Licensing by modification: The case of French *de* nominals[1]

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The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the positive effect that modification has on the distribution of noun phrases in otherwise illicit environments. I focus on *de* nominals in French. By focusing on these nominals, whose distribution is altered by the addition of modifiers, the paper shows that modifiers can do much more than simply modify: they can change the syntactic and semantic status of a noun phrase. The licensing property of modifiers is an intriguing topic and has not been greatly discussed in the literature. I argue that modifiers can come to play the role of determiners in French as long as they are accompanied by a head *de*, which is the spell-out of a Cardinal head (see Lyons 1999). My proposal goes back to an old idea put forward by Damourette & Pichon (1911–1940) according to which, in modified contexts, *de* functions as one half of the article while the adjective functions as the other half. More generally, articles in French are seen as dual entities comprising of a specifier and a head. In the absence of the determiner *les*, an adjective can raise to the specifier of CardinalP. This is achieved via phrasal rather than head movement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the positive effect that modification has on the distribution of noun phrases in otherwise illicit environments. To illustrate, while (1a) is completely ungrammatical, the addition of a modifier to the noun *romans* 'novels' in (1b) changes the status of the sentence: suddenly, it is perfectly well-formed.

(1) (a) *J'ai   lu   de romans l'été   dernier.
          I. have read DE novels the.summer last
          Intended: 'I read (some) novels last summer.'
    (b)   J'ai   lu   de bons romans l'été   dernier.
          I.have read DE good novels the. summer last
          'I read good novels last summer.'

It appears that the modifier behaves like a determiner (turning a predicate into an argument), since in lieu of a modifier the addition of *les*, to give *des* (I will assume throughout the paper that *des* = *de* + *les*, as is done traditionally), results in an equally grammatical sentence. This is shown in (2).

(2) J'ai   lu   des   romans l'été   dernier.
    I.have read DES   novels the.summer last
    'I read (some) novels last summer.'

The idea that the modifier acts like a determiner in (1b) is reinforced by the fact, illustrated in (3), that post-nominal modifiers in French do not have a positive effect on the distribution of *de* nominals. Determiners in French (e.g. *le*, *la*, *les*, *un*, *une*, *des*) are pre-nominal : they can only turn a predicate (noun) into an argument if they c-command their associated nouns in the syntax (*des romans* 'novels' but not **romans des*).

(3) *J'ai   lu   de   romans français l'été   dernier.
     I.have read DE   novels French   the.summer last
    Intended : 'I read French novels last summer.'

By focusing on French *de* nominals, whose distribution is altered by the addition of modifiers,we will see that modifiers can do much more than simply modify : they can change the syntactic and semantic status of a noun phrase. The licensing property of modifiers is an intriguing topic and has not been greatly discussed in the literature. The present paper is a contribution to this line of research.

My account of the puzzle – why do pre-nominal modifiers improve the grammaticality of anotherwise ill-formed sentence – builds on Androutsopoulou & Español Echevarría's (2003) insight that the adjective in modified *de* nominals comes to fill the determiner position (Androutsopoulou & Español Echevarría's 2003 paper will be referred to as A & EE henceforth). I will argue against their idea, however, that the adjective in such contexts raises to D^0 (via head movement). Instead, I propose that the adjective raises to the determiner domain by phrasal movement. In addition, whereas A & EE's account underplays the role of *de* in such environments, I argue that its contribution to the well-formedness of sentences with modified *de* nominals is in fact crucial.

In viewing both the pre-nominal adjective and the element *de* as relevant to the licensing of *de* nominals in subject (and object) positions, my proposal goes back to an old idea put forward by Damourette & Pichon (1911–1940). According to this proposal, in modified contexts *de* functions as one half of the article while the adjective functions as the other half.

The proposal is that articles in French are dual entities comprising of a specifier and a head. In indefinite contexts, *de* comes to occupy the head while *les* or an adjective in the absence of *les* occupies the specifier position. This gives support to the general proposal by Lyons (1999) that articles can

be either heads or specifiers, but I show specifically that determiners can be distributed (between a head and a specifier).

My proposal has important theoretical ramifications. First, it shows that, contra Landau (2007), the phonological realization of a given head is often/generally not sufficient to licence a noun phrase in subject position. Visibility of BOTH a head and a specifier is required if a *de* nominal is to be properly licensed. This proposal is in tune with Giusti's (2002) Principle of economy of lexical insertion (according to which both specifiers and heads need to be visible), showcasing in passing the importance of specifiers, contra Starke (2001).

Second, my proposal shows that head movement is not needed in order to account for the behaviour of modifiers in *de* nominal contexts. This must be seen as a welcome result, since head movement has been shown to be problematic in current syntactic theory (see Chomsky 2001 for details).

Third, my proposal sheds light on a long-lasting puzzle in French syntax, i.e. the categorical status of *de*. Some grammarians have claimed that it is a preposition; others, that it is a determiner; or even either a preposition or a determiner depending on the context (see Wilmet 1986 for a summary of the literature). On my view, *de* is a determiner but of a special kind: it is not a full partitive or indefinite determiner, as usually claimed, but a semi-determiner (or a deficient determiner, along the lines of what Heyd 2003 has proposed for different facts) that requires another determiner-like element in its specifier for the sentence to be well-formed: either a modifier or *les* in the more traditional cases.

Finally, my proposal illustrates the flexibility of lexical categories (modifiers) to act as functional categories (determiners), showing that a strict distinction between lexical and functional categories is not well-motivated (Déchaine 1993, Borer 2005): an adjective can come to play the role of a determiner.

This is how I shall proceed. I begin in Section 2 by introducing the basic puzzle with which the present paper is concerned. Section 3 gives an analysis of modified *de* nominals and explains why they manage to appear in all contexts where standard indefinite phrases are licit. Section 4 argues against the allomorphy analysis. Section 5 argues against the idea that modified *de* nominals behave differently from non-modified *de* nominals because they are focused. Section 6 argues that Dayal's (2004) account for modified *any* cannot be applied to the case of French modified *de* nominals. Section 7 concludes the paper.

2. A PUZZLE

The first noteworthy mention in the literature of the relevance and contribution of modification on the distribution and well-formedness of noun phrases comes from Romance languages such as Spanish and Italian. In the

normal cases, a bare noun is licit in an object (4a), but not in a subject position (4b).

(4) (a) Ha invitado escritores. Spanish
　　　has invited　writers
　　　'He has invited writers.'
　　(b) *Escritores han　aceptado su　invitación.
　　　　writers　　have accepted　his invitation
　　　'Writers have accepted his invitation.'

However, if we add a modifier to the noun *escritores*'writers' in (4b), then the sentence becomes grammatical (Delfitto & Schroten 1991, Longobardi 1994). To illustrate, consider the examples in (5). In (5a) *franceses* 'French' modifies *escritores* 'writers' while in (5b) the complex modifier *de mi generación* 'of my generation' modifies the noun *escritores* 'writers'. Both sentences are grammatical in sharp contrast with (4b).

(5) (a) Escritores franceses han　aceptado su　invitación.
　　　writers　　French　　have accepted　his invitation
　　　'French writers have accepted his invitation.'
　　(b) Escritores de mi generación han　acceptado su　invitación.
　　　writers　　of my generation have accepted　his invitation
　　　'Writers of my generation have accepted his invitation.'

The special effect that modification has on the distribution of noun phrases has also been noticed with regard to English *any* (Dayal 2004). As shown by (6a), *any* cannot normally appear in a subject position. Traditionally, this is because an *any* phrase needs to be c-commanded by a proper licensor (such as negation) and can thus only appear in an object position, as in (6b).

(6) (a) *Any student didn't sign the petition.
　　(b) The students didn't sign any petition.

However, as (7) testifies, when modified, *any* is suddenly completely licit in a subject position (the CP *who went to the meeting* modifies *any student*).

(7) Any student who went to the meeting didn't sign the petition.

In fact, even in the absence of negation, the subject position is a licit environment for *any*. This is shown in (8a). In the absence of a modifier, *any* cannot of course appear without a proper licensor such as negation, as shown by (8b).

(8) (a) Any student who went to the meeting signed the petition.
　　(b) *The students signed any petition.

A third set of facts illustrates further the positive effect that modification has on the distribution of noun phrases. As shown by Wolter (2007),

normally a demonstrative phrase such as *those employees* in (9a) is scopally inert: it takes widest scope only. On the other hand, a definite description such as *the employees* in (9b) is ambiguous between a transparent and an opaque reading. On the opaque reading, the referent of *the employees* varies across John's belief worlds, but on the transparent reading it does not.

(9) (a) John believes that those employees were fired.
   (b) John believes that the employees were fired.

However, if we modify the phrase *those employees* as in (10), then suddenly it is possible to obtain both a transparent and an opaque reading: the referent of *those employees responsible* varies across John's belief worlds. The demonstrative description is no longer scopally inert.

(10) John believes that those employees responsible were fired.

The present paper focuses on a fourth set of facts: the case of French *de* nominals. As seen in the introduction, the bare noun in (1a) becomes licit in the sentence if modified, as in (1b). The generalization also holds for the subject position, as shown in (11).

(11) (a) *De romans ont été publiés l'été dernier.
      DE novels have been published the.summer last
      Intended: '(Some) novels were published last summer.'
  (b) De bons romans ont été publiés l'été dernier.
      DE good novels have been published the.summer last
      'Good novels were published last summer.'

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, while it is possible for a pre-nominal modifier to save the sentence from ungrammaticality, post-nominal modifiers cannot undo the ill-formedness of the sentence (3).

