

Restrictive and non-restrictive adjectives in Romance languages: Portuguese and Spanish evidence

Placement of adjectives have been investigated in generative syntax. In the adjunct approach, adjectives were understood as adjoined to the NP (Lamarche, 1991; Bouchard, 1998). However, Specifier-based approach has admitted that adjectives might move in the DP-structure, either to check their agreement features (Laezlinger, 2005), or to account for the mirror image structure of postnominal and prenominal adjectives in Germanic, and Romance languages (Cinque, 2010). This study investigates whether the attested data on Brazilian Portuguese (BP), European Portuguese (P), and Spanish (SP) provides further evidence to support that phrasal movements inside the DP-structure can account for the postnominal positions in Romance languages (Laezlinger, 2005; Cinque, 2010). Second, semantic properties of restrictive and non-restrictive adjectives are also examined. Even though structural semantic properties of S, BP, and P are somewhat different from Italian, we will show that Cinque's theory (2010) accounts for movements in Romance languages.

According to Kayne's economy of derivation (1994), prenominal position would be favoured universally since it is derivationally less complex than postnominal order. To account for this antisymmetry theory, Laezlinger (2005) proposes an NP-movement (in a roll-up fashion) analysis rather than an N-movement, previously argued by Lamarche (1991), to derive postnominal order of adjectives. The maximal projection containing the noun would raise inside the DP-projection to check overtly features of gender, and number which would account for French-English contrasts. Likewise, Cinque (2010) states that Romance postnominal adjectives would, then, be derived from a phrasal movement. For instance, in Portuguese, the noun phrase (eg.: *A sua [filha]_{NP} inteligente*, the his daughter intelligent) would derive from (eg.: **A sua inteligente [filha]_{NP}*, the his intelligent daughter) in which the NP raises to the specifier position of AP. He then proposes the existence of two modifiers: an indirect (RC), and a direct modifier (AP). The former is generated higher in the three in a prenominal position (as Spec of a projection above the AP), and behaves semantically as predicative adjectives. The AP merges lower in the hierarchy, and closer to the noun. In light of Cinque (Ibid), restrictive adjectives which are restricted to a group of reading, would be indirect modifiers, predicate of the noun they modify. Non-restrictive adjectives, however, are direct APs merged closer to the noun, not narrowing the reading of the noun they modify. For instance, *crianças lindas* children beautiful means of all the children, the ones who are beautiful, while *lindas crianças* means all the children who happen to also be beautiful (Rio, 2006).

Two problems are, however, raised. The first concerns the ambivalent position of certain adjectives in Romance languages. In Portuguese *uma paisagem magnífica* a landscape magnificent and *uma magnífica paisagem* are both grammatical, with no change of meaning (Rio, 2006). In light of Cinque's phrasal movement (2010 :137), we propose that those adjectives are both direct modifiers. Therefore, they would both be close to the noun, even though the NP could have moved, in a postnominal surface position. Laezlinger (2005:656) defends also that these ambivalent adjectives have different properties in prenominal position, and could express focus, emphasis, or subjectivity. The second problem is related to the subjective meaning of prenominal positions in EP and S. Rio (2005: 107) states that in EP, the prenominal position is marked by a connotative meaning (*uma rara ocasião* 'a rare occasion' – *unique, extraordinary*), which can be ambiguous, meaning either an evaluative connotation (*extraordinary*), or an informative point (small number). According to Laezlinger (2005), a change of meaning could also indicate the merge in different positions which accounts for the difference in meaning attested in the data.

Even though Cinque neglects the connotative cases of EP in prenominal positions, we propose that his phrasal movement theory with a direct modification – lower in the tree, and an indirect modification – merged higher, seems to account for the placement of restrictive, and non-restrictive adjectives in Romance languages. First, ambivalent adjectives with different surface positions could indicate the same type of modifier, and comparatively ambiguity could imply different merge positions.

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