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Item Type	article;article
Authors	Valois, Daniel
Download date	2024-08-13 13:13:12
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/36655">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/36655</a>

# The internal syntax of DP and adjective placement in French and English\*

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## 0. Introduction

There have been a number of proposals in the literature concerning similarities between Noun Phrases and clauses. Among other things, it has been suggested that Noun Phrases contain an INFL-like node (e.g. Szabolcsi, 1983, 1987, 1990, Abney 1987; Ritter 1988, 1990), or a Comp-like position (Szabolcsi op. cit.; see also Tellier 1988, Stowell 1989)), and that noun-movement somewhat parallels verb-movement (Szabolcsi, Ritter op. cit., Cinque 1990). In work in progress, I propose that the internal structure of Noun Phrases is strictly parallel to that of CP in all respects. This proposal has far reaching consequences. To begin with, one obvious and direct result of this is that projection rules are similar for both CP and DP. This means that not only will arguments be projected in the same way in both structures, but that both will also contain a number of similar functional categories. But perhaps more importantly, it implies that categories in both systems will share the same properties in many respects. For example, it is shown that, at both levels, parallel specifiers share the same A-A'-status and behave similarly with respect to agreement and case, while parallel functional categories also share the same case and agreement properties. It should also follow from the strict parallel between both structures that rules operating on the structure of clauses operate similarly in noun phrases. For instance, inversion, scrambling, pro-drop, case assignment, extraction, etc. all apply in a similar way in both clauses and noun phrases. In section 1, we will look at a number of "noun phrase phenomena" which fall out from this proposal.

In this paper, I will focus on one aspect of the enterprise. Assuming that both clauses and Noun Phrases project similarly, we expect certain adjunct modifiers to have the same distribution in both cases. This is again what happens: I will propose that the position of adjectives in event nominals parallels that of adverbs at the clausal level. More precisely, the position adjectives occupy in event nominals is totally predictable on the basis of their meaning, just as it is the case for adverbs at the clausal level (see Grimshaw 1990 for a discussion of event versus result nominals). Given

that in English all adjectives occur pre-nominally, this can easily be seen since adjectives corresponding to sentential adverbs always precede those corresponding to VP-adverbs. However, the situation is more complex in French: adjectives in event nominals can appear either in the pre-nominal or the post-nominal position (with no change in meaning), and the possible combinations of two (or more) co-occurring adjectives are numerous. It will be proposed that this results from the interaction of noun-movement in French and the optional incorporation of adjectives. But before I move on to that, I will present the structure I adopt for DP in section 1, and show that a good number of phenomena follow from it.

