with adjectives derived from reduced RC. Indeed they do appear to share at least some properties with indirect modification adjectives. To the right of the numerals, they can be either indirect modification or direct modification adjectives. The interpretation of *right* and *left* in (11) seems to correspond to indirect modification adjectives, since they are all predicative, but not all doublets of positional adjectives behave the same. Cinque claims that indirect modification adjectives get restrictive reading, while indirect modification adjectives get nonrestrictive reading. As shown in (15), when *severni* 'northern' is used after the numeral, it gets nonrestrictive reading, and thus corresponds to direct

modification adjectives, (15a), while prenumerally, it gets restrictive reading, just like other indirect modification adjectives, (15b).

- (15) a. trije severni otočki (nonrestrictive) Slovenian
 three northern islands
 b. severni trije otočki (restrictive)
 northern three islands

So, relying on (15), we can conclude that positional adjectives are indirect modification adjectives, contrary to our conclusion above. This means we have to review the observed ban on predicative positions, shown in (14). Postnominally and predicatively, positional adjectives of this type and relevant interpretation can be used when inside a preposition phrase (PP), which cannot be used prenominally.

- (16) a. The book on the right is really good.
 b. The book about Kyrgyzstan is on the left.
 c. *the on the right book

We can try to derive the two expressions from the same source. If so, *left* and *right* when appearing prenominally are derived from a reduced RC with an additional reduction of the preposition and the definite article. *Right* and *left* in (16a-b) appear to be nouns or adjectives modifying a null noun, since they are preceded by a definite article. But at least in Slovenian, where *levi* and *desni* can also be used postnominally inside a PP, (17), the same two adjectives in prenominal positions receive regular adjectival agreement morphology, which nouns never do, even when used as modifiers of another noun, (18).

- (17) Tisto drevo na levi je češnja Slovenian
 that tree on left is cherry
 'That tree on the left is a cherry tree.'

- (18) a. lev-emu velik-emu mest-u Slovenian
 left_{N,Sg,Dat} big_{N,Sg,Dat} town_{N,Sg,Dat}
 'to the left big town'
 b. mest-u Nov-i Goric-i
 city_{N,Sg,Dat} new_{F,Sg,Dat} Gorica_{F,Sg,Dat}
 'to the town of Nova Gorica'

Additionally, the adjectives *upper* and *lower*, which appear to be part of the same class of positional adjectives (they appear to the left of cardinal numbers in English and cannot be used predicatively), cannot appear inside a PP in postnominal or predicative position, which means the reduced RC analysis (with additional reduction of PP) cannot be used for all of these adjectives.

- (19) a. the upper/top three balloons
 b. the lower two pictures
 c. *John's book is upper.
- (20) a. *The three apartments on (the) upper were sold yesterday.
 b. *The book on (the) lower is really funny.

Just like *upper* and *lower*, which appear very much like adjectives, *northern*, *western* etc. also seem to have adjectival endings (cf. *the northern shore* vs. *the shore on the north*).²

2 Interestingly, the suffix *-ern* is said to be historically a suffix denoting direction (Harper 2010), suggesting that at

On one side, these adjectives pattern with direct modifiers and on the other with indirect modifiers. The properties discussed by Cinque that discriminate between direct and indirect modification adjectives might not all apply to all adjectives, so maybe positional/locational adjectives do not pattern with all of them simply because these are different adjectives and/or are structurally different. As we saw, these positional/locational adjectives have restrictive interpretation, they seem to have stage-level interpretation, and they are located to the left of numerals which should all make them indirect modification adjectives, derived from reduced RCs. But they are also not predicative, which is true of direct modification adjectives, and from which we can conclude that they are not reduced RCs.

This class of adjectives has some further interesting properties in Slovenian and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) since on the one hand they appear to be derived from reduced RCs and on the other to be (bare) adjectival (direct) modifiers, precisely the two things we just concluded they are not. In Colloquial Slovenian, adjectives *levi* “left”, *desni* “right” and others of the same class regularly appear with the adjectival definite article *TA*.

- (21) a. ta leva dva slona *Slovenian*
 _{TA} left two elephants
 'the left two elephants'
 b. ta zgornjih pet opic
 _{TA} upper five monkeys
 'the upper five monkeys'

According to Marušič and Žaucer (2006), as cited in Cinque on page 29, adjectives with *TA* derive from reduced relative clauses, which would suggest “left” and “right” are indeed indirect modifiers of the usual type in Slovenian, but as we have seen above, the two cannot be used predicatively, so that a reduced RC analysis cannot be used for them.

