

Predication, Modification, and the Possession of Dimension

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Problem and data: According to Cinque (2010) there are two sources of modification. Direct modifiers originate in specifiers of designated functional projections, and indirect modifiers are predicates in a reduced relative clause. Hence, the grammaticality of the modifier in predicative position is a simple test to distinguish between the two. This system seems to work accurately for Dutch (putting aside some known exceptions). (1a) shows that the subjective modifier can be used predicatively. Based on other tests (cf., Cinque 2010), the modifier in (1a) indeed corresponds to an indirect modification source. The direct modification source material modifier in (1b) does not allow predicative use.

- (1) a. *Dit verhaal is interessant.*
 this.N story be.3SG.PRS interesting
 ‘This story is interesting.’
 b. *Deze stoel is *hout-en.*
 this.COM chair be.3SG.PRS wood-en

If we apply this me test to Russian, it seems that both subjective (2a) and material (2b) modifiers are equally good in predicative position. According to Babby (1975) modifiers in (2) should be analysed as attributive modification of a phonologically non-realised noun.

- (2) a. *Et-a istori-ja interesn-aja.*
 this-F.NOM story-NOM interesting-F.NOM.LONG
 ‘This story is interesting.’
 b. *Et-ot stul derev’ann-yj.*
 this-M.NOM chair-NOM wooden-M.NOM.LONG
 ‘This chair is made from wood.’

Russian is different from Dutch. It has two forms for modifiers: long (2) and short (3). The former is commonly used both attributively and predicatively and is associated with more nominal properties (e.g., Borik 2014). The latter is mostly used predicatively and bears more verbal properties (e.g., Borik 2014). Strikingly, the short form is available for the subjective modifier (3a), but not for the material modifier (3b), patterning with the Dutch data in (1).

- (3) a. *Et-a istori-ja interesn-a.*
 this-F.NOM story-NOM interesting-F.SHORT
 ‘This story is interesting’
 b. **Et-ot stul derev’an’-en.*
 this-M.NOM chair.NOM wooden-M.SHORT

In this paper we provide a unified account for the phenomena observed in Dutch and Russian based on a novel analysis of adjectival modification. We show that establishing a possessive relation between the noun and the modifier (cf., Koontz-Garboden & Francez 2010, Español-Echevarría 2016) is essential for allowing predicative modification in Dutch and short forms in Russian. This allows us to capture cross-linguistic data on predicative modification the distribution and semantics of which does not match the predictions of Cinque (2010).

Analysis: In recent work we argue that attributive adjectival modifiers are always specifying a dimension classifier (bold in (4a)) that heads a DimensionP. Explicit evidence for this is derived from attributive modification patterns such as (4) for Dutch. In the talk we also provide evidence that Russian has a zero allomorph in this case.

- (4) a. *een groen-e (kleur) auto*
 a green-COM colour car
 ‘a green car’
 b. *een houten (*materiaal/*stof) stoel*

a wooden material/stuff chair
 ‘a wooden chair’

We systematically show that while the pattern in (4a) holds for higher modifiers (see the adjectival hierarchy in, e.g., Scott 2002), lower modifiers such as material ones do not allow a lexically realised free-standing dimension classifier (4b). In the current talk we show that this analysis also accurately predicts the predicative modification patterns. Only those modifiers that are in a possessive relation with the noun, i.e., can be paraphrased as *the car has a green colour* or *the story has an interesting character*; can be predicative in Dutch and have a short form in Russian. This concerns exactly the same modifiers that allow the pattern in (4a). For these cases, we propose a structure in which a PossessionP embeds a DimensionP. Crucially, when the material modifier is used figuratively implying a possessive relation it can have a short form in Russian (5a) and a predicative use in Dutch (5b), where the possessive suffix *-ig* marks this possessive relation explicitly. (5a,b) both can be paraphrased as *his movements have a restrained character*.

- (5) a. *Ego dvizheni-ja derev'ann-y.*
 his movement-PL.NOM wooden-PL.SHORT
 ‘His movements are restrained.’
 b. *Zijn beweging-en zijn hout-er-ig.*
 his movement-PL be.PL.PRS wood-er-ig
 ‘His movements are restrained.’

Given their predicative use, short forms in Russian are expected to have a stage-level interpretation (cf., Cinque 2010), yet they can also denote non-temporal properties such as *čelovek smerten* ‘person is mortal’ (see Borik 2014). In our analysis of modification via a possessive relation, the dimension classifier has a [class:_] feature that is valued either as [type] or as [token] allowing for both individual-level and stage-level interpretations of the predicate respectively. This is supported by Nagano & Shimada (2015) according to whom direct modifiers in Japanese can be used predicatively if overtly followed by what we have called a dimension classifier. This element ensures the interpretation of the subject as kind (see also McNally & Boleda 2004), which is what our system predicts by the feature specification. This way Japanese overtly shows the need for a dimension classifier in predicative modification predicted by our analysis of Dutch and Russian.

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