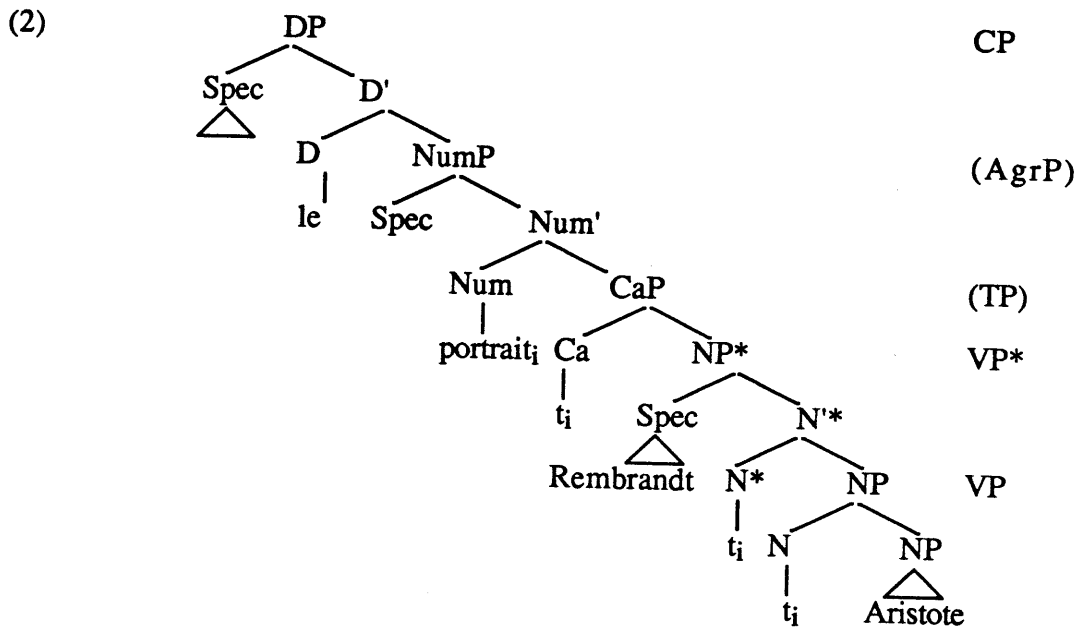
### 1. The structure of DP

A strict parallel between the structures of clauses and Noun Phrases forces certain assumptions about the structure of DP. Without justifying here, I will adopt the following (see work cited for details):

- (i) I agree with Sportiche (1990) that arguments in DP are projected the same way they are in clauses, i.e. in a "pseudo-Larsonian" structure (cf. Larson 1988), whereby each argument is projected in its own phrasal projection;
- (ii) SpecDP is an A'-position (Szabolcsi 1983, 1987, 1990; also Tellier 1988, Stowell 1989);
- (iii) other specifiers are A-positions (see Mahajan 1990 for a definition of A/A'-positions);
- (iv) adjunction to nominal projections within DP is prohibited;
- (v) I will assume that, in addition to D, noun phrases contain two functional categories; I agree with Ritter (1990) that one of them carries the number features of the noun phrase, hence her Num(ber) label; the second one is the projection of the genitive structural case-marker in DP, Ca(se)<sup>0</sup> (this is somewhat similar to Szabolcsi's (N+I)P node; I motivate the need for CaP in Valois (forthcoming));
- (vi) N<sup>0</sup>-movement parallels V-movement in clauses (see Longobardi 1990, Cinque 1990 for the parameterization of head-movement in Romance and Germanic);

The S-structure of a French phrase such as (1) will be as in (2) (see section 3 for noun-movement), with the corresponding clausal labels on the right (as in Sportiche 1990, I assume that *de* is not a preposition but simply a case-marker):

- (1) *Le portrait de Rembrandt (agent) d'Aristote (theme).*<sup>1</sup>  
*the portrait of Rembrandt of Aristotle*



Now, a number of phenomena follow directly from the above structure. First, it derives Giorgi and Longobardi's (1990) claim that the structural hierarchy of "complements" in DP is: possessor > agent > theme.<sup>2</sup> Among other things, the evidence they provide comes from binding facts. I will illustrate with an example from French:

- (3) a. Le portrait de [chaque peintre étranger]<sub>i</sub> de son<sub>i</sub> enfant.  
*the portrait of each foreign painter of his child*
- b. \*Le portrait de son<sub>i</sub> professeur de [chaque élève]<sub>i</sub>.<sup>3</sup>  
*the portrait of his professeur of each student*

Under standard analyses, a bound reading obtains only when a pronoun is m-commanded by the projection containing a quantifier. Given that in a structure like (2) the agent is structurally higher than the theme, m-command obtains between the quantifier phrase containing *chaque* and the DP containing *son* in (3a), but not in (3b).

Second, we can account for some well-known extraction facts out of DP. For instance, there have been a number of proposals in the literature suggesting that extraction out of Noun Phrases must proceed according to the same hierarchy possessor > agent > theme (Cinque 1980, Milner 1982, Torrego 1986, Stowell 1989, Giorgi & Longobardi 1990). For instance, a theme cannot be extracted in the presence of an agent (see fn. 4):

- (4) a. Tu connais le portrait [DP de Rembrandt ] [DP d'Aristote]  
agent theme  
*you know the portrait of Rembrandt of Aristotle*

- b. Le peintre dont<sub>i</sub> tu connais le portrait t<sub>i</sub> d'Aristote  
*the painter of whom you know the portrait of Aristotle*
- c. \*Le philosophe dont<sub>i</sub> tu connais le portrait de Rembrandt t<sub>i</sub>  
*the philosopher of whom you know the portrait of Rembrandt*
- d. Le philosophe dont<sub>i</sub> tu connais le portrait t<sub>i</sub>.

