On degree phrases and result clauses
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Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
1998

Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database

Citation for published version (APA):

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Download date: 04-10-2020
Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Degree Phrases & Result Clauses

This dissertation is concerned with phrases like *te lang* `too tall`, *zo mooi* `so beautiful` or *intelligenter* `more intelligent`. They can function as small clause predicates ((1a,b,d), cf. Hoekstra 1988), but also as modifiers (1c):

(1)  a  Ze is lang
     `She is tall'
     
     b  Ze is veel te lang
     `She is much too tall'
     
     c  Ze heeft zo prachtig gezongen dat iedereen er stil van was
     *she has so beautifully sung that everyone there quiet of was*
     `She sang so beautifully that everyone was quiet'
     
     d  Die vrouw is intelligenter dan je denkt
     *that woman is intelligent-er than you think*
     `That woman is more intelligent than you think'

Such phrases are analyzed as degree phrases, in which the degree items *te* `too`, *zo* `so` and `-er` `-er` function as heads that select the phrase projected by the adjective (cf. Abney 1987, Corver 1990 and the discussion in chapter 3 of this thesis). Degree items only select gradable adjectives. Zwarts (1992) assumes that a degree head is an operator that binds an argument position in the Theta-grid of the adjective. Adjectival predicates without a lexicalized degree head (as in (1a)) are assumed to have an empty degree head: *lang* `tall` in (1a) is a degree phrase, rather than a bare AP:

(2)  a  [[degp] ∘ [ap lang]]
    b  [[degp] te [ap lang]]
    c  [[degp] zo [ap prachtig]]
    d  [[degp] intelligenter-er [ap t]]
Some degree heads cooccur with subclauses that appear to depend on the degree head, see for instance the result clause in (1c). Such dependent clauses need not be adjacent to the projection of the degree head that licences it. In chapter 5 I propose an analysis of result clause constructions like (1c) in which the subclause is base-generated in sentence-final position, independently of the projection of the degree head.

Before dealing with the major issues of this dissertation, I will sketch the theoretical framework in section 1.2 and make some remarks on terminology in section 1.3.

1.2 Framework

The most important theoretical program that is adopted in this dissertation is Kayne's (1994) antisymmetry hypothesis. Kayne proposed to project the hierarchical relations in a syntactic tree on the linear order of the end nodes (the Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA)). To guarantee the correct (i.e. observed) left to right order of words and phrases in a sentence, the structure of a syntactic tree must be restricted.

An important consequence of the antisymmetry hypothesis is that movement to the right and right-adjunction are illegitimate options in analyzing syntactic structures. This severely restricts the possible analyses of a great many constructions, among which extraposition analyses of result clauses. Chapter 5 of this thesis will provide an analysis of the sentence-final occurrence of result clauses that is consistent with the framework outlined in Kayne (1994).

Another consequence of "antisymmetric syntax" is a one-level X-bar structure, in which a head $X^0$ immediately projects a maximal projection XP. To this XP only one YP can adjoin, which implies that a specifier is an adjunct of XP, instead of a sister of $X^*$. The latter implication means that adjuncts and specifiers have the same structural configuration. A specifier of $X^0$ is an adjunct of XP that is special, in the sense that a specifier is an adjunct that is involved in an agreement relation with the head $X^0$ (cf. Hoekstra 1991, Kayne 1994).

In addition to Kayne's LCA, I will adopt a minimalist view on syntax, though this is not crucial to the analyses proposed in this thesis. I will follow Zwart (1993, 1997) in assuming that a subject in Dutch subject-initial main clauses occurs in the
specifier position of AgrSP and that an object occurs in the specifier position of AgrOP.

For the analyses in this dissertation, no intricate feature checking is needed. I will assume that a specifier-head relation provides the correct configuration for matching the respective features of maximal projections and heads.

With respect to lexical insertion, I will assume that this takes place at or after Spell-Out (see for instance work by Halle & Marantz 1993). This implies that the syntactic component works with syntactical categories and features only. For example, in case the degree head is represented by a bound morpheme and selects an AP, the adjectival head moves up and adjoins to the degree head. The complex head $A^0$-$Deg^0$ is spelled out as a comparative or superlative form of the adjective when lexical insertion takes place. As we will see in chapter 3 of this dissertation, taller and tallest, but also more, represent an $A^0$-$Deg^0$ complex.

1.3 Terminology

As mentioned in the previous section, adjectives can be used as modifiers within or outside of noun phrases in Dutch. As prenominal modifiers they can carry schwa-inflection (cf. section 2.3.2 of chapter 2). In all other environments they are not inflected:

(3) a de meest waarschijnlijke oplossing
    ‘the most probable solution’
   b Het probleem is waarschijnlijk al opgelost
    ‘The problem is probably already solved’

I will use the term adjective for both cases, sometimes specifying that we are dealing with an adjective that is used adverbially. In tree diagrams, both will be indicated by AP.