In this section, we have seen that the positive effect that modification has on the licensing of bare nominals is a general phenomenon. It is a new topic worthy of attention that will help us understand better the flexible nature of syntactic categories. The case of French is particularly interesting because it sheds light not only on the nature of adjectives and the role they can play beyond the simple case of modification, but also on the nature of determiners and their syntactic structure.

3. THE ACCOUNT

In this section, I provide a syntactic solution to the French puzzle. The solution that I am proposing builds on A & EE's analysis of modified *de* nominals. My analysis is similar in that I propose that pre-nominal adjectives in the contexts under review behave like determiners, but my analysis is nevertheless different and has, I believe, many advantages over A & EE's account.

3.1 *De as a semi-determiner*

My proposal is as follows: *de* is a semi determiner that must work in tandem with another element in the specifier of CardP in order to yield a grammatical sentence (see Heyd 2003 for the idea that *de* in negative contexts is a deficient determiner). Since double determination is required in the case of *des* (on my view, *des* is the combination of *de*+*les*) *de* is not capable of saturating the nominal variable on its own (12a). This is why either *les*, a free form, needs to be added, as in (12b) or – and this is the interesting part – an adjective needs to be added, as in (12c).

(12) (a) *J'ai   lu   de romans.
           I.have read DE novels
           *J'ai lu [$_{CardP}$ de [$_{NP}$ romans]].
           Intended: 'I read novels.'
     (b) J'ai   lu   des   romans.
         I.have read the+DE   novels
         J'ai lu [$_{CardP}$ les+DE [$_{NP}$ romans]].
         'I read novels.'
     (c) J'ai   lu   de bons romans.
         I.have read DE good novels
         J'ai lu [$_{CardP}$ bons+DE [$_{NP}$ romans]].
         'I read good novels.'

The facts presented in this paper and the essential ingredients of my analysis tally with the view according to which determiners are the combination of both a specifier and a head. Following Lyons (1999), only the specifier or the head of definite determiners is filled with phonological material in some languages, while in others double determination is possible. For example, in English, there is only one definite determiner: *the*. In Danish and Icelandic, however, both a free form and a suffixal form coexist in the language. The choice between the two forms is grammatically conditioned: the free form article is used whenever the noun is preceded by modifying material; the suffix otherwise. Relevant examples appear in (13) and (14).
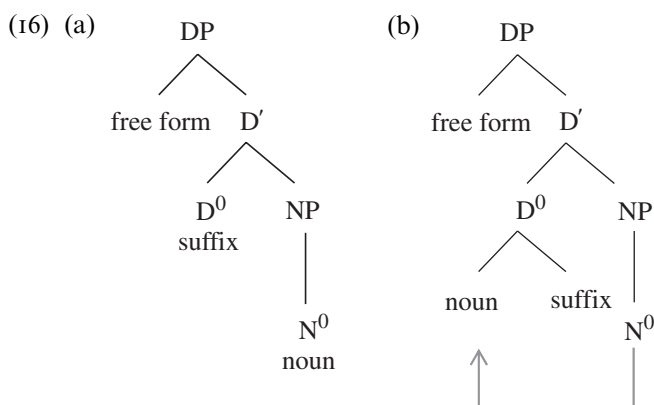
(13) (a) hus**et** 'the house' Danish
     (b) **det** gamle hus 'the old house'
     (c) **de** tre huse 'the three houses

(14) (a) bátur**inn** 'the boat' Icelandic
     (b) **hinn** fallegi bátur 'the beautiful boat'
     (c) **hinn** eini bátur 'the one boat'   (Lyons 1999: 77)

As shown in (15), Swedish also has two definite articles, a free form and a suffix, cognate with those of Danish, but differs in that the two can co-occur (Holmes & Hinchliffe 1994). The free form is used, as in Danish,

in the presence of a pre-nominal modifier, but the affix also appears in this case.

(15) (a) resa**n** 'the journey' Swedish
　　(b) **den** långa resa**n** 'the long journey'
　　(c) **de** fyra resor**na** 'the four journeys'　　　　　(Lyons 1999: 78)

Here both a free form and an affix are phonologically spelled-out. I assume like Lyons (1999) that the affix sits in D^0 while the free form appears in the specifier of DP, where D stands for 'definiteness' rather than 'determiner'. On his view, because the noun raises to D^0, the suffix ends up attached to the noun. The tree diagram in (16a) represents the structure before the movement while the diagram in (16b) represents the structure after movement.

(16) (a)

```
            DP
           /  \
   free form   D′
              /  \
           D⁰    NP
         suffix   |
                  N⁰
                 noun
```

(b)

```
            DP
           /  \
   free form   D′
              /  \
           D⁰    NP
          /  \    |
      noun  suffix N⁰
         ↑_____/
```

An indefinite article on the other hand is the equivalent of the cardinal 'one'. For example, in French, as in many languages, it is clear that the indefinite determiner is a cardinal element: *un* 'a' is the same word as the cardinal *un* 'one' (most, if not all, indefinite determiners are derived from adjectives historically, see Greenberg 1978, Haspelmath 1995). The projection headed by the cardinal 'one' or *un* is CardP.

Just like the case of the definite article discussed above, depending on the language, the indefinite article is a free form (e.g. French *un/une*) or an affix (e.g. Romanian *-ul*, as in *pom-ul* 'the tree'). In some languages double determination is possible. As discussed by Lyons (1999), in Persian, *yek* is a free-standing indefinite article that can appear together with an affix *-i*. The addition of the latter makes the NP non-specific, arbitrary (the noun on its own can mean either 'the man' or 'a man'), thus there is a clear semantic effect, but syntactically we have a clear case of both a free form and a suffix denoting indefiniteness. When modified, the noun does not carry the suffix, but the modifier does instead, see (17a). When not modified, the noun carries the suffix, see (17b).
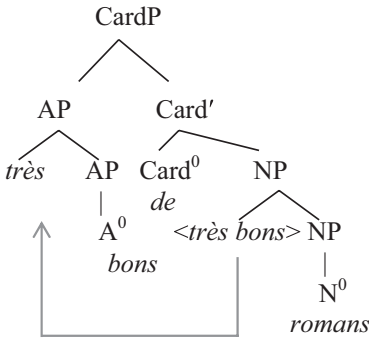
(17) (a) yek mard-ī khub 'a good man' Persian
(b) yek ketābhā-ī 'some books'

(Lyons 1999: 90)

This is not unlike the French cases under review. When a modifier appears post-nominally in French, *des* must be used. This is the free form. However, when a modifier appears pre-nominally *de* is preferred, if not obligatory in the majority of cases. I will argue below that *de* is in fact a clitic. It must attach to the modifier.

My account explains why an adjective cannot act as a determiner on its own: the contribution of *de* is not negligible. It is precisely the combination *de* + adjective that acts as a determiner. The tree diagram in (18a) below gives the representation for the string *de très bons romans* 'very good novels'. The adjectival phrase in (18a) occupies the same position as a determiner would occupy had the adjective not surfaced. The tree diagram in (18b) represents the case where it is the free form *les* that surfaces in the specifier of DP. Of course, *de* appears before the adjective or *les* in the morphology: we come back to this point below. The syntactic structure spells out two different positions: one is a specifier, the other a head (I choose the adjunction theory of modifiers rather than Cinque's (1993, 1994) approach, i.e. APs as specifiers of Agreement projections, but nothing hinges on this matter). Note that I assume that *les* in (18b) is a maximal projection (a DP). Angled brackets, as around AP in (18a), indicate that the item is a copy of the raised element.

(18) (a) *de très bons romans*   (b) *des très bons romans*
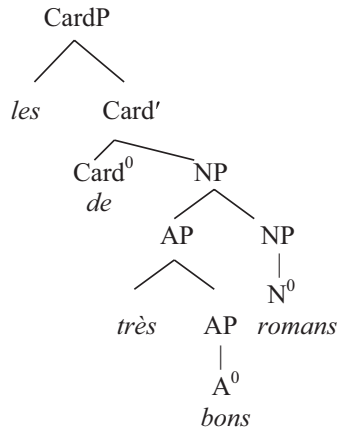
The question that now arises is why *de* always surfaces to the left of the AP or to the left of *les*. The diagrams in (18a–b) are only the syntactic structures, not the phonological output.

I want to argue that *de* is a phrasal proclitic: it is phonologically weak. For example, it is often reduced, as in *d'excellents romans* 'excellent novels'. It
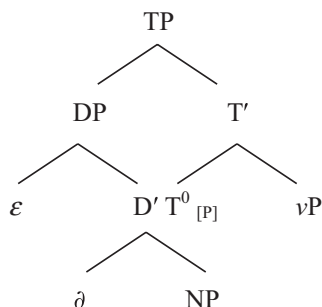
also forms a prosodic word with the adjective: it needs to attach to the overall XP with which it is associated, namely CardP, as in (19a) below. As is well-known, phrasal clitics have special properties (see Zwicky 1977): they are not adjacent to a word that they select but attach instead to a specific syntactic phrase (on phrasal clitics, see Klavans 1985, Anderson 1992, Legendre 2000, Spencer 2000 and Himmelmann 2001 especially for phrasal proclitic articles). I assume that the leftward operation is achieved at PF. In (19b) *les* has to further merge morphologically with *de* yielding *des* since we end up with a portmanteau word.