For independent reasons having to do with case and agreement in the clausal system, Sportiche (1990) shows that, when adjunction is not permitted, extraction must proceed through specifier. Adopting this view for DP, (4c) is properly ruled out: since, under our above assumption, adjunction to NP, NP\*, CaP or NumP is not allowed, the blocking effect of the agent noun phrase in (4c) follows (Sportiche 1990).<sup>4</sup>

Third, extraction out of "embedded" DP is accounted for. Take (5):

- (5) a. Tu as vu la photo de la mère de Marie.  
*you have seen the picture of the mother of Mary*
- b. \*[De qui]<sub>i</sub> as-tu lu la photo de la mère t<sub>i</sub>  
*of whom did you see the picture of the mother*

Again, extraction must proceed from specifier to specifier. The derivation for (5b) is as in (6) (omitting functional categories):

- (6) [De qui]<sub>i</sub> as-tu vu [DP t<sub>i</sub> la [NP t<sub>i</sub> photo de [DP t<sub>i</sub> la [NP t<sub>i</sub> mère t<sub>i</sub>]]]]
- 5
4
3
2
1

Since SpecDP is an A'-position, the problem with (6) is step 3: the WH-phrase moves from the DP specifier of mère (an A'-position) to the NP specifier of photo (an A-position). (5b) is ruled out as an instance of improper movement.

Fourth, extraction of adjuncts is also ruled out as a case of improper movement. Look at (7):

- (7) a. Lise a acheté le livre de l'écrivain avec la moustache.  
*Lise bought the book of the writer with a moustache*
- b. \*Avec quoi Marie a-t-elle acheté le livre de l'écrivain?  
*with what did Mary buy the book of the writer*

The only possible (partial) derivation for (7) is as in (8):

- (8) [avec quoi ]<sub>i</sub> ... [DP le [NP livre [DP I' [CaP t<sub>i</sub> [NP [NP écrivain [ t<sub>i</sub> ] ]]]]]]]
- X

Movement of the adjunct avec quoi (from an A'-position) to the Specifier of CaseP of écrivain (an A-position) is another instance of improper movement.



**Table 1. Jackendoff's (1972) positional classification of adverbs**

Class I:	<b>Initial, Aux, VP-final, VP-final (meaning change)</b> cleverly, clumsily, carefully, carelessly, happily, truthfully
Class II:	<b>Initial, Aux, VP-final, (no meaning change)</b> quickly, slowly, reluctantly, sadly, quietly, frequently
Class III:	<b>Initial, Aux</b> evidently, probably, certainly, unfortunately, naturally
Class IV:	<b>Aux, VP-final</b> completely, easily, totally, handily, badly, mortally
Class V:	<b>VP-final</b> hard, well, more, early, fast, home, slow, terribly
Class VI:	<b>Aux</b> truly, virtually, merely, simply, hardly, scarcely

For the purpose of this paper, I will concentrate on the first four classes. (11)-(14) illustrate the distribution of those adverbs:

- (11) a. Clumsily, John dropped his cup of coffee.  
 b. John clumsily dropped his cup of coffee.  
 c. John dropped his cup of coffee clumsily.
- (12) a. Slowly, John dropped his cup of coffee.  
 b. John slowly dropped his cup of coffee.  
 c. John dropped his cup of coffee slowly.
- (13) a. Evidently George read the book.  
 b. George evidently read the book.  
 c. \*George read the book evidently.
- (14) a. \*Completely George read the book.  
 b. George completely read the book.  
 c. George read the book completely.

