

PRO, predication and the nature of non-finite relatives in Romance

This presentation will propose an analysis of Infinitives and Participles in predicative uses in Romance languages, especially French and Romanian. Landau (1999) proposes that there are two types of Infinitives, predicates and arguments, and that in structural terms, the difference between these two types is related to a feature of PRO that enables it to – or prevents it from – doing A' movement (a +Operator feature), and this feature has to do with Case assigned to PRO. Landau's main argument for this analysis of predicative infinitives is the correlation illustrated below by English and Hebrew, i.e. the fact that a language seems to allow, or reject, at the same time, infinitival subject-gap relatives and subject-gap infinitives as complements to psychological adjectives:

- (1) the right person_i [Op_i [t_i to fix the sink]]
- (2) a the right person to do the job is Harry
- b the chicken is ready to eat / to be eaten
- (3) a *ha-is letaken et ha-kiyor ze Gil
- l'homme à réparer l'évier est Gil
- b *ktav-ha-yad muxan lehkare
- the-manuscript ready to-be-read
- c Gil muxan likro et ktav-ha-yad
- Gil prêt lire le-manuscrit
- d sefer tov likro kase limco
- livre bon lire difficile trouver

But this generalization seems to contradict some facts, especially for Romance languages.

- (4) a l'uomo giusto **per** fare questo lavoro é Gianni
- b * l'uomo giusto **da** fare questo lavoro é Gianni
- c la meilleure personne **pour** faire ce travail est Jean
- d *la personne **à** faire ce travail est Jean
- (5) a il manoscritto é pronto **per** essere letto
- b * il manoscritto é pronto **da** essere letto
- c ?le manuscrit est prêt **pour** être lu
- d ??le manuscrit est prêt **à** être lu
- (6) a un libro **da** leggere mi farebbe piacere
- b il manoscritto é pronto **da** leggere
- c un livre **à** lire me ferait plaisir
- d le manuscrit est prêt **à** lire

These facts show that the predicative status of Infinitives is rather contributed by something external to the Infinitive itself, through Romance languages, namely a Preposition-like element. By itself, a subject-gap Infinitive has to be a complete (argumental, propositional) structure. This explains the fact that French infinitives cannot relativize the subject :

- (7) a *un homme à venir souvent
- b un homme à inviter à toutes les fêtes

Another important fact to be discussed is a contrast from Romanian, a language which is “loosing” its Infinitive. In fact, Romanian Infinitives cannot have predicative uses. Instead, in some specific predicative positions, Romanian uses a Participial form, the Supine. This is the case of reduced relatives, copular structures and Tough constructions, cf (8), (9) and (10) respectively.

- (8) a carte de citit

- b *carte de a citi
 (9) a cartea este de citit
 b *cartea este de a citi
 (10) a cartea este greu de citit
 b *cartea este greu de a citi

Our proposal is that it is not the fact that the null subject of these infinitives can have, or drop, a +Operator feature, but they have a reduced structure, in which there is no room for a subject. Therefore, the strategy in order to obtain a predication relation has to be different: hence the recourse to a P-like element, which always introduces a predication about the object. The paradigm in (8)-(10), i.e. the choice of supine in Romanian, is explained by the fact that this language can relativize the internal argument realized in a subject position, with a Supine structure. The PRO subject of Infinitives cannot give rise to A'-movement, for the simple reason that the relevant non-finite forms in these contexts (Infinitives, Supine) are subjectless, bare VPs. Our analysis is compatible with the classical theory of PRO-licensing, and needs no further stipulations such as differences in terms of Case on PRO between languages. PRO only appears in clause-like infinitives, i.e. infinitives corresponding to the category TP. As clausal structures, these infinitives have EPP, the edge feature, and represent a phase. This is not the case for the non-finite structures at study here.

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