(19)   (a)   *de* [$_{CardP}$ *très bons* Card^0 <*de*> [$_{NP}$ *romans*]] 'very good novels'

       (b)   *de* [$_{CardP}$ *les* Card^0 <*de*> [$_{NP}$ *très bons romans*]] '(some) very good novels'

In summary, my analysis shows that in some languages, i.e. French, it is necessary for both the head and the specifier of a given nominal to be visible for that nominal to be licensed. This is because the function of the French indefinite article is distributed along the specifier and the head. This result is very different from Landau's (2007) proposal about visibility in syntax, since on his view it is the head of a given phrase that must be filled (the specifier may remain empty). On my view, both ε and ∂ in (20) must be filled (see Section 5 below, where I give a proper introduction of Landau's 2007 account; in (20), ε = specifier position and ∂ = head position).

(20) Visibility

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                    TP
                   /  \
                 DP     T′
                /  \   /  \
              ε    D′ T⁰[P]  vP
                   /  \
                  ∂    NP
```

The notion of economy adopted herein is closer to Giusti's (2002) proposal. According to Giusti (2002: 70), a functional head is realized only if it is absolutely necessary, but when it is inserted, a functional projection has to be licensed, either by making the specifier visible or making the head visible or both.

(21) *Principle of economy of lexical insertion*

A functional projection must be licensed at all levels of representation by
(a) making the specifier visible
(b) making the head visible

(Giusti 2002: 70; see also Dimitrova-Vulchanova & Giusti 1998)

Clauses (a) and (b) may operate either disjointly or conjointly (depending on the language or the construction). In the case of indefinite phrases in French, they apply conjointly.

3.2 *XP movement versus head movement*

Androutsopoulou & Español Echevarría (2003) argue that examples such as (1b) above are grammatical because the adjective raises to D^0. Although they do not spell out the details and consequences of such an analysis, the idea is that phrases with pre-nominal modifiers are the equivalent of nominals headed by D^0.

The account in A & EE is similar to what Delfitto & Schroten (1991) – D & S henceforth – propose for the Italian facts pertaining to bare nouns with pre-nominal adjectives (see Section 2 above). These authors claim that in such contexts the noun raises to D^0 at LF. In both accounts (A & EE's and D & S's), the D^0 position comes to be filled: by the adjective itself (overtly) in A & EE, in which case the adjective acts like a saturator for the variable introduced with the noun (in lieu of a determiner), and by the noun (covertly) in D & S. On the latter view, adjectives that can appear pre-nominally are heads while those that cannot are phrasal (they cannot incorporate into D^0).

Regarding the D & S account, the first problem of note concerns the architecture of the grammar, and the need to update it. It is no longer possible to appeal to differences between pre-Surface Structure and post-Surface Structure when talking about movement, since such a level of representation is no longer postulated in minimalism (Spell-Out is not a level of representation, see Chomsky 1995). This means that on D & S's account, the noun will have to move to D^0 overtly. This is certainly not an impossible operation and has been proposed independently for proper names (Longobardi 1994). Proper names are licensed in both object and subject positions. Although they contain an empty D^0, the proper name raises to it (at least in languages like English; Greek has obligatory determiners with proper names). But the main problem with D & S's account is that it is not clear why bare nouns would move to D^0 ONLY when modified. The movement is not motivated – it is purely ad hoc. The question is: What stops bare nouns to move to D^0 in Italian even in the absence of a modifier?

The A & EE analysis of the French facts does not face the same problems as the D & S analysis, since on the latter view raising of the adjective to D^0 is triggered only when *les* (treated as an expletive determiner, since *des* = *de* + *les*, where *les* has no definite or specific import), is

absent.[2] In *des bons livres* 'good books', the adjective *bons* is a specifier just as in the case of post-nominal adjectives, e.g. *des livres intéressants* 'interesting books', *les* is not absent (it is in D^0).

The structure in (22) is a simplified version of what A & EE proposes, but is sufficient for our purposes. Note that the adjective raises to D^0 via head movement (form inside the AP) and that the element *de* plays no role: in their analysis, it is treated as an external element to the DP.

(22)
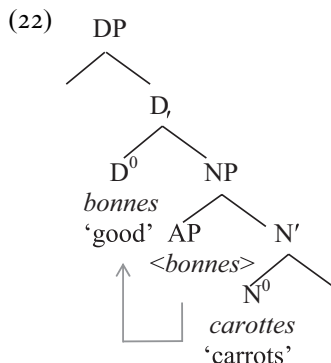
On this view, post-nominal adjectives are different and are not capable of saving the sentence from ungrammaticality because a determiner is necessary: the determiner is the head of the whole structure rather than the adjective. In other words, post-nominal adjectives are specifiers throughout the whole syntactic derivation and they can never incorporate into D^0 because of their categorical status. In contrast, pre-nominal adjectives are heads (see Lamarche 1991, Valois 1991a, Bouchard 1998 for French and Sadler & Arnold 1994 for English) and as heads they can incorporate into D^0.

According to A & EE, this squares well with independent properties distinguishing pre-nominal from post-nominal adjectives. First, Romance pre-nominal adjectives, in contrast to post-nominal ones, cannot take complements. Compare (23a) with (23b).

(23) (a) le   professeur respectueux de ses édiants
       the professor   respectful   of his students
       'the professor respectful of his students'

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[2] This determiner is usually claimed not to be the definite determiner *les* as in *les romans* 'the books' (since the interpretation is not definite or in many cases partitive). According to Milner (1978) and Jones (1996), *les* is in this case an expletive with no presuppositional and/or definiteness force for the DP, since *des romans* does not refer to a known set of novels. Instead, it is an indefinite phrase. Although, I will also decompose *des* into *de les*, this does not mean necessarily that I think *les* is in this case (indefinite use of *des*) an expletive determiner. I remain agnostic. It could well be that *les* is a full determiner. For example, Dayal (2004) argues against *les* being considered an expletive on the grounds that it is restricted from appearing in the nuclear scope where expressions without existential presuppositions are interpreted – this distinguishes English bare plurals from Italian definite plurals.

(b) *le respectueux de ses étudiants professeur
   (*le respectueux professeur* is marginal but not impossible)

Second, while liaison is obligatory with pre-nominal adjectives, as shown in (24a), it is optional with post-nominal adjectives, as illustrated in (24b). Because of these facts, Lamarche (1991) argues that pre-nominal adjectives incorporate into the noun.

(24) (a) les bonnes [z] idées de Paul
         the good   ideas of Paul
         'Paul's good ideas'
     (b) (i)   les livres   anglais
             the books   English
         (ii) les livres [z] anglais
             the books   English

However, my account is superior to A & EE's. First, it explains why in the cases under review an adjective cannot act as a determiner on its own. If it could, then the sentence in (25) would be grammatical. Given A&EE's account, this sentence is expected to be grammatical, since *de* plays absolutely no role in the analysis.

(25) *J'ai   lu   bons romans.
       I.have read good novels
     'I read good novels.'

On my view, the contribution of *de* is crucial. I argue that it is precisely the combination *de* + adjective that acts as a determiner. My analysis goes back to an old idea first mentioned by Damourette & Pichon (1911–1940) according to which *de* functions as the second half of the article. My account is thus different from most traditional accounts. For many linguists, *de* is an article (Frei 1960) while for others it is a preposition (Clédat 1901, Wagner & Pinchon 1962, Gross 1967). Yet others (Kupferman 2004) have proposed that *de* has a dual nature, either prepositional (when interpreted as partitive) or a quantificational head. On this view, a nominal phrase such as *des épinards* 'spinach' looks as follows (Kupferman 2004: 67):

(26)   QP
      / \
    Q^0 DP
    de   / \
        D^0 NP
        les   /\
            épinards
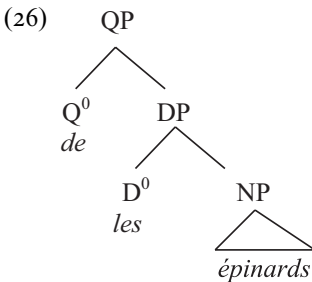
My analysis shares with that of Kupferman's (2004) the idea that *des* is the combination of *de* and *les* (one argument in favour of this view is that *des* alternates with *de ces* 'of these', *de mes* 'of my.PL', '*de ceux*'of those', *de ce que* 'of which', etc.). The difference between Kupferman's proposal and mine is that, although I treat *de* as an element separate from *les*, I nevertheless advocate a strong relationship between the two elements, since for me both *de* and *les* are two parts of a single determiner entity. This allows me to explain facts pertaining to *de*+adjective strings, facts that are not studied or explained in Kupferman's (2004) analysis.

The second point of comparison with A&EE concerns evidence that in the cases under review the adjective raises to the D domain, not via head movement, but via phrasal movement instead. Evidence for such a claim comes from three sources. First, modifiers that modify *de* nominals can themselves be modified. The examples in (27) show that the pre-nominal adjective *bons* 'good' can surface with an intensifier such as *très* 'very' (27a) or *assez* 'quite' (27b).

(27) (a) J'ai   lu   de **très** bons romans l'été   dernier.
         I. have read DE very good novels the.summer last
         'I read very good novels last summer.'
    (b) Il   a   obtenu d'**assez** bons résultats.
        he has obtained DE.quite good results
        'He obtained quite good results.'

Second, as illustrated by (28), *de* nominals can appear in comparative constructions. In this example, *plus* 'more' modifies *beaux musées* 'beautiful museums'.

(28) J'ai   visité de plus beaux   musées   cette année que
     I.have visited DE more beautiful museums this year   than
     l'année   dernière.
     the.year last
      'I visited better museums this year than last year.'

Third, a modified *de* nominal can be coordinated while being modified by a single intensifier, as shown in (29).

(29) J'ai   lu   de très bons et   charmants romans.
     I.have read DE very good and charming   novels
     'I read very good and (very) charming novels.'

On the basis of such facts – and also of the fact that pre-nominal adjectives can be focalized (*une SUPERBE voiture* 'a SUPERB car') – Laenzlinger (2005) argues that, if we follow Kayne's (1975) tests for clitichood of pronouns (akin

to incorporation, see Lamarche 1991, Valois 1991a, Bouchard 1998), it turns out that pre-nominal adjectives do not qualify as clitics incorporated into the noun (incorporated elements/clitics cannot be focalized, they form a prosodic word with their hosts). We should also add that clitics in French are limited in number (they are closed class items). Pre-nominal adjectives, on the other hand, are members of an open class and do not become part of the phonological word with which they surface (this is a point made by Lieber (1992: 52–53), who argues against Stowell's (1981) original idea according to which modifiers are positioned after the head noun, but raise as clitics when they surface pre-nominally).

We appear to have contradictory evidence, however, because as mentioned above, in French (and in English) it is not possible for pre-nominal adjectives to surface with complements whereas post-nominal adjectives are free to appear with complements. If, as I propose, pre-nominal adjectives raise to the D domain via phrasal rather than head movement when *de* does not surface with *les*, we might expect pre-nominal adjectives to appear with complements. However, this is not possible, as shown by (30).

(30)   *De respectueux de leurs étudiants professeurs ont été
        DE respectful of their students professors have been
       félicités.
       congratulated
       Intended: 'Professors respectful of their students were
       congratulated.'

Having said that, as pointed out by Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou (2007: 389), if not having a complement necessarily leads us to postulate a head analysis, then all pre-nominal English adjectives would have to be derived by the head analysis, since they cannot surface with a complement either. Yet, we have much independent evidence that many adjectives in English have a predicative source and thus originate in a post-nominal position (see Kayne 1994). In addition, pre-nominal adjectives in English can be conjoined and can appear with a full array of adjectival modifiers. This is shown in (31) – examples from Lieber (1992: 53).

(31) (a) a very big and unbelievably dirty dog
      (b) a not too surprisingly tall woman