In BCS the same adjectives obligatorily take the long form (argued by Marušič and Žaucer 2006 to be structurally related to the Slovenian *TA*), (22). Both *TA* and the long form on these adjectives clearly show these are indeed adjectives and not e.g. nouns or adverbs since both *TA* and the long form can only be used on adjectives (cf. Marušič and Žaucer 2006).

- (22) a. levi čovek / *lev čovek *B/C/S*
 left_{LONG} man left_{SHORT} man
 b. leva dva čoveka
 left two men
 c. Gornji/ Donji Vakuf³
 Upper/ Lower Vakuf

As Cinque argues (p. 101), B/C/S long form adjectives can have both a direct and an indirect modification source, so that the long form on these adjectives does not necessarily mean they are direct modification adjectives, but since they are at the same time nonpredicative, they cannot be derived from a reduced RC, which should mean they are direct modifiers after all.

least historically, pronominal adjectives *eastern*, *western*, *southern*, and *northern* can be derivationally related to the postnominal preposition phrase.

3 *Gornji Vakuf* and *Donji Vakuf* are two towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Adjectives inside (place) names typically have the long form, so the long form on *Gornji* 'upper' and *Donji* 'lower' in these two cases does not prove these adjectives obligatorily take the long form (cf. *Novi Sad*, *Stari Grad*, *Novigrad* ...). But there are (and were) other towns called *XY Vakuf* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which do not have the long form morphology on the first element in their name (i.e. the final *-i*), like *Kulen Vakuf*, *Skender Vakuf*, and *Varcar Vakuf*. Since these pronominal modifiers are not (regular) adjectives, not even this proves what I am trying to say. But let's assume that synchronically some of these could in principle act or be analysed as adjectives (since adjectives are the prototypical pronominal modifiers in B/C/S) so that they could in principle carry long form morphology. If so, the fact that some names do not have the long form and that the comparable names given in (22c) have it does suggest the long form morphology is present in (22c) (also) because it is obligatory on these kinds of adjectives.

In order to bring together these opposing properties, we need to allow bare AP adjectives to be merged also higher than where reduced RCs are merged and change Marušič and Žaucer's (2006) proposal relating *TA* to reduced RCs. The latter was already done in Marušič and Žaucer (to appear), which claim *TA* is an element inside the extended projection of the adjective and thus does not signify the presence of a reduced RC. The former is what I suggest should be added to the proposal made by Cinque in this book.

Slavic languages seem to have yet another class of adjectives that can be merged very high in the structure. These are the possessive adjectives given in (23). They can be merged higher than both cardinal and ordinal numerals, (23a,b), and receive the regular adjectival inflection, as shown in (23c). Marušič and Žaucer (2008) claim these adjectives are not predicative, which again means they cannot be derived from a RC. So just like for the positional/locational adjectives above, we need to posit an extra projection where possessive adjectives merge with the DP as bare AP, like direct modifiers.

- | | | | |
|------|----|--|------------------|
| (23) | a. | Žodorjeva prva dva zobka
Žodor's first two teeth
'Žodor's first two teeth' | <i>Slovenian</i> |
| | b. | Đokovićev drugi naslov ove sezone
Djoković's second title this season
'Djoković's second title in this season' | <i>B/C/S</i> |
| | c. | rektorjev-ega dosmrtn-ega mandat-a
rector' _{Sg.M.Gen} life-long _{Sg.M.Gen} term _{Sg.M.Gen}
'of president's lifelong term' | <i>Slovenian</i> |

To conclude, Cinque's book is a comprehensive comparative study of the syntax of adjectives. The main argument is built on data from English and Italian, but various supportive arguments are built on all sorts of languages from all five continents (those interested in the syntax of adjectives will also find helpful the extensive 36-page-long list of references covering all sorts of adjective-related topics in a number of different languages). The appendix gives six additional short discussions on Chinese, Maltese, B/C/S, Romanian, Greek, Russian, and German, which all argue for the main claim made in the book. Adjectives are said to come in more than one flavour (either as bare APs or as reduced RCs) and are merged in a number of different dedicated functional projections, where those hosting reduced RCs dominate the projections hosting bare APs. As acknowledged by Cinque, parts of his analysis are built on insights by Larson (1998, 2000, 2004), who also talked about two domains for attributive adjectives and proposed that adjectives either merge as APs inside the NP or else come into the DP as reduced relative clauses. All in all, Cinque's monograph provides a well-argued framework for future work on adjectives, which has begun already (also in this review).

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