

On the properties of relational adjectives in Romanian and Spanish

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In this paper, I discuss the properties of relational adjectives in Romance. As is well known, there are two sub-classes of relational adjectives, namely Thematic and Classificatory ones (Bosque & Picallo 1996), illustrated in (1):

- (1) a. *producción petrolera* b. *análisis sintáctico*
oil production syntactic analysis

Following Postal (1969), Levi (1978), Bosque & Picallo (1996), Fabregas (2001) and Alexiadou & Stavrou (2005) I argue that all relational adjectives are denominal. However, Th-adjectives differ from Cl-adjectives in their ability to absorb thematic roles and to occur in the predicative position:

- (2) a. *alegeri (*sunt) prezidențiale* b. *analiza (este) sintactică*
*elecciones (*son) presidenciales* *análisis (es)sintáctico*
presidential elections syntactic analysis

Note that the adjective (2a) is Thematic as it absorbs the thematic role of the deverbal noun and is not predicative, while *sintactică* in (2b) is Classificatory as it is not a subcategorized argument and is licit in the predicative position.

In the light of these observations, I put forth two hypotheses in this paper:

Hypothesis 1:

- shows that there is a correlation between the genitive case in Romanian (and the de-art-N in Spanish which stands for the genitive case) and the argument nature of the relational adjective

Hypothesis 2:

- is valid for Romanian and represents a test for the non-argumental nature of Cl-adjectives, as these relational adjectives can occur with *cel* which according to Marchis & Alexiadou (to appear) is a appositive relative marker introducing a small relative clause.

The first hypothesis regards the status of Th-adjectives as DPs with an empty D. In order to support this claim, I show first that Th-adjectives are subcategorized arguments of the deverbal noun, being either the theme or the agent (Levi (1978), Bartning (1980), Bosque & Picallo (1996)). Assuming that a nominal expression is an argument only if it is introduced by a Determiner, i.e. only if it is a DP (Longobardi 1994:620), consequently Th-adjectives must have been a DP at some level of representation.

Second, Th-adjectives correspond to Gen DP; according to Cornilescu (1995) genitive is a structural case which absorbs theme/agent role. For Spanish, Fabregas (2007) also claims that Th-adjectives are paraphrased with the preposition *de* which corresponds to genitive.

Theme

- (3) a. *alegere prezidențială* ≈ *alegerea președintelui*
elección presidencial ≈ *la elección del presidente*
Presidential election ≈ the election of the president

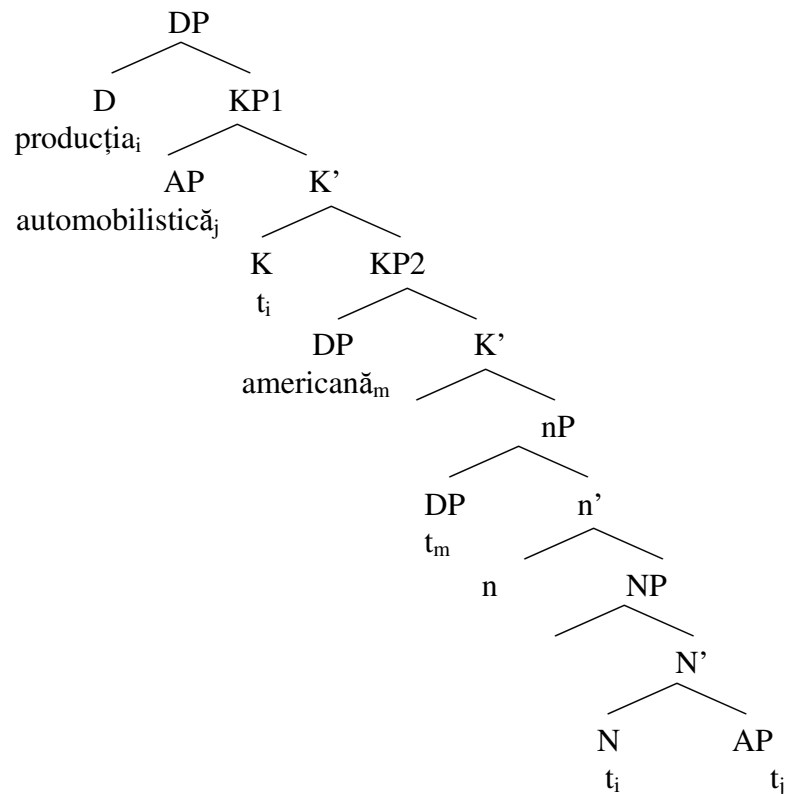
Agent

- b. *decizie guvernamentală* ≈ *decizia guvernului*
la decisión gubernamental ≈ *la decisión del gobierno*
governmental decision ≈ the decision of the government

I propose that Th-adjectives are merged as DPs within the thematic domain of the head noun. Following Alexiadou & Stavrou (to appear) and Fabregas (2007), I show that they become adjectives in the syntactic derivation:

- (4) *Producția automobilistică americană*

American car production



Essentially, this approach brings counterevidence for Bosque & Picallo's (1996) argument that Th-adjectives (internal objects) must be in the Specifier, i.e., *the internal argument of an event noun cannot surface as a Th-adjective* (Bosque & Picallo (1996):

- (5) * *la pesca ballenera por parte de los japoneses*
 whale fishing by the Japanese

The ungrammaticality of (5) is argued to be due to the fact that the deverbal head must have an argument syntactically realized into a complement position while the thematic adjective is in the specifier position. However, note that the agent role can be also syntactically realized with the preposition "de" and the sentences are grammatical:

- (6) *la producción petrolera de los venezolanos.*
 The oil production of the Venezuelan.

Fabregas (2007) argues, however, that the preposition "de" in Spanish corresponds to the genitive case and has a very weak meaning to the extent that it is used to denote the patient and the agent (Fabregas 2007:142). This represents counterevidence for Bosque & Picallo's (1996) argument that Th-adjectives (internal objects) must be in the Specifier Position in Spanish. The same observation holds also for Romanian. Like Grimshaw 1990 and subsequent work, Bosque & Picallo (1996), Alexiadou & Stavrou (2005), I also account for the ungrammaticality of (5) with adjuncts PP by claiming that Th-adjectives occur with simple event nominals and are ungrammatical with complex event nominals.

The second hypothesis assumes that Cl-adjectives are predicative adjectives, i.e. simple NPs that are necessarily interpreted as restricted. Importantly they can occur with *cel* in nominal ellipses, a pattern that only admits restrictive modifiers:

- (7) *analiza morfologică și cea sintactică*
 The morphological analysis and the syntactic one

The *cel* pattern is generally argued to introduce a predicative clause see Cornilescu (2003), Cinque (2004) and Marchis & Alexiadou (to appear). So in (8) I provide the syntactic structure for CI-adjectives:

(8) [DP [&P [DP analizal]_i &: [DP sintactica_i [CP [C' [IP Ø AP_i]]]]]