

Syntax/Morphology Mismatches in Romance Relational Adjectives

In this paper I discuss a special case of syntax/ morphology mismatch that represents a puzzle for Distributed Morphology i.e., the transposition of Relational adjectives which have the semantic interpretation of nouns while exhibiting the formal properties of adjectives. I regard Relational adjectives both from a micro-perspective as nouns (cf. Postal 1969, Levi 1978, Bartning 1980, Bosque & Picallo 1996, Fábregas 2007 and Alexiadou & Stavrou to appear) and also from a macro-perspective as compounding on a par with incorporation in English.

The first aim of this paper is to show that Relational adjectives are all underlying nouns but with a different syntactic behaviour. Specifically, I present empirical evidence for Bosque & Picallo's split classification of Relational adjectives, i.e., Th(-ematic) adjectives, corresponding to argument bare nouns, DPs of deverbal nouns, while Cl(-assificatory) adjectives to modifier bare nouns, NumPs of common nouns (cf. Dobrovie & Blears & Espinal 2005, Giurgea 2005). The morpho-syntactic structure I propose for Relational adjectives captures not only their nominal nature as it contains a nP but also their adjectival nature reflected in their deficient anaphoric properties (see Alexiadou & Stavrou to appear).

The second aim of this paper is to provide a novel perspective on the morpho-syntactic analysis of Relational adjectives. On the basis of Bisetto & Scalise's (2005) classification of compounds, I propose that Relational adjectives in Romance correspond crosslinguistically to two types of compounding, i.e., Thematic adjectives correspond to subordinate compounds while Classificatory adjectives to attributive ones. Concretely, I discuss the variation between English and Romanian & Spanish in endocentric subordinate compounds, showing that the different strategies employed by languages in this type of compounding are only Case-related, i.e., the Case of the complement can be checked by incorporation in English, *de*-insertion in Romance or Thematic adjectives in Romance and English (cf. Marchis submitted).

Thus, I provide a theoretical answer to the puzzle of syntax/ morphology mismatch in the status of Relational adjectives as nouns in the syntax and as adjectives in the morphological structure (PF): In the spirit of Embick & Noyer (2005), I argue that the Case features of Thematic adjectives are relevant only at PF, conditioning the choice of Vocabulary Items expressing Case. Specifically, the deficient Case features of Thematic adjectives are valued only at PF, conditioning the choice of introducing the Agreement node (AGR) where the noun turns into an adjective through suffixation or introducing the Case feature Genitive which is spell-out as *de* preposition in Romance languages.