It should also be noted that complements with pre-nominal adjectives are not ruled out universally: it is possible in languages such as Greek, German, Albanian, Romanian and Bulgarian (see Alexiadou et al. (2007: 388) for Greek and German examples). It must therefore be the case that French pre-nominal adjectives cannot surface with complements for independent reasons.

Finally, there are problems with head movement in minimalist grammars. According to Chomsky (2000, 2001), 'a substantial core of head-raising processes, excluding incorporation in the sense of Baker (1988), may fall within the phonological component' (Chomsky 2001: 37). In recent years, it has been popular in the literature to take the operation out of the narrow syntax, relegate it to PF or eliminate it completely and replace it with XP movement/remnant movement. Head movement is problematic for minimalist syntax because (i) it violates the Extension Condition; (ii) it also violates the c-command condition on traces; (iii) unlike specifier–head checking relations, head-to-head relations do not seem to involve 'complementary' ('matching') features (say, interpretable ϕ-features of nouns and uninterpretable ϕ-features of verbs); and (iv) head movement seems to have no semantic effect.

That we do not need head movement in order to account for the facts under review must be seen as a welcome result. In sum, although the current proposal owes much to A & EE's original insight, my conclusions are very different from theirs.

3.3 *Scope*

If the idea according to which pre-nominal modifiers in *de* nominal contexts come to act as determiners or saturators of nominal's variables is correct, then it is predicted that such phrases should behave like canonical indefinite phrases with respect to scope. This prediction is borne out.

As is well-known, object *de* nominals that are not modified cannot receive wide scope: they are only interpreted as taking narrow scope. To illustrate, (32) below can only mean 'It is not the case that I have read novels this summer' and not 'There are some novels and it is not the case that I have read them this summer.' According to Mathieu (2004), the reason why they receive only narrow scope is because they are semantically incorporated (they denote properties). This is a property they share with bare nouns in other languages that have overt articles, e.g. Spanish and Italian: these denote properties and receive only narrow scope (Longobardi 1994, Chierchia 1998, Dobrovie-Sorin & Laca 2003, among many others). The sentences in italics after the examples give the different scope possibilities/semantic readings.

(32) Je n'ai   pas lu   de roman(s) l'été   dernier.
      I NE.have not read DE novel(s) the.summer last
      'I didn't read any novel(s) last summer.'
      '*It is not the case that I read a novel/novels last summer*'
      *'*There is/are a novel/some novels and it is not the case that
      I read it/them last summer.*'

However, a modified *de* nominal can take wide scope in relation to negation. This is shown in (33). The sentence can mean either 'It is not the case that I read good novels last summer' (in which case the *de* nominal takes narrow scope) or 'There are some good novels and it is not the case that I read them last summer' (in which case the *de* nominal takes wide scope). The judgement about the wide scope is subtle, but there is a clear contrast between (32) and (33): (33) is ambiguous, (32) is not.

(33) Je n'ai   pas lu **de** bons romans l'été   dernier.
      I   NE.have not read DE good novels the.summer last
      '*It is not the case that I read good novels last summer.*'
      '*There are some good novels and it is not the case that I read them last summer.*'

In other contexts, the similarity between *de* and *des* nominals in terms of scope is even clearer. As indefinite phrases, *des* nominals can take either narrow or wide scope in relation to a predicate like *chercher* 'to look for'. This is shown in (34): *des enveloppes* 'envelopes' can be interpreted either specifically (I am looking for specific envelopes) or non-specifically (I am looking for (any) envelopes – I have none in mind).

(34) Je cherche des   enveloppes.
      I   look.for DE+LES envelopes
      '*I am looking for envelopes.*'
      '*There are envelopes (somewhere) and I am looking for them.*'

The example in (35) is similar to the one in (34) in that the modified *des* nominal can yield either a wide or a narrow scope reading. I may be looking for specific big envelopes that I put away somewhere or I am simply in search of big envelopes.

(35) Je cherche des   grandes enveloppes.
      I   look.for DE+LES big   envelopes
      '*I am looking for big envelopes.*'
      '*There are some big envelopes (somewhere) and I am looking for them.*'

When we use a modified *de* nominal instead of a modified *des* nominal, we obtain the same readings. Although, admittedly the most natural reading for (36) is one according to which the nominal phrase takes narrow scope in relation to *chercher* 'look for', the interpretation according to which the nominal takes wide scope is not impossible in the right context.[3]

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[3] As a *JL* referee points out, the wide versus narrow scope reading can be shown through the form of a following pronoun: *je cherche de grandes enveloppes et je ne les trouve pas* 'I am

(36) Je cherche de   grandes enveloppes.
      I   look.for DE big   envelopes
      '*I am looking for big envelopes.*'
      '*There are big envelopes (somewhere) and I am looking for them.*'

In the same vein, whether we use *de* or *des*, the example in (37a) below has a reading according to which there are close relatives of mine such that, if they die, I will be rich. Both modified *de* and *des* nominals are thus able to take scope over an *if* clause to which they belong, i.e. escape a scopal island. This is a property that indefinites have generally (see Reinhart 1997), and Spector (2003) has shown this for French *des* nominals. In turn, I show this for modified *de* nominals to make the point that their scopal properties are identical to *des* nominals.[4] A non-modified *des* nominal is exemplified in (37b).

(37) (a) Si de proches parents à moi meurent, je serai   riche.
          if DE close   relatives to me die   I be.FUT rich
          '*If close relatives of mine die, I will be rich.*'
          '*If close relatives of mine die, I will inherit a house.*'
          '*There are close relatives of mine, and if they die,*
          I can inherit a house.'
     (b) Si des parents à moi meurent, je serai riche.
          '*If relatives of mine die, I will inherit a house.*'
          '*There are relatives of mine, and if they die, I can inherit a house.*'

I assume that the modified *de* N achieves wide scope via a Choice Function mechanism à la Reinhart (1997).

3.4 *The case of post-nominal modifiers*

This section addresses the question as to why post-nominal modifiers cannot act as determiners in French *de n*ominal constructions. Because on my analysis pre-nominal modifiers in such contexts are phrasal (just like post-nominal modifiers), I lose the contrast introduced by the A&EE account that allowed the authors to explain why post-nominal modifiers play no role in the enhanced distribution of *de* nominals.

  The solution to this problem is simple: post-nominal modifiers are in the wrong position to begin with. In order for a modifier to act as a

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looking for big envelopes and I can't find them [wide scope] versus *je cherche de grandes enveloppes et je n'en trouve pas* 'I am looking for big envelopes and I can't find any'[narrow scope].

[4] In the absence of scopal elements in the sentence, it is clear that in the right contexts, *des* nominals are ambiguous between an existential non-partitive reading and a partitive interpretation (see Galmiche 1986a).

determiner together with *de*, it must be able to appear pre-nominally independently.

All in all, it seems to me, that the position of adjectives in French is fairly free: many adjectives in French can appear pre- or post-nominally.[5] This does not mean that the interpretation is constant. Adjectives that are freer in their distribution appear to obtain a different interpretation depending on their position. Post-nominal adjectives, for example, have an emphatic interpretation or a strong subjective reading or are interpreted as restrictive/intersective (see Bouchard 2002 for a detailed description). Two examples appear in (38). Whereas (38a) singles out a part of the writers as being mediocre (restrictive, intersective reading), (38b) qualifies all writers as mediocre.

(38) (a) nos écrivains médiocres
          our writers   mediocre
          'our writers who are mediocre'
     (b) nos médiocres écrivains
          our mediocre   writers
          'our mediocre writers'
                              (Bouchard 2002: 98, citing Blinkenberg 1933: 108)

What is interesting is that when pre-nominal, the adjective surfaces with *de* (*des* is impossible) but when post-nominal, the adjective surfaces with *des* (*de* is impossible). This is shown in (39).

(39) (a) Nous avons interrogé   des/*d'écrivains   médiocres.
          we   have interviewed DE + LES/DE.writers mediocre
          'We interviewed mediocre writers (i.e. writers who are mediocre).'
     (b) Nous avons interrogé   de/*des   médiocres écrivains.
          we   have interviewed DE/DE + LES mediocre   writers
          'We interviewed mediocre writers.'

The difference in distribution between *de* and *des* nominals also surfaces with quality adjectives that tend to appear more often than not post-nominally, e.g. *fier* 'proud' (quality adjectives such as *magnifique* 'magnificent', *superbe* 'superb' tend to be freer in their distribution: they can appear pre- or post-nominally). When the quality adjective is pre-nominal, *de* is preferred, as shown in (40a). When it is post-nominal, *des* is preferred, as illustrated in (40b).

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[5] To the exception of non-predicative adjectives: as is well-known, *un ancien president* 'a former president' is possible, but not **un président ancien* 'a former president'. Also, nationality terms resist appearing in pre-nominal positions. We return to this point below, in Section 3.

(40) (a) J'ai   rencontré des/*de   parents fiers à la réunion.
         I.have met   DE + LES/DE parents proud at the meeting
         'I met proud parents at the meeting.'
         (i.e. 'I met parents who were proud.')
     (b) J'ai   rencontré de/*des   fiers   parents à la réunion.
         I.have met   DE/DE + LES proud parents at the meeting
         'I met proud parents at the meeting.'

In addition, although it is often said that colour terms in French have to appear post-nominally, it turns out that they can appear pre-nominally as long as they surface with *de*. When they appear post-nominally, on the other hand, they must surface with *des*. This is shown in (41) and (42).

(41) (a) Des/*de   parures noires ornaient les murs.
         DE + LES/DE fineries black decorated the walls
         'Black fineries decorated the walls.'
         (i.e. 'Fineries that were black decorated the walls.')
     (b) De/*des   noires parures ornaient les murs.
         DE/DE + LES black fineries decorated the walls
         'Black fineries decorated the walls.'

(42) (a) Des/*de   prairies vertes s'étendaient au   loin.
         DE + LES/DE prairies green self-stretched at.the far
         'Green fields stretched in the distance.'
         (i.e. 'Fields that were green stretched in the distance.')
     (b) De/*des   vertes prairies s'étendaient   au   loin.
         DE/DE + LES green   prairies self-stretched at.the far
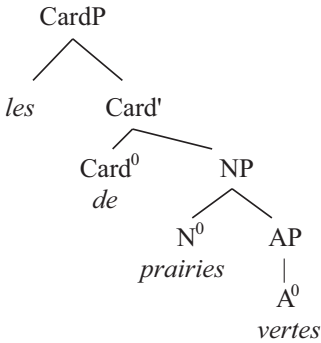   'Green fields stretched in the distance.'

Of course, examples with predicative adjectives in pre-nominal position have a literary flavour to them.[6] However, the important point is that they are grammatical: a native speaker of French would have no trouble understanding what they meant if he/she came across them in, say, a novel and speakers have access to a subtle difference in meaning between the two variants. The post-nominal adjective is intersective while the pre-nominal adjective is not. What is noteworthy, however, is that when the colour term appears pre-nominally, *de* is possible, but *des* is ruled out.

The tree diagram in (43a) shows the structure for *des prairies vertes* in (42a) above, and (43b) is the representation for *de vertes prairies* in (42b). In this case, the adjective is in the specifier of CardP (see Abeillé & Godard 1999, Demonte 1999, Androutsopoulou 2000, Laenzlinger 2005, among many
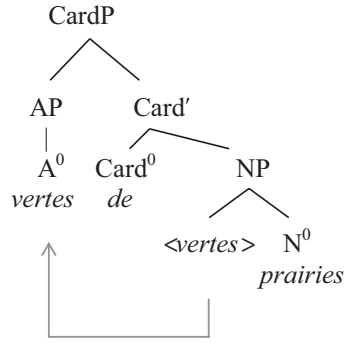
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[6] What I mean by predicative adjectives here is: those adjectives that are normally in predicative position but can also appear pre-nominally; I will call those adjectives that can appear only predicatively, pure predicative adjectives – see next page of in the main text.

others, for the idea that pre-nominal adjectives attain their position via movement from a post-nominal position).

(43) (a) *des prairies vertes*　　　　　　　(b) *de vertes prairies*

