

**Attributives are not relatives:
A single source analysis for
attributive adjectives**

Dr. Zoë Belk
UCL

The plan

- An introduction to adjectives
- Attributives as relatives
- The syntactic behaviour of attributives and relatives
- The semantic behaviour of attributives and relatives
- Conclusions

- Slides available at ucl.ac.uk/~zcyjtf11/Research

Adjectives 101

- Adjectives can be characterized as either attributive or predicative.
 - Look at that **big red** dog!
 - That dog is **big** and **red**!
 - Clifford is a dog that is **big** and **red**.
- Some languages lack one category (e.g. Yoruba seems to lack predicative adjectives (Ajíbóyè 2001), Slave seems to lack attributive adjectives (Baker 2003))
- The obvious question is how closely attributives and predicatives are related
 - Can we derive one category from the other?

How many sources of attributive adjectives?

- There are three basic options:
 - Attributive and predicative adjectives all have the same source (e.g. Smith 1964)
 - Some attributives share a source with (some?) predicatives (e.g. Larson 2000, Cinque 2010)
 - Attributives and predicatives have separate sources (e.g. Bolinger 1967, Belk 2017)
- This talk: attributives are not derived from predicatives (or vice versa) – they have a single source distinct from predication

What are some possible sources?

- In general, attributive adjectives are argued to be derived from (full or reduced) relative clauses
 - E.g. Smith 1964, Larson 2000, Cinque 2010
- Belk 2017:
 - Attributives and predicatives are syntactically distinct (i.e. not derived from each other via movement and/or deletion)
 - They also relate to the noun in different ways: predicates use θ -identification (Higginbotham 1985), attributes use an operator, JOIN (Truswell 2004)

Some predictions

- If attributives are always or sometimes derived from predicatives, we would expect attributives to behave the same as predicatives in important ways, at least some of the time.
- If attributives have a single distinct source, we would expect them to behave consistently differently to predicatives.
- Put differently, if attributives and predicatives consistently behave differently, Smith, Larson and Cinque have to explain why.

Attributives as Relatives

Deriving attributives from predicatives

- Cinque 2010: Adnominal adjectives have two sources, direct modification and reduced relative clauses (RRCs)

| Direct modification | RRCs |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ordering requirements or preferences • individual-level • nonintersective • absolute reading (among other properties) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free ordering with respect to each other • stage-level • intersective • relative (to a comparison class) reading (among other properties) |

Two sources of adjectives?

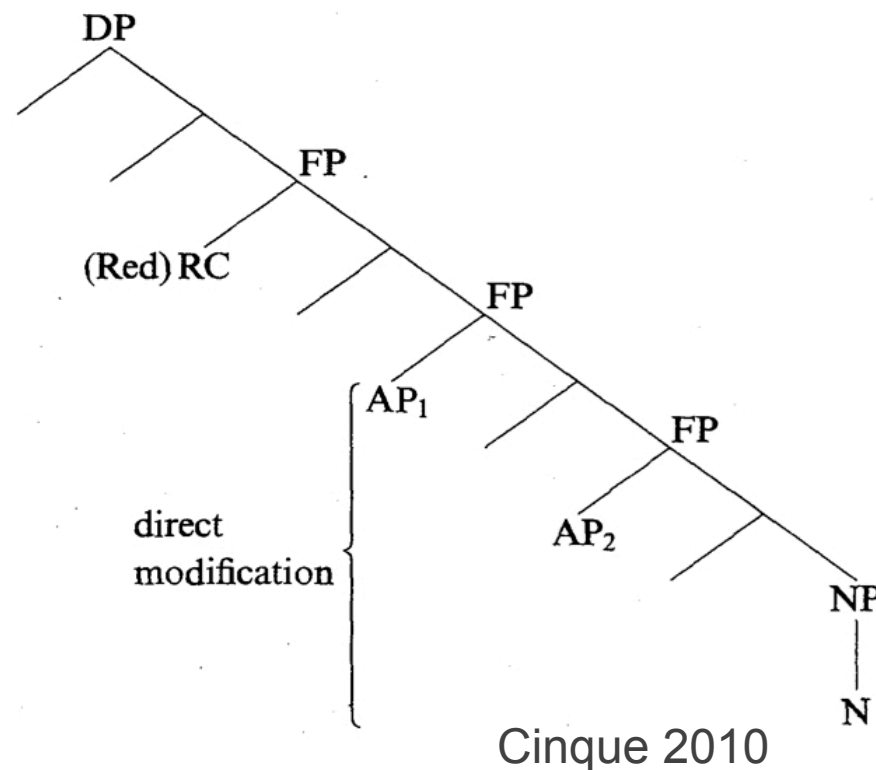
stage-level > individual-level > N > stage-level
(Larson 1998 pp.155–6)

- Every **VISIBLE** visible star
- *Every visible **VISIBLE** star
- Every visible star **VISIBLE** (Cinque 2010, p.19)

individual-level > N > individual-level > stage-level

- una posizione invidiabile (oggi anco più **INVIDIABILE**
a position enviable (today even more) enviable)
- *una posizione (oggi ancor più) **INVIDIABILE** invidiabile
- un invidiabile posizione (oggi ancor più) **INVIDIABILE**
(Cinque 2010 p.21)

Two sources of attributives?



