

Chapter 1: Problems for N movement in Romance

1.1 An apparent restriction on the number of postnominal adjectives in Romance. Under the idea that postnominal adjectives result from the head N raising past them one first problem is provided by the existence of an apparent curious restriction on the number of adjectives found after the N and before a complement (or adjunct) of the N. In Italian, for example, as shown in example (1) of the Introduction, repeated here, the N must raise past the thematic adjective *romana*:

- (1)a La **sola possibile** invasione **romana** della Tracia
the only possible invasion Roman of.the Thrace
b The **only possible Roman** invasion of Thrace
c *La **sola possibile romana** invasione della Tracia
the only possible Roman invasion of.the Thrace

As apparent from (2), it also can (though need not) raise past an adjective like *possibile*:

- (2)a La sola **possibile** invasione della Tracia
the only possible invasion of Thrace
b La sola invasione_i **possibile** t_i della Tracia
the only invasion possible of Thrace
'the only possible invasion of Thrace'

Yet successive raisings of the N past both *romana* and *possibile* give rise to an unacceptable sentence. Compare (1)b and (2)b with (3):

(3) *?La **sola** invasione **possibile romana** della Tracia

the only invasion possible Roman of Thrace

This problem was noted, but left without a real account, in Cinque (1990b,1994).¹

The problem, it now seems to me, is connected to the one discussed in the next section, as the other side of the same coin.

1.2 Existence of unexpected mirror-image orders between Germanic and Romance. As

observed in the literature, postnominal adjectives in Romance characteristically enter an order which is the mirror image of the order of prenominal adjectives in Germanic. See, among others, Lamarche (1991), Bosque and Picallo (1996), Bouchard (1998, 2002, chapter 3), Laenzlinger (2000, 2005a,b), Dimitrova-Vulchanova (2003). Although the potentially interfering factor of a DP final position of adjectives derived from relative clauses is not always taken into consideration in these works (with the consequence that some of the arguments lose much of their force)², the observation is fundamentally correct; something I failed to recognize in Cinque (1994).

So, for example, if we control for the absence of the interfering factor just mentioned by considering only postnominal adjectives that are non predicative (hence cannot constitute the predicate of a reduced relative clause), we still find the mirror-image effect (cf. Bernstein 1993a, chapter 2, fn.38).

In (4), one of the two non predicative adjectives in prenominal position, *probabile*, precedes, and takes scope over, the other (*main*). As (5) shows, in Italian, when both adjectives are postnominal, the order, which retains the same interpretive and scope properties of the English order, is necessarily the reverse: *probabile* ('probable') follows *prima* ('main/foremost'):³

(4) The most probable main cause of his death (is this)

(5)a La causa prima più probabile della sua morte (è questa)

the cause main most probable of his death (is this)

‘The most probable main cause of his death (is this)’

b *La causa più probabile prima della sua morte (è questa)

the cause most probable main of his death (is this)

We now see why (3) is bad. Not because of any restriction on the number, or type, of adjectives found between the N and one of its complements or adjuncts, but because the order is the “direct” one found preminally in English rather than the required mirror image of it, which is actually fine (see (6)):⁴

(6) La sola invasione *romana possibile* della Tracia

the only invasion Roman possible of Thrace

‘the only possible Roman invasion of Thrace’

Another argument for the conclusion that postnominal adjectives in Romance enter an order which is the mirror image of the one found preminally in Germanic can be construed on the basis of a case discussed in Bouchard (2002, 124f, to appear, sections 2.1 and 2.2). As he notes, in one of its interpretations, (7) can have *malhonnêtes* taking scope over *chinois*, while itself being under the scope of *présumés* (as indicated by the bracketing):⁵

(7) les [présumés [[[professeurs] chinois] malhonnêtes]]

the alleged professors Chinese dishonest

‘the alleged dishonest Chinese professors’

This is problematic for an analysis that takes postnominal adjectives in Romance to be a consequence of N movement, with all postnominal mirror-image orders analysed in terms of a DP final relative clause source for adjectives on the right taking scope over those to their left (as in Cinque 1994). To assume that *malhonnêtes* is a DP final reduced relative clause (in order to account for its taking scope over *chinois*) would incorrectly lead to the expectation that it also takes scope over the prenominal adjective *présumés*, as does a bona fide relative clause:

- (8) les présumés professeurs chinois qui sont malhonnêtes
the alleged professors Chinese who are dishonest
'the alleged Chinese professors who are dishonest'

If some derivation other than one involving a relative clause source for *malhonnêtes* must be at the basis of (7) under the discussed interpretation, then the mirror-image status of the postnominal adjectives in (7) constitutes a real problem for a pure N raising approach, which gives the wrong result.

1.3 Existence of unexpected scope effects in Romance. (Cf. Valois 1991b; Svenonius 1994; Bouchard 1998, 2002). Provided that we again control for the absence of a relative clause source for the postnominal adjective (by selecting a non predicative one), the head movement analysis leads one to expect a postnominal adjective not to be able to take scope over a prenominal one. Yet, this seems possible in cases like the following:

- (9) E' una *giovane* promessa *sicura*
He is a young promise sure
'He is a sure young promise'

Here the postnominal adjective *sicura* (which is non predicative: **la giovane promessa è sicura* ‘the young promise is sure’) takes scope over *giovane promessa* (hence over the prenominal adjective *giovane*). An unexpected result.

On top of all these problems, there is another, more serious, one for the head movement approach: its inability to provide a unified analysis for the different pattern that we find in the interpretation of prenominal and postnominal adjectives in Germanic and Romance. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

¹ In Cinque (1994) I tentatively suggested (p.90) that the restriction would be understandable if thematic APs were to “compete with manner APs for one and the same position”, but as (3) shows the restriction is more general (and the suggestion questionable in any case - see Bouchard 2002,180f, and Crisma 1993,96).

² See Cinque (1994,98ff) for discussion.

³ Neither adjective is predicative in (4) and (5), as shown by the unacceptability of (i) and the corresponding Italian cases (ii):

(i)a *The cause of his death is main

b *The main cause of his death is (most) probable

(ii)a *La causa della sua morte è prima

b *La causa prima della sua morte è (la più) probabile

⁴ Similar facts hold in French (and in the other Romance languages). For example, according to Bouchard (2002,122),

(i) shows the only natural order of the adjectives *français* and *possible*:

(i) Le seule fournisseur français possible d’armes nucléaires, c’est l’Etat français

The only supplier French possible of weapons nuclear, is the State French

‘The only possible French supplier of nuclear weapons is the French state’

⁵ For the other possible readings of *les présumés professeurs chinois malhonnêtes*, and their derivations, which are not necessarily the ones attributed by Bouchard (to appear) to cartographic analyses, see Chapter 6, note 7.