```
        CardP                                  CardP
       /     \                                /     \
     les     Card'                          AP      Card'
            /     \                         |      /     \
        Card⁰     NP                       A⁰   Card⁰     NP
         de      /   \                   vertes  de     /    \
               N⁰     AP                              <vertes>  N⁰
            prairies   |                                      prairies
                      A⁰
                     vertes
```

I propose that movement of a modifier to the pre-nominal position is triggered by a feature on D^0, call it F. The exact nature of this feature remains to be determined but for some cases we have reviewed it is clear that the feature has something to do with non-restrictiveness/non-intersectiveness. It is as if the post-nominal modifier is focused (*des parures noires* 'fineries that are black (rather than white)') whereas when the modifier is pre-nominal it is the noun together with the adjective that are focalized. For some authors, it is a Degree feature that triggers the raising of pre-nominal modifiers (Demonte 1999) or a Strong subjectivity (emphasis) feature (Laezlinger 2004).

There are only two kinds of adjectives that cannot appear pre-nominally: nationality terms and pure predicative adjectives (what I mean by 'pure' is that they cannot be used attributively – see footnote 6 above). If we follow Laenzlinger's (2005) hierarchy for modifiers, given in (44) below, we notice that the higher in the hierarchy the modifier is the easier it is for that modifier to appear in a pre-nominal position provided that *de* rather than *des* is used, and the lower the modifier is on the hierarchy the more difficult it is for it to appear pre-nominally if *des* is used (*de* may surface with pre-nominal colour terms).

(44)　A_{quant} > $A_{epistemic}$ > $A_{quality}$ > A_{size} > A_{form} > A_{colour} >
　e.g. nombreux　possible　　　talentueux　immense　long　　vert
　　　　numerous　possible　　　talented　　huge　　　long　　green

　　　$A_{nationality}$ > A_{pred}
　　　français　　nu
　　　French　　　naked

Here is a list of examples with adjectives in a pre-nominal position using *des* or *de*. Apart from the lowest two terms, which as I have mentioned, are purely predicative, it is always possible to use *de*.

(45) (a) ??des nombreux problèmes/de nombreux problèmes
      'many problems'
  (b) ?des possibles erreurs/de possibles erreurs
      'possible errors'
  (c) ???des talentueux étudiants/de talentueux étudiants
      'talented students'
  (d) des immenses tours/d'immenses tours
      'huge towers'
  (e) des longues heures/de longues heures
      'long hours'
  (f) *des vertes vallées/de vertes vallées
      'green valleys'
  (g) *des français romans/*de français romans
      'French novels'
  (h) *des nus corps/*de nus corps
      'naked bodies'

When adjectives surface post-nominally, the pattern is the reverse: *de* can simply never be used and *des* is acceptable. The correlation/generalization is thus that *de* is used with pre-nominal adjectives but *des* is used with post-nominal adjectives.

(46) (a) ??des problèmes nombreux/*de problèmes nombreux
      'many problems'
  (b) des erreurs possibles/*d'erreurs possibles
      'possible errors'
  (c) des étudiants talentueux/*d'étudiants talentueux
      'talented students'
  (d) des tours immenses/*de tours immenses
      'huge towers'
  (e) ?des heures longues/d'heures longues
      'long hours'
  (f) des vallées vertes/*de vallées vertes
      'green valleys'
  (g) des romans français/*de romans français
      'French novels'
  (h) des corps nus/*de corps nus
      'naked bodies'

While Laenzlinger (2005) argues that the noun raises around several modifiers along a skeleton that contains several functional projections (e.g. QuantP, SubjP, WeakP, etc.), I argue that it is the adjective that raises to the D domain (for a summary of the problems that are associated with the postulation of N^0 movement in the DP, see Valois 1991b; Bernstein 1993; Cinque 1993, 1994, 1999; Longobardi 1994, among many others, see also Alexiadou

et al. 2007). My account nevertheless shares with Laenzlinger's proposal the idea that what raises higher in the tree is an instance of XP movement rather rather than head movement.[7] The problem with Laenzlinger's (2005) analysis is that it simply glosses over the fact that for adjectives to appear pre-nominally in French, *de* rather than *des* must be used. Although, many of the examples he introduces contains *de*, it appears that on his view *de* is simply an allomorph of *des*. As should be clear by now, we know that this cannot be the case. While the distribution of adjectives within the noun phrase has been extensively discussed in recent years (Bouchard 2002, Knittel 2005, Laenzlinger 2005, and others), it is never emphasized that when adjectives are pre-nominal, *de* rather than *des* must be used: this fact is simply glossed over. It must, however, be a significant fact because there appears to be a deep connection between pre-nominal adjectives and *de*.

To conclude on this topic: nationality terms and pure predicative adjectives cannot raise to a pre-nominal position, probably because as strong predicative adjectives they are very embedded in the complement position, much more so, for instance than colour terms.

3.5 *The case of du*

As pointed out by a *JL* referee, contrary to the indefinite article *des*, the partitive article *du*/*de la*, is not reduced to *de* when co-ocurring with a pre-nominal adjective. Compare (47a) with (47b) (these are the referees' examples and judgments).

(47) (a) Il a bu du (bon) vin.
        he has drunk DU good wine
        'He drank good wine.'

   (b) *Il a bu de bon vin.
         he has drunk DE good wine
        Intended: 'He drank good wine.'

---

[7] It is worth noting that modifier raising as XP movement within the DP domain is not an isolated phenomenon. It applies not only in the case of *de* nominals, but also in the case of demonstratives in languages such as Greek. In this and other languages, it is possible for both definite articles and demonstratives to surface in a DP. For many researchers, the demonstrative raises from a lower position (Giusti 1997, Panagiotidis 2000, Brugè 2002, Shlonsky 2004) to surface in Spec-DP. This is shown in (ia); (ib) represents the base position for the demonstrative.

(i) (a) [$_{\text{Spec-DP}}$ afto [$_{\text{D}}$ to vivlio <afto>]]
            this   the book

   (b) [$_{\text{D0}}$ to vivlio afto]
          the book this
       'this book'

Examples such as (47b) are supposed to show that *de* cannot systematically save a sentence from ungrammaticality when it surfaces with an adjective. One might argue that on my analysis it is predicted that *de* can systematically act as one half of an article, since I propose a purely structural constraint (i.e. both Card⁰ and Spec-CardP must be filled or, in other words, determiners are a combination of two elements). However, as pointed out by Jones (1996: 228), examples such as (48) are possible in very high/literary registers. For me, they are archaic, but grammatical.

(48) Ils   vendent de   bon vin.
      they   sell   DE   good wine
      'They sell good wine.'

Why does (48) sound archaic? Although there is a tradition where *du* and *des* form a homogenous group (Galmiche 1986b), I want to argue, following Anscombre (1996), that they are in fact very different. First, there is a semantic difference between the two elements. While the partitive interpretation is clear in the case of the singular, it is not natural in the case of the plural. The interpretation obtained in (49b) for *des vins fins* 'fine wines' is more like 'several fine wines' rather than partitive.

(49) (a) Au cours du   repas, Max a   servi du   vin   fin.
           during   of.the meal   Max has served DU   wine fine
           'During the meal, Max served fine wine.'
      (b) Au cours du   repas, Max a   servi des   vins   fins.
           during   of.the meal   Max has served DE + LES   wines fines
           'During the meal, Max served fine wines.'

                                                            (Anscombre 1996: 84)

As pointed out by Anscombre (1996), there is in fact a preferred use of *du* versus *des* depending on the accompanying noun. Compare (50a) with (50b).

(50) (a) Dans les boulangeries, on   vend du   pain/?des   pains.
           in   the bakeries   one sells DU   bread/DE + LES breads
           'In bakeries, bread/breads is/are sold.'
      (b) Dans les boulangeries, on   vend ??du gateau/des   gateaux.
           in   the bakeries   one sells DU   cake/DE + LES   cakes
           'In bakeries, cake/cake is/are sold.'

                                                            (Anscombre 1996: 84)

