

On modal nature of Attributive Nominal Constructions

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The fact that there is a structural parallelism between DP and CP (Abney 1987, Szczabolsci 1992, Kayne 1995) is widely accepted. Thus, it should not be weird that Universal Grammar provides that, within the DP, certain functional categories of the sentence domain can be projected, for instance the modal phrase (MP). Similar proposals that are not brand new can be found in Bernstein (1993), S nchez (1995) or Postma & Rooryck (1998). Regarding this trend, we are going to argue that the so-called *Attributive Nominal Constructions* (ANCs) in (1) are DPs and that there is no QP projected within these DPs, contrary to Su er (1990), but a modal phrase (MP) as in (2):

(1) a. El asno / abogaducho / tonto de Apuleyo (the donkey / shyster / foolishness of Apuleyo)

(2) a. $[_{DP} \text{El } [_{MP} \text{M } [_{DP/P} \text{de } [_{SC} [\text{Apuleyo}] [\text{asno}]]]]]$

b. $[_{DP} \text{El } [_{MP} [\text{asno}]_i \text{M } [_{DP/P} \text{t}_i \text{de } [_{SC} [\text{Apuleyo}] \text{t}_i]]]]$

(2a) follows the structure trend of Kayne (1994:106) represented in (3):

(3) $\text{cet } [_{D/PP} [\text{NP } \text{imb cile}_j] [\text{de }]_{IP} \text{Jean I... } [e]_j$ (The stupidity of John)

nevertheless as opposed to this one, (2) fulfils the predicative relationship held between the appreciative predicate *asno* «donkey» and the subject *Apuleyo* through a small clause (SC), as in Su er (1990): $[_{SD} \text{El } [_{QP} \text{Q } [_{AP} \text{A } [_{AgrP} \text{Agr } [_{SC} [\text{Apuleyo}] [\text{asno}]]]]]]]$. However, the movement of the predicate is not properly induced by Su er (1990) nor Kayne (1994). Following Chomsky (1995, 1998), we propose that such a movement is due to checking reasons. So our main claim is that those predicates in (1) carry a modal semantic feature [+M] and that the SC, where the predicate is included, merges with the MP below the DP. Due to attraction, the predicate moves in over syntax in order to check the distinctive feature [+M] of MP. So only those elements that carry this feature (*maravilloso* vs **alto*) count as predicates in the ANCs. This implies an advantage against those analyses of Su er (1990) and Kayne (1994) because we justifies the typical dislocation of the appreciative predicate in ANCs. Observe that this dislocation is not through a formal feature, as in Chomsky (1995), but through a semantic property, that is to say, by virtue of an + interpretable feature. At this point, we agree with Chomsky (1998:36) that certain semantic properties can involve dislocated structures. Moreover, it should be observed that the mechanism we proposed avoids the conceptual problem that appears when facing the deletion of interpretable features along the derivation, because it implies a violation of the Inclusiveness Principle (Romero 1997:61).

Coming back to the nature of appreciative predicates, our hypothesis is that these elements are modal operators that should move toward a c-command position in order to have scope over the SC. If this is the case, a further explanation is available for the dislocation in ANCs, thereby barring elements with no modal (and therefore no c-commanding) force. We also propose that the appreciative predicates are associated to a kind of modality called *evaluative* (Rescher 1968, Palmer 1986 and Cinque 1996). We grasp modality in a wide sense, i.e., as the *speaker's cognitive, volitional or emotional qualification towards the events or entities*. Note that in this regard the ANCs create unfactual intensional contexts (by saying *El tonto de Juan* «The foolishness of John» does not commit us to its truthfulness or falseness). Moreover, these structures are closely related to the exclamative modality: *Qu asco de pel cula!* «What a horrible film!», *Ay, desdichado de m!* «How unhappy am I!», *Pobres de los muchachos!* «Poor boys!». Finally, we argue against the hypothesis that the evaluative predicates in the ANCs are legitimated by a focus phrase (FP), as Bosque suggests (1996:67) and in an indirect way, Guti rrez Rexach and Silva Villar (1994).

Why not an QP? The ANCs are essentially characterized by presenting a) a predicate relationship between the two parts of the phrase and b) a predicate inversion that expresses an appreciative, emotive or emphatic qualification. This excludes professional names (*soldado* «soldier» *abogado* «lawyer»), relational adjectives (*argentino* «argentine» *albanés* «albanian») and nouns of relationship (*padre* «father» *hermano* «brother»)

- (4) *El soldado / argentino / padre de Pedro. (The argentine/ soldier/ father of Peter.)

However, the sentences in (3) become grammatical when their predicates appear related to [+appreciative] elements, ([+M] in our own terms used), as in the case of the appreciative morphology (5a), relative morphology (5b), the prefixes *semi-*, *super-*, *pseudo-* (5c), or when they are modified by expressions like *pedazo de* «a piece of» / *cacho de* «a portion of» (5d):

- (5) a. El soldaducho de Ryan. (The soldier of Ryan)
 b. El argentinisimo de Pedro. (The Argentinism of Peter)
 c. El *semi-* / *pseudo-* / *super*cura de Apeles. (The semi-/pseudo-/superpriest of Apeles)
 d. El *pedazo de* / *cacho de padre* de Pedro

We are going to defend that the appreciative feature is not actually associated to the presence of a QP in (1), i.e., a quantification. If there would be a QP in the ANCs, we would not only expect gradual appreciative elements in the predicate position but dimensional ones which is impossible:

- (6) *Juan es alto/ bajo (John is tall / short)
 (7) *El alto/ bajo de Juan (The tall / short of John)
 (8) *El tan alto / bajo de Juan (The so tall / short of John)

Therefore, the prediction is that the inverted predicates can be or cannot be scaled, but they should always be [+appreciative], as it is shown in (9):

- (9) a. *El alto de Juan (The tall of John) [+ scalar] [- appreciative]
 b. El tonto de Pedro (The dumb of Peter) [+ scalar] [+ appreciative]
 c. El medicucho de Pedro (The doctor +pejorative of Peter) [- scalar] [+ appreciative]

An empirical argument in favor of our analysis is the contrast between (9a) and (9b-c). As Bosque points out (1996b), the DPs plus a specific determiner allow that the adjectives always precede the noun when they are linked to a grade:

- (10) a. *La espaola / espao *lita* / feucha *ni a* (The Spanish /little Spanish/ ugly girl)
 b. La tan espaola *ni a* (The so Spanish girl)
 c. La espaol *sima* / fe *sima* *ni a*. (The great Spanish/ the ugliest girl)

That is, the predicates with an appreciative morphology or relational adjectives (10a), are not in used in the contexts found in (10). It is completely opposed to what can be observed in the ANCs. This indicates that the implied semantics in those structures cannot be that of quantification, that is to say that there is no QP projected within DP, but another kind of functional category: MP in our analysis.

References

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