Germanic order: Prenominal As base-generated.

Romance order: Derived through roll-up movement of the noun through the direct modification adjectives and the reduced relative clauses.

Adjectives as reduced relative clauses

- This approach has a few problems.
- If we can't tell when a given adjective is DM or RRC, we can't make good predictions about their behaviour:
 - The bus is big. The bus is red.
 the big red bus *the red big bus
- It also relies on there being similarities between (some) attributives and reduced relative clauses.
 - Do these similarities really exist?

What is a (reduced) relative clause?

- Like a relative clause but smaller...
- Ross (1972) refers to a “well-known and uncontroversial rule” to derive reduced relatives from full relatives – Whiz deletion
- However, Hudson (1973) and (Stanton 2010) show that full and reduced relatives are different in some ways
- RRCs seem to require a complement in English (Belk 2017) – postnominal adjectives without complements do not behave like other RRCs

How can we tell when we're (not) dealing with an RRC?

- If a postnominal adjective has no complement, it is not an RRC – it's something else
- But what about the *visible stars visible*?
- ...I don't think the second visible is an RRC.
 - No complement (normally required in RRCs)
 - Restricted to certain adjectives and fixed expressions
 - Only possible with certain determiners
 - Every/*a/*the/*three/the three star(s) visible
 - Every/a/the/three/the three man/men proud of his/their son(s)
 - (R)RCs are actually ambiguous!
 - We looked at every star that was <generally> visible <that night>

Uh-oh

- This is a big problem for accounts arguing that some attributives are actually reduced relatives!
- The examples of reduced relatives they rely on are not actually reduced relatives. They're something else – and likely something attributive.
- So are there similarities between some attributives and (real) reduced relatives? Can we save this approach?

The Syntactic Behaviour of Attributives and Relatives

RCs vs. RRCs vs. As

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a proud (*of his son) man b. a man who is proud (of his son) c. a man proud *(of his son) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. elke [voor gehandicapten ongeschikt*(-e)] villa b. elke villa die voor gehandicapten ongeschikt*(-e) is c. ?elke villa [ongeschikt*(-e) voor gehandicapten] |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the utter/*afraid fiend b. the fiend who is *utter/afraid c. the fiend more *utter/afraid than any other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. de op zo'n soort parcours waarchijnlijkst (*het) snelst-e marathonloper b. de marathonloper die op zo'n soort parcours waarschinlijk *(het) snelst is c. ? de marathonloper waarschijnlijk *(het) snelst op zo'n soort parcours |

RCs vs. RRCs vs. As

- (R)RCs ≠ As:

| (R)RCs | As |
|--|---|
| Allow a wider range of predicates (including APs, PPs and participles) | Only allow AP and participial forms |
| May or must take complements | Disallow complements in English |
| Disallow non-predicative adjectives (intersective or nonintersective) | Allow non-predicative adjectives |
| No ordering preferences | Some As exhibit ordering preferences |
| Require particular determiners or quantifiers in English (RRCs only) | Not restricted in terms of the determiners they may appear with |
| Do not have to satisfy the head-final filter in Dutch | Must satisfy the head-final filter in Dutch |
| Do not take a declensional schwa in Dutch | Must take a declensional schwa in the appropriate contexts |
| Require or preferably appear with <i>het</i> -superlatives | Disallow <i>het</i> -superlatives |

The Semantic Behaviour of Attributives and Relatives

Adjective ordering and scope

- Some adjectives are subject to (violable) ordering preferences:
 - e.g. the big black bag; a beautiful old house
- Other adjectives are not
 - However, non-ordered adjectives seem always to take scope

Scope-taking adjectives

1. ‘Sortal’ interpretation:

- Found when violating ordering preferences,
e.g. I like the black big bag (not the blue one)

2. Inherently scope-taking, ‘modal’ adjectives:

e.g. the <former> famous <former> actress; the <fake>
metal <fake> gun

3. Participial (?) adjectives

- e.g. <frozen> chopped <frozen> chicken

Scope-taking relatives?

- Not so much
 1. ‘Sortal’ interpretation:
 - Relatives don’t display ordering preferences
 - Any sortal interpretation that might be found tends to be a) left-to-right (so not true scope) and b) easily cancellable
 2. Inherently scope-taking, ‘modal’ adjectives:
 - Modal adjectives tend to be disallowed in relatives
 - Those that are allowed scope only over N

Scope-taking relatives?

3. Participial (?) adjectives

Introducing...

- “Our (new/fineest/whatever) chicken frozen in the Arctic tundra, chopped by Japanese masterchefs”
 - An order of events, but not the same as scope
 - Compare: our (new/fineest/whatever) chicken frozen in the Arctic tundra and chopped by Japanese masterchefs
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- Overall, there appear to be no scope effects. The interpretation of (R)RCs suggests coordination, as does the intonation

Conclusions

Conclusions

- Bare postnominal adjectives are not reduced relative clauses, so can't be used to determine the properties of RRCs
- Attributives consistently behave homogeneously, both syntactically and semantically
- ...And their behaviour is distinct from that of true relatives

Conclusions

- Overall, there is no evidence that any attributives are derived from relatives and lots of evidence that they are their own homogeneous class of modifier
- Any attempt to derive attributives would have to explain these differences
- ...This is especially true of analyses where attributives are argued to have multiple sources

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