In addition, while *des* can be used in generic sentences (at least in subject position), it is not possible for *du* to be used in such contexts. Compare (51a) with (51b).

(51) (a) Des   chats ont   besoin d'affection.
           DE + LES cats   have need   of.affection
           'Cats need affection.'

(b) *Du ketchup est à base de sauce tomate.
    DU ketchup is at base of sauce tomato
    'Ketchup is made from tomato sauce.'

<div align="right">(Anscombre 1996: 86)</div>

Finally, while recognizing that examples such as (48) were common until recently (they are found with certain 20th-century authors), Anscombre (1996) points out correctly that today their use is marginal and that therefore this must indicate that *du* is different from *des*, since examples with *de* + A (those that are of interest to us in this paper) are perfectly grammatical. In other words, the distribution of *du* versus *des* (and its variant *de* in the *de* + A complex) is completely different. While this may not always have been the case, 'on assiste donc en français contemporain à un divorce entre le role de *de* dans *des* et dans *du/de la*' (Anscombre 1996: 85).[8]

In conclusion, we can take the fact that *J'ai lu de bons livres* 'I read good books' is grammatical while **J'ai bu de bon vin* 'I drank good wine' is not for many people as direct evidence that *du* is not the singular form of *des* and that the two elements are distinct. This means that *de* in *du* requires a different analysis from the one I propose in this paper. I leave this interesting topic for further research.

4. THE ALLOMORPHY HYPOTHESIS

An alternative and simple explanation for the grammaticality of (1b) above is that *de* might simply be an allomorph of *des*. This is what Kayne (1984) proposes in passing for data such as these. On this view, (1b) is the equivalent of (52), the version with a full determiner.

(52) J'ai lu **des** bons romans l'été dernier.
     I.have read DE + LES good novels the.summer last
     'I read good novels last summer.'

Jones (1996) proposes a similar idea. Although he concedes that 'it is not clear why the presence of a prenominal adjective should favour or allow the use of *de* without a definite article to indicate indefiniteness' (Jones 1996: 228), he nevertheless tentatively proposes that in such contexts *les* is simply phonologically dropped. On this view, *de bons romans* is thus not a bare noun, but a full (indefinite) noun phrase.

This solution cannot, unfortunately, be on the right track. Although my analysis shares with the allomorphy view the idea that modified *de* nominals are not bare nouns but full indefinite phrases, I show in the present section that we cannot claim that *les* is simply deleted in modified environments. The

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[8] 'We therefore witness today, in contemporary French a divorce between the role of *de* in *des* and in *du/de la*' – my translation.

contribution of the pre-nominal modifier is essential for the proper licensing of *de* nominals in the contexts under review.

First, as (53a) illustrates, *des* nominals, whether they are modified or not, are not really tolerated under the scope of negation. They behave like Positive Polarity Items (PPIs). If they are judged grammatical, they are interpreted with wide scope only. However, (53b) is fully grammatical and in this case the nominal can achieve either wide or narrow scope with respect to negation.

(53) (a) ??Des   (bons) romans n'ont   pas été   publiés
            DE + LES good   novels NE.have not been published
       l'été   dernier.
       the.summer last
       Intended: '(Good) novels were not published last summer.'
       '*There are (good) novels and it is not the case that I read them last summer.'
       *'It is not the case that I read (good) novels last summer.'
   (b) De bons romans n'ont   pas été   publiés
        DE good novels NE.have not been published
        l'été   dernier.
        the.summer last
        'Good novels were not published last summer.'
        '*There are good novels and it is not the case that I read them last summer.'
        '*It is not the case that I read good novels last summer.'

In English, PPIs are also strange under the scope of negation, as shown by (54). They necessarily involve wide scope over negation.

(54) (a) ??I didn't see someone.
            'There is someone and it is not the case that I saw them.'
            *'It is not the case that I saw someone.' (i.e. 'I didn't see anyone.')
   (b) Someone didn't come.
        'There is someone and they didn't come.'
        *'It is not the case that someone came. (i.e. 'No one came.')

Second, when the modifier of a *de* nominal is a quantifier, e.g. *nombreux* 'many', as in (55), it is only possible to obtain the *de* variant. The alternative with *des* is ruled out. If *de* was simply *des* in disguise, we would expect both versions to be acceptable in such contexts.

(55) J'ai   vu   de/??des   nombreux films   l'été   dernier.
     I.have seen DE/DE + LES many   movies the.summer last
     'I saw many movies last summer.'

Third, as shown in Section 3 above, when adjectives surface postnominally, as in the case of colour or nationality terms, *des* must be used.

However, when modifiers appear pre-nominally, *de* is preferred. Again, this indicates that *de* is not *des* in disguise, for if it was, both versions should be equally licit in such environments.

Finally, common phrases or near-compounds tend to reject *de* (Wilmet 1986: 123). This is shown in (56). *Des* is preferred in these cases. With *des* the meaning seems to be 'youngsters' (compound reading) whereas with *de* the meaning appear to be 'young people' (quasi-compound reading).

(56) (a) Des/?de   jeunes gens   sont entrés.
         DE + LES/DE young people are   entered
         'Youngsters/young people came in.'
     (b) Des/??de   vieilles filles sont entrées.
         De + LES/DE old   girls   are   entered
         'Spinsters came in.'

In summary of this brief section we can say that the distribution of *de* and *des* nominals in adjectival contexts is not identical. Therefore, one conclusion we can safely put forward is that *de bons romans* is simply not the phonologically reduced equivalent of *des bons romans*.

5. MODIFIED *DE* NOMINALS AND FOCUS

As already mentioned in Section 2, the distribution of bare nouns in Spanish and Italian changes when a modifier to the bare noun is added. A solution in terms of focus has been proposed for this generalization and in this section I examine the possibility that the French facts under review in this paper might find an explanation through this focus solution.
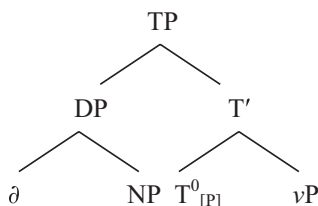
I begin with Landau's (2007) minimalist account of ECP effects. The reason why I introduce his theory is because it is an interesting minimalist take on why bare nouns and similar elements are not licensed in subject positions and because he gives an explanation in particular as to why *de* nominals in French are restricted to object positions in negative environments. Although he does not deal with the problem under review in this paper, namely that modified *de* nominals behave differently from non-modified *de* nominals, I speculate that we could in principle appeal to his proposal about modified bare nouns in Spanish and Italian in order to solve the French problem. I propose to review such a solution. In a nutshell, the idea is that modified bare nouns can appear in subject positions because they are focused. This is in fact exactly what Chierchia (1998) proposes for similar facts. I will show that this idea cannot possibly be applied to the French cases under review.

Landau (2007) uses Holmberg's (2000) version of the EPP, where the EPP has PF requirements: it is composed not only of a categorial [D] feature, but also of a phonological [P] feature. Landau (2007) argues that TP in languages like English needs more than simple overt material in its specifier, it also
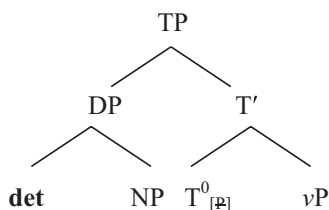
requires a phrase whose head is phonologically realized. Whereas this requirement is imposed on DP subjects (they cannot appear with null heads), object bare nouns are exempt from it, since V bears no [P] feature.

To illustrate, compare the structure in (57a) – where ∂ is empty determiner – with the structure (57b), where the noun is fully clothed, i.e accompanied by a determiner. The structure in (57a) leads to ungrammaticality (the visibility requirement is not respected, since the head of the subject DP is phonologically empty). On the other hand, (57b) is perfectly well-formed (the visibility condition is satisfied, since the head of the subject DP is filled by an overt determiner). The crossed-out [P] means that the feature P has been verified/checked.

(57) (a) *No visibility* (b) *Visibility*