In English, however, an adjective like perfect carries the suffix -ly in sentential modification:

(4) a that perfect little house
   b that little house is fits our purposes perfectly
I will refer to perfect as an adjective, or adjectival degree phrase. I will refer to the -ly form perfectly as an adverb, or an adverbial degree phrase. In trees, the two forms will be indicated by AP and AdvP, respectively.

The term adverbial will be used as roughly similar to the term modifier: it refers to prepositional phrases as well as to degree phrase adverbials.

Adverbials of different types (modal, temporal, intensifying) can modify projections of various syntactic categories. In general, adjectival degree phrases modify noun phrases and adverbial degree phrases modify anything else:

(5)  

a  dat is een ongelooflijk mooi boek  
`that is an incredibly beautiful book'

b  het waarschijnlijk groene boek komt volgend jaar uit  
the probably green book comes next year out  
`the book, that will probably be green, will appear next year'

c  zij zit diep in de put  
she sits deeply in the well  
`she's deeply depressed'

d  dat is pijnlijk betrekkelijk  
that is painfully relative  
`that's painfully relative'

e  de klaarblijkelijk bloedmooie roman  
the apparently blood-beautiful novel  
`the apparently very beautiful novel'

f  de gisteren nog prachtige bloemen  
the yesterday still beautiful flowers  
`the flowers that were still beautiful yesterday'

g  Hij is waarschijnlijk gisteren ziek geweest  
he is probably yesterday ill been  
`He probably was ill yesterday'

One requirement that can be set for a theory about the structural configuration of modification is that it applies uniformly across these categories. This desideratum is taken up in chapter 2.
1.4 Outline

This dissertation consists of two parts: one on degree phrases and one on result clauses.

The first part concerns (a) the structural status of degree phrase that appear as modifiers in the sentential domain and (b) the internal structure of degree phrases. Chapter 2 discusses the first issue. I consider an analysis in which adverbs are heads that select the phrase they modify as complements and argue that this analysis is incorrect. I then consider Cinque's (1997) analysis of adverbial modifiers as specifiers of functional projections and compare it to an analysis in which they are not specifiers but adjuncts. The difference between specifiers and adjuncts is not structural: they share the same structural configuration of adjunction to a maximal projection. A specifier, however, is a special type of adjunct that is in agreement with the head of the projection it is adjoined to (cf. Hoekstra 1990 and Kayne 1994). Comparing the two types of analysis, my conclusion will be that degree phrases which function as modifiers are preferrably analyzed as adjuncts without any agreement relationship with the head of the projection they adjoin to.

Chapter 3 discusses the second issue of the first part of this dissertation: the internal structure of degree phrases. Following Abney (1987) and Corver (1990), I assume that te mooi 'too beautiful' and mooier 'more beautiful' are degree phrases, consisting of a degree head (e.g. te) with an adjectival complement (the AP mooi). Corver (1994, 1997) argues convincingly that a degree head like too does not have the same structural status as the comparative element more. He presents a set of very interesting data, showing that the group of items that were all analyzed as degree heads in Abney (1987) and Corver (1990), in fact consists of two subgroups. Some of these items (such as too) cooccur with much, whereas others (such as more) do not. I argue that the interpretation that Corver provides for these differences in syntactic behavior is incorrect. In the last part of chapter 3 I present an alternative analysis of these data, arriving at the conclusion that too (and so, and as, etc.) is indeed a degree head, whereas more (and less and most, etc.) is a degree phrase that consists of a comparative degree morpheme and an incorporated adjectival quantifier.

The second part of this dissertation deals with result clauses like the one in (2) below. The observation that a result clause depends on a degree element, yet is not obligatorily adjacent to it, raises the question whether the degree phrase
and the result clause are generated in adjacent positions within the same projection and if so, which one is moved:

(6) Janna heeft al zoveel boeken over quilten gekregen dat we nu maar een boek over borduren voor haar kopen.

Janna has already so-many books about quilting got that we now but a book about embroidery for her buy

`Janna has got so many books about quilting that we will buy her a book about embroidery this time'

Chapter 4 starts off with a number of earlier analyses of result clause constructions. At the end of that chapter I conclude that result clauses are not generated inside the projection of the degree head zo `so'. This conclusion sets the scene for my analysis of result clauses, which is presented in chapter 5. In this chapter, I show that coordination, comparatives, noun phrases with relative clauses and result clause constructions show striking similarities in their distribution and other aspects of syntactic behavior. In light of these similarities, I adopt an X-bar analysis of conjunction which embraces both coordinating and subordinating constructions. In this analysis, a result clause is conjoined with the matrix clause or with part of the matrix clause. Chapter 5 shows how this analysis accounts for several properties of the construction at issue. Additional firm support for the conjunction analysis of result clauses is presented in chapter 6. This chapter shows that the analysis correctly accounts for word order phenomena in Frisian result clauses and provides a discussion of negative polarity items like ook maar `even', which can occur in a result clause while being licensed by negation in the matrix clause.

Chapter 7 summarizes the argumentation and conclusions of this thesis on degree phrases and result clauses.