Rochette (1990) proposes to collapse Classes I and II, and to base-generate adverbs according to their selectional restriction (i.e. whether they select a proposition, an event, or an action- see her work for details). Having said this, Table 2 illustrates the possible positions of the three classes of adverbs in a clausal structure like that in Pollock (1989) (except for the relative position of Agr and Tense- see Belletti (1988):

**Table 2: Adverbs adjunction sites**

**Group 1:** (= Class III) are adjoined to TP (or, perhaps, to Agr);<sup>5</sup>

**Group 2:** (= Classes I and II) are adjoined to TP (or, perhaps, to Agr) or VP;<sup>6</sup>

**Group 3:** (= Class IV) are adjoined to VP;

Basically, what this means is that the co-occurrence of adverbs always obeys the hierarchy: Group 1 > Group 2 > Group 3. This can be seen by pairing members of each each group as in (15)-(17)<sup>7, 8</sup>:

- |         |  |           |
|---------|--|-----------|
| (15) a. | They [TP probably [VP completely invaded Jupiter]]   | Gr. 1 & 3 |
| b.      | *They completely probably invaded Jupiter.           |           |
| (16) a. | They [TP frequently [VP completely invaded Jupiter]] | Gr.2 & 3  |
| b.      | *They completely frequently invaded Jupiter.         |           |
| (17) a. | They [TP probably [VP frequently invaded Jupiter]]   | Gr. 1 & 2 |
| b.      | *They frequently probably invaded Jupiter.           |           |

Having said this, and given that both the structure of DP and CP are projected similarly, we expect adjectives corresponding to the above adverbs to have the same distribution. Table 3 shows the adjunction sites of adjectives within DP:

**Table 3: Adjective classification**<sup>9</sup>

**Group 1: adjoined to CaP (see fn. 6);**  
e.g. probable, unfortunate;

**Group 2: adjoined to CaP or NP(\*) (see fn. 6);**  
e.g. clever, clumsy, careful, careless, frequent;

**Group 3: adjoined to NP(\*);**  
e.g. complete, easy, total, bad, mortal, brutal;

Given that the head noun does not move up in English (see below), nothing else need be said, and corresponding to (15)-(17) we get (18)-(20):

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| (18) a. | The [CaP probable [NP complete invasion of Jupiter]] |
| b.      | *The complete probable invasion of Jupiter.          |
| (19) a. | The [CaP frequent [VP complete invasion of Jupiter]] |
| b.      | *The complete frequent invasion of Jupiter.          |
| (20) a. | The [CaP probable [NP frequent invasion of Jupiter]] |
| b.      | *The frequent probable invasion of Jupiter.          |

In the next section, I turn to French and discuss the interaction between head-movement and the position of adjectives.

### 3. French

Adjective placement in French DPs is quite interesting. Adjectives in event nominals can appear both in pre-nominal and post-nominal positions. As a result, there are several possible combinations of two (or more) adjectives with the head noun.



However, the word order is very strict: not all combinations are possible. We will see how this follows from the analysis presented so far, coupled with the fact that the head noun moves up in French, and that adjectives optionally incorporate into the head noun.

It has been proposed that  $N^0$ -movement in Romance and Germanic (cf. Longobardi 1990, Cinque 1990) is parameterized. For instance, Cinque (1990) has argued that, assuming that argument adjectives (those which receive an agent theta-role, cf. Kayne 1984) are base-generated in SpecNP, the contrast between Italian (21a) and English (22) follows from movement of the head-noun to a position between D and N in Italian but not in English:

- (21) a. L'[AgrP [Agr *invazione*]<sub>i</sub> [NP *tedesca*  $t_i$  dell'Austria]]  
           *the invasion German of Austria*
- b. \*L'*invazione dell'Austria tedesca*.
- c. \*La *tedesca invazione dell'Austria*.

(22) The [NP German invasion of Austria ]

Obviously, the parameterization of noun-movement in Italian/French and English can be explained along the same lines than verb-movement. Assuming, following Ritter (1990), that the (highest) functional category between D and N contains the number features of DP, affixation of those features to the noun proceeds in the same way verbal affixation does in clauses: by movement up to a functional category in Italian/French, by Affix-hopping in English (cf. Emonds 1978, Pollock 1989).