```
        TP                          TP
       /  \                        /  \
     DP    T'                    DP    T'
    /  \   /  \                 /  \   /  \
   ∂   NP T⁰   vP             det  NP T⁰   vP
          [P]                        [P̶]
```

There are two reasons why we should abandon the ECP as a tool to explain the distribution of bare nouns and other constructions involving an empty category. One is theoretical, the other empirical. First, the notion of government has disappeared from mainstream generative linguistics (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work), therefore appealing to the ECP, which relies heavily on the concept of government, is ruled out. Second, the traditional ECP cannot account for two specific constructions with empty categories: one is the case of bare nouns in small clause subjects and the second is the case of conjoined bare nouns in Spanish and Italian (I choose not to introduce these examples for lack of space).

Landau (2007) extends his analysis of bare nouns in Romance to the case of French *de* nominal in negative environments. The facts are as follows. A bare *de* nominal is not licit in subject position (58a), but it is fine in object position (58b).[9]

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[9] *De* nominals are neither bare nouns (they cannot surface on their own) nor Negative Polarity Items (see Kayne 1984, Heyd 2003, Heyd & Mathieu 2005): unlike English *any* phrases they cannot appear in questions or conditionals, as shown by the examples in (i), unless they are modified, as illustrated by (ii).

(i) (a) Avez-vous vu   *d'/des   étudiants?
         have-you seen DE/DE+LES students
         'Did you see any student(s)?'
    (b) Si *d'/des   étudiants arrivent, dis-le moi.
         if DE/DE+LES students   arrive   tell.it me.DAT
         'If any students arrive, let me know.'

(58) (a) *De romans n'ont   pas été publiés   l'été   dernier.
         DE novels   NE.have not been published the.summer last
         Intended: 'No novels were published last summer.'

   (b) Je n'ai   pas lu de romans l'été   dernier.
       I   NE.have not read DE novels the.summer last
       'I didn't read novels last summer.'

For (58a) to be grammatical, an indefinite plural determiner *des* needs to be used. This is shown in (59).

(59) Des   romans n'ont   pas été   publiés
      DE+LES novels   NE.have not been published
      l'été   dernier.
      the.summer last
      '(Some) novels were not published last summer.'

This contrast is traditionally accounted for by appealing to the notion of government: only the object is governed by the verb. Landau (2007) brings the French facts under his EPP account on the (reasonable) assumption that *de* nominals contain an empty determiner.

However, if we modify *de romans* in (58a), then the sentence becomes grammatical. This is shown in (60). In the case where a modified *de* nominal is in an object position, the positive effect of modification is masked because of course the *de* nominal would be licit in such an environment even without a modifier (the reason being that in this case the *de* nominal is licensed by negation).

(60) De bons romans n'ont   pas été   publiés   l'été   dernier.
      DE good novels NE.have not been published the.summer last
      'No good novels were published last summer.'

Although Landau's (2007) account has extensive empirical coverage, it does not address the issue pertaining to French *de* nominals that are modified. It does, however, deal with focalized bare nouns in subject positions and we may find here a tentative solution for our problem. Spanish or Italian bare nouns, as already mentioned, are banned from subject positions (see Contreras 1986, among many others). When the subject bare noun is focused, however, the sentence becomes grammatical as (61) shows. Here, *escritores*

(ii) (a) Avez-vous vu   de bons étudiants?
         have.you   seen DE good students
         'Did you see any good student(s)?'

    (b) Si de bons étudiants arrivent, dis-le moi.
        if DE good students arrive   tell.it me.DAT
        'If any good students arrive, let me know.'

'writers' is contrastively focused. Following Rizzi (1997) and others, we can assume that *escritores* raises to the specifier of a focus projection after it has moved to Spec-TP, the canonical subject position.

(61)   ESCRITORES han   aceptado su invitación (pero
       writers   have accepted his invitation but
       periodistas no…)
       journalists no
       'WRITERS have accepted his invitation (but not journalists).'

The question that arises is why should a null determiner be excluded in Spec-TP but allowed in Spec-FocP, given the (plausible) assumption that both T^0 and Foc^0 are [P]-bearing heads? Landau tentatively proposes that the answer might lie with the different anchoring features for [P]. On T^0, [P] is anchored by Case/ϕ-features on Foc^0, the anchor is simply [+foc]. Suppose that within DP, Case/ϕ-features are specified on D^0 (possibly spread to N^0 by concord) but [foc] is a feature of N^0. This is motivated by the observation that D^0 is the prototypical locus of morphological contrasts in Case/ϕ-values, while it is N^0 that bears the semantic content targeted by the focus interpretation. Now we understand why (61) is grammatical. Since [P] on T^0 is anchored by a feature that is checked against D^0, it is D^0 that must be phonologically visible to satisfy [P]; hence, Bare Nouns (with a null determiner are excluded in Spec-TP. By contrast, since [P] on Foc^0 is anchored by a feature checked against N^0, it is N^0 that must be phonologically visible to satisfy [P]; hence, a null determiner is tolerated in Spec-FocP. Note that Spec-TP can but need not be lexicalized in Romance (e.g., in post-verbal subject constructions).

It seems to me that this account is not unlike the one proposed by Chierchia (1998). Chierchia's hypothesis has the advantage of addressing the issue as to why modified bare nouns in Romance languages are also acceptable in subject positions. Chierchia (1998) argues that we have in this case weak focus. Weak focus presupposes a set of alternatives. To interpret a modified noun phrase such as *famosos escritores* 'famous writers', we intersect the set that is the extension of the adjective (people that are famous) with the set that is the extension of the noun (people that are writers), giving the set of things that are both famous and writers, that is famous writers. This is similar to, yet different from, the case of contrastive focus above, since in the latter case not only is a set of alternatives presupposed, but it is also evoked and excluded. Following Longobardi (1994), Chierchia (1998) argues that bare nouns contain a bare determiner δ and that 'in Italian the licensing conditions for δ appear to be either licensing by a lexical head (perhaps by a process of LF incorporation) or by the functional head of a Focus Phrase, via Spec-Agreement (under the assumption that focalized constituents are moved to the Spec of FP; see Rizzi 1997 and references quoted there)'(Chierchia 1998: 386–387).

The problem is that the focus solution will not work for modified *de* nominals in French. As already mentioned in the introduction, it turns out that, in the case of French *de* nominals, only modifiers that are in a pre-nominal position are able to save a given sentence from ungrammaticality. *De* nominals with post-nominal modifiers are not licit in subject positions. This is shown in (62). The first of these examples, (62a), involves a bare modifier, (62b) involves a PP modifier, and (62c) involves a CP modifier. Pre-nominal and post-nominal modifiers are equally focused. Therefore, they should behave the same, but they do not. The same facts hold in the case where no negative element is present in the derivation.

(62) (a) *De   romans français (n')ont   (pas) été   publiés
         DE novels   French (NE)have not   been published
         l'été   dernier.
         the.summer last
         'No French novels were (not) published last summer.'
    (b) *De   romans de grande qualité (n')ont   (pas) été
         DE novels of great   quality (NE)have not   been
         publiés   l'été   dernier.
         published the.summer last
         '(No) novels of great quality were(not) published last summer.'
    (c) *De   romans qui se   vendaient mal   (n')ont   (pas) été
         DE novels   that self sell   badly (NE)have not   been
         réédités l'été   dernier.
         reedited the.summer last
         'No novels that were selling badly were (not) reedited last summer.'

On the other hand, in the case of Spanish (and Italian) bare nouns, there is no difference between pre- and post-nominal modifiers: as exemplified by (63), both are capable of saving a sentence from ungrammaticality. Let us suppose that in this case, a focus functional head is capable of licensing the nominal (via Agree or Spec–Head agreement at LF or other such mechanism). However, this will work only for Spanish (and Italian), not for French.

(63) (a) Escritores franceses han   aceptado su invitación.
         writers   French   have accepted his invitation
         'French writers have accepted his invitation.'
    (b) Famosos escritores han   aceptado su invitación.
         famous writers   have accepted his invitation
         'Famous writers have accepted his invitation.'

The idea that focus is not responsible for the licensing of modified French *de* nominals is reinforced by the fact that, contrary to what happens with bare nouns in Spanish and Italian, the addition of contrastive focus on a subject *de* nominal does not improve grammaticality. This is shown in (64a). This is

also true in the case of an object *de* nominal that surfaces without a proper licensor, as shown by (64b).

(64) (a) *De ROMANS n'ont   pas été   publiés
         DE novels   NE.have not been published
         l'été   dernier.
         the.summer last
         'No NOVELS were published last summer.'
     (b) *J'ai   lu   de ROMANS l'été   dernier
         I.have read DE books   the.summer last
         (pas des   magazines).
          not DE+LES magazines
         'I read BOOKS last summer (not magazines).'

To conclude Section 5: In French only pre-nominal modifiers allow *de* nominals to appear in otherwise illicit environments. There thus appears to be a syntactic constraint on the distribution of modified *de* nominals that is independent from the notion of focus.

6. DAYAL (2004)

The positive effect that modification has on noun phrases has been considered elsewhere, by Veneeta Dayal. In Dayal (2004) (see also Dayal 1995 and 1998), she discusses the case of English *any*, a lexical item that normally occurs in negative and other downward entailing contexts or in modal and generic environments, but which becomes acceptable in non-modal, non-negative contexts if modified by a relative clause, a prepositional phrase or an adverbial phrase (as first noted by Legrand 1975).

Let me illustrate. In normal cases of formal licensing we expect the licensor to take scope over the licensee. In the case of licensing by negation, for example, *any* in subject position cannot be licensed by sentential negation because the subject position in English is thought to be higher than negation. This is why (65a) is unacceptable but (65b) is grammatical. Of course, if there is no negation, the sentence is simply ungrammatical, as shown in (65c).

(65) (a) *Any student didn't sign the petition.
     (b) The students didn't sign any petition.
     (c) *The students signed any petition.

However, if a modifier is added, then the sentences are well-formed, as shown in (66) and (67). This is true for cases with and without negation. In each case the noun is modified by a post-nominal modifier.

(66) (a) Any student who went to the meeting signed the petition.
     (b) Any student who went to the meeting didn't sign the petition.
     (c) The students signed any petition that was circulated by the professors.

(67) (a) Any student at the meeting signed the petition.
 (b) Any student at the meeting didn't sign the petition.
 (c) The administrators scolded any students at the meeting.

Dayal (2004) argues that these cases are grammatical because the modifier is modally independent of the head noun: it introduces an independent spatio-temporal variable. This is possible, however, because the post-nominal modifier is phrasal (see Sadler & Arnold 1994). The idea is that only phrasal modifiers provide the necessary situation variable that is crucial to the licensing of *any*: a pre-nominal modifier does not introduce an independent spatio-temporal variable. This explains why (68) is ungrammatical. In this case, the pre-nominal modifier forms a head structure with its associated noun rather than a phrase (more on this below).

(68) *Mary talked to any angry student.

Dayal's proposal goes like this: *Any* is a universal quantifier over situations and individuals. The sentence in (68) is unacceptable because in this case there is a clash between the presupposition that the domain of quantification ranges over possible individuals and a predication that can only apply to actual individuals. This is shown in (69).

(69) $\forall s,x$ [student (x,s) & angry (x,s) & $C(s)$] $\forall s'[s < s'$ & talk$(m,x,s')]$

The version of (68) with a post-nominal modifier (in (70) below) avoids this problem by restricting the domain of quantification to those possible individuals who also fulfill the property in the relative clause, including the property of being in the temporal slice denoted by the temporal specification of the relative clause. This is shown in (71).

(70) Mary talked to any student who was at the meeting.
(71) $\forall s,x$ [student(x,s) & $C(s)$ & $\forall s''[s < s''$ & $\mathbf{P}(s'')$ & angry$(x,s'')]$] $\forall s'[s < s'$ & talk$(m,x,s')]$

Dayal (2004) concludes that the apparent licensing effect of modification is derivative on independent parts of the meaning and is derived from the semantics of the parts, obviating the need for a radical shift in the role of directionality in licensing. Dayal's (2004) paper is interesting because it tries to link the intriguing facts about *any* with the facts about bare nouns in Romance reviewed above. She gives a pair of examples from Italian, reproduced in (72) below, to show that post-nominal modifiers can suddenly save a sentence from ungrammaticality. The sentence in (72a) is not possible in Italian (a determiner needs to be inserted in order to obtain the generic interpretation) but, surprisingly, (72b) is possible. In this case, the bare noun is modified.

(72) (a) *Leo odia gatti.
       Leo hates cats
     'Leo hates cats.'

(b) Leo odia gatti di grandi dimensioni.
Leo hates cats of great   dimension
'Leo hates cats of large size.'

Dayal (2004) also notes that whereas English plural definite phrases generally do not yield a generic interpretation, they suddenly can if the plural definite phrase is modified, as in (73a) below. The fact that English plural definites do not allow a generic interpretation can be attributed to the familiarity requirement associated with the English definite. In (73b) the underlined condition is, according to Dayal (2004), meant to capture the familiarity requirement, along the lines of Kamp & Reyle (1993). The variable introduced by the definite must be identified with a variable in the super-ordinate Discourse Representational Structure (DRS) resulting in reference, in this case, to some entity in the world of evaluation.

(73) (a) The students work hard.
(b) Gen s,x [students-in-s(x) <u>& x = ?</u>] [are-successful-in-s(x)]

When the English plural definite phrase is modified, the presupposition *that the students* be anchored to some salient entity in the context is clearly inert. The underlined condition in (74b) is not part of the representation and the generic reading results.

(74) (a) The students who work hard are successful.
(b) Gen s,x [students-in-s(x) & work-hard(x) & x = ?] [are-successful-in-s(x)]

Despite the merits of Dayal's (2004) analysis of modified *any* in English, it is clear that her account cannot be generalized to French modified *de* nominals. The reason is because in French, post-nominal modifiers (which are supposed to be phrasal on Dayal's view) do not save a sentence from ungrammaticality. On the contrary, it is a modifier that is pre-nominal that is capable of saving a sentence from ungrammaticality. There is nothing to suggest that in French pre-nominal modifiers are phrasal but post-nominal modifiers are heads. In fact, quite the opposite has been claimed (see Valois 1991a, Lamarche 1991 and Bouchard 1998).

It should also be mentioned that in Spanish and Italian, pre-nominal modifiers are quite capable of saving a sentence from ungrammaticality. As already mentioned earlier in the paper (see Section 2 above), it makes no difference whether modifiers appear pre- or post-nominally with Spanish and Italian bare nouns: in both cases the sentence is grammatical. On Dayal's (2004) account this is unexpected.

(75) (a) Bravi studenti hanno telefonato. Italian
good students have   phoned
'Good students have phoned. '   (Chierchia 1998: 384)

(b) Famosos escritores han   aceptado su invitación. Spanish
    famous   writers   have accepted his invitation
    'Famous writers have accepted his invitation.'

Dayal's (2004) proposal (as she acknowledges herself) cannot account either for the fact that other factors, such as coordination and focus (see Section 5 above), improve the status of bare plurals in Romance. The licensing of *any* is clearly different from the licensing of Romance bare nouns. For example, coordination does not improve the status of *any* without a licensor, as shown in (76a), and nor does focus, as illustrated in (76b).

(76) (a) *Any student and any professor signed the petition
     (b) *ANY STUDENT signed the petition.

Finally, it seems to me that the set of data in (72) should receive an analysis slightly different from other cases where modification makes a difference for the distribution of noun phrases. For example, in French, it is marginally possible to use *des* noun phrases in generic contexts if the noun phrase is modified (see Vogeeler & Tasmowski 2005, 2006 for a brief discussion); the definite determiner *les* is otherwise commonly used. However, the modification can come not only in the form of a pre-nominal adjective, as in (77b), but also in the form of a post-nominal adjective, as in (77c), or even a PP modifier, as in (77d). These cases are clearly different from the cases of *de* nominal.

(77) (a) Je déteste les/*des   chats.
         I   hate   the/DE + LES cats
         'I hate cats.'
     (b) Je déteste les/?des   petits chats.
         I   hate   the/DE + LES small cats
         'I hate small cats.'
     (c) Je déteste les/?des   chats noirs.
         I   hate   the/DE + LES cats black
         'I hate black cats.'
     (d) Je déteste les/des   chats de petite taille.
         I   hate   the/DE + LES cats   of small size
         'I hate small size cats.'

In conclusion, the fact that only pre-nominal modifiers can help French *de* nominals to appear in subject positions and more generally without a licensor suggests that a formal, i.e. syntactic, operation is responsible for the grammaticality of such cases. It appears that the influence that modification has on English *any* is of a different nature from the influence that modification has on French *de* nominals. There may be overlapping properties between the two sets of constructions, but French *de* nominals are clearly sensitive to the syntactic distinction between pre- and post-nominal

modification. Therefore, Dayal's account, although very interesting and promising, cannot be applied to the case of French *de* nominals.

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have shown that it is possible for modifiers to extend the distribution of *de* nominals in French. I have shown that this is not an isolated phenomenon. It has been noted in the linguistic literature that modification can be used to license elements (e.g. Romance bare nouns, English *any*) in a sentence that would otherwise be illicit. The accounts offered for such phenomena have been shown here not to be applicable to the French facts (three different types of accounts have been reviewed: the allomorphy analysis, the focus account and the extra situation variable account). In view of the special distribution that modified French *de* nominals exhibit (only pre-nominal adjectives can save a sentence from un-grammaticality if a determiner like *les* is not present), I proposed a new account. I argued that modifiers can come to play the role of determiners in French as long as they are accompanied by a head *de*, which is the spell-out of a Cardinal head (see Lyons 1999). In French, the role of determiners is thus shared between the specifier and the head of that category. In the absence of the determiner *les*, an adjective can raise to the specifier of CardinalP. This is achieved via phrasal rather than head movement.

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