Returning to adjectives in event nominals<sup>10</sup>, since  $N^0$  moves all the way up to Num<sup>0</sup>, we predict that any adjective may appear in post-nominal position. This is indeed the case<sup>11</sup>:

- (23) a. L'[NumP [Num *invazione*]<sub>i</sub> [CaP *probable* [NP  $t_i$  de Jupiter]]]                   Gr. 1  
           *the invasion probable of Jupiter*
- b. L'[NumP [Num *invazione*]<sub>i</sub> [CaP *fréquente* [NP  $t_i$  de Jupiter]]]                   Gr. 2  
           *the invasion frequent of Jupiter*
- c. L'[NumP [Num *invazione*]<sub>i</sub> [NP *complète*  $t_i$  de Jupiter]]                   Gr. 3  
           *the invasion complete of Jupiter*

However, any adjective may also occur in pre-nominal position (cf. (24)). Moreover, when two of them co-occur, Group 1 adjectives must precede Group 2 adjectives, and Group 2 must precede Group 3 (cf. (25)):

- (24) a. La *probable invasión de Jupiter*.   Gr. 1  
       b. La *fréquente invasión de Jupiter*.   Gr. 2  
       c. La *complète invasión de Jupiter*.   Gr. 3

- (25) a. Les probables fréquentes invasions de Jupiter. Gr. 1 & 2<sup>12</sup>  
 b. La probable complète invasion de Jupiter. Gr. 1 & 3  
 c. La fréquente complète invasion de Jupiter. Gr. 2 & 3

Looking at (24), I propose that the pre-nominal position of adjectives is the result of incorporation into the head noun (see Stowell 1981, Pesetsky 1987). At least two sets of facts corroborate this. First, pre-nominal adjectives can never be phrasal (cf. Stowell op. cit.):

- (26) a. L'invasion improbable aux yeux des Terriens de Jupiter.  
*the invasion improbable to the eyes of the Earthlings of Jupiter*  
 b. \*L'improbable aux yeux des Terriens invasion de Jupiter.  
*the improbable to the eyes of the Earthlings invasion of Jupiter*

Second, only pre-nominal adjectives trigger "liaison"<sup>13</sup>:

- (27) a. Les fréquentes ([z]) invasions de Jupiter.  
 b. Les invasions (\*[z]) infréquentes de Jupiter.

As for (25), note that the order of adjectives reflects their position in the tree. For instance, (25c) is the result of a two-step incorporation of the pre-nominal adjectives. First, the noun moves to  $Ca^0$ . Then complète moves to the right of the head noun. The newly formed complex [complète-invasion] moves to  $Num^0$ , followed by incorporation of fréquente to the left of the complex. This is shown in (28):

- (28) la [ $NumP$  [ $Num$  fréquente<sub>z</sub> [ $Num$  [ $Ca$  complète<sub>k</sub> [ $Ca$  invasion<sub>i</sub> ]]<sub>n</sub> ] ] [ $CaP$  t<sub>z</sub> [ $CaP$  t<sub>n</sub> [ $NP$  t<sub>k</sub> [ $NP$  t<sub>i</sub> de Jupiter ]]]]]

Now, since incorporation is optional, we predict all kinds of combinations when two adjectives co-occur, depending on whether both or only one of them has incorporated:

- (29) a. La complète invasion probable de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 3  
 b. La complète invasion fréquente de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 3  
 c. Les fréquentes invasions probables de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 2  
 d. La fréquente invasion complète de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 2  
 e. La probable invasion complète de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 1  
 f. Les probables invasions fréquentes de Jupiter. Incorporation of Gr. 1

The results are more or less good depending on the choice of adjectives, but basically the phrases in (29) are grammatical. Also, we predict that the hierarchy alluded to above must be obeyed. For instance, since by any version of the Head-Movement Constraint, (cf. Travis 1984), incorporation must proceed step-by-step, there is no way to derive a phrase where a prenominal Group 3 adjective precedes a prenominal Group 2 adjective:

- (30) \*La complète fréquente invasion de Jupiter.

## 5. Agreement

Adjectives in French agree both in number and gender with the head noun, whether one or more adjectives is/are present, and this, independently of the position of the adjective(s):

- (31) a. La complète (fem. sing.) destruction (fem. sing) de Jupiter.  
 b. La destruction (fem. sing.) complète (fem. sing.) de Jupiter.  
 c. La fréquente destruction complète de Jupiter.  
 d. La fréquente complète destruction de Jupiter.

This can be accounted for in the following way: the adjectives in (31) all take invasion as an external argument; consequently, the internal structure of the AP in, say, (31a) is as in (32):

- (32) [AP PRO [A' complète ]]

Now all head nouns in French bear gender. Gender in French is unpredictable, that is each noun must be learned along with its gender.<sup>14</sup> We can assume, then, that the noun already bears the gender features at the point of lexical insertion. Once it has reached the Number position, the noun carries all of its features (number and gender). But note that from that position, the noun m-commands everything within the noun phrase. We can now construe agreement between the head noun and the adjective(s) as a special case of control: since the head noun "controls" any PRO within the lower AP, it can transmit all of its features to it. Then by specifier-head agreement, PRO agrees with the head of AP.

## 6. Conclusion

We have seen good evidence supporting the parallelism between Noun Phrases and clauses. By simply projecting the internal organization of noun phrases in a fashion similar to clauses, a number of problems are solve in a surprisingly easy way. Among other things, unexplained extraction facts can be reduced to cases of improper movement, but perhaps more importantly, this paper sheds some light on the problem of adjective placement (at least in event nominals).

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\* I am greatly indebted to Dominique Sportiche for numerous discussions about this paper, from which many of the ideas presented here emerged. Many thanks also to Tim Stowell. Among the many people who have helped me with various aspects (and others) of this paper, I would like to mention Anna Szabolcsi, Giuseppe Longobardi, Betsy Ritter, Hilda Koopman and Guglielmo Cinque. Part of the research which led to this paper was conducted during the Summer of 1990 during which I worked on Anne-Marie diSciullo's project at UQAM. Thanks, Anne-Marie. I also benefited from a doctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for part of 1990.

<sup>1</sup> I argue elsewhere that the order agent-theme is the unmarked word order. This can be seen by the contrast in (i), where the agent Noun Phrase may only very marginally follow a PP complement (cf. Sportiche 1990):



The stronger ungrammaticality of (4c) could be attributed to the fact that nouns (or their traces), as opposed to verbs, are not governors for traces which are not antecedent-governed within DP (cf. Giorgi & Longobardi 1990). Consequently, the slexical government requirement of the ECP (Sportiche 1990) will not be met (see also Rizzi (1990)).

<sup>5</sup> Adjunction to Agr accounts for the occurrence of Group 1 and 2 adverbs between subject and auxiliary in English. However, this option is not available in French:

- (i) \*Pierre probablement a interrompu la conversation.  
*Pierre probably has interrupted the conversation.*
- (ii) \*Pierre fréquemment a interrompu la conversation.  
*Pierre frequently has interrupted the conversation.*

It is possible that English (i) and (ii) involve head-movement of the adverb to the left of the auxiliary rather than base-generated adjunction to Agr, an option somehow not available in French. If this is true, it would allow us to maintain that adverbs are all adjoined to maximal projections. I will assume no adjunction to Num<sup>0</sup> for adjectives.

<sup>6</sup> That Group 2 adverbs may be attached lower than Group 1 adverbs can be seen by the French sentences in (i)-(ii):

- (i) Ils ont envahi fréquemment la planète.  
*they invaded frequently the planet*
- (iii) \*Ils ont envahi probablement la planète.  
*they invaded probably the planet*

<sup>7</sup> Since co-occurrences of three adverbs (or adjectives) is somewhat awkward, I will stick to pairs of modifiers. But it is interesting to note that, to the extent that (i) is acceptable, it represents the only possible ordering of adverbs:

- (i) They probably frequently completely invaded Jupiter.

<sup>8</sup> This hierarchy must be obeyed even if, according to Table 2, Group 1 and Group 2 adverbs can both be adjoined to TP. This probably follows from the restriction on adjunction to the same projection (see Jackendoff 1972): only one adverb may be adjoined to one given projection. This can be shown when an ambiguous Group 2 adverb co-occurs with a Group 1 adverb:

- (i) a. John intelligently answered the question.  
b. John intelligently stupidly answered the question.

(i.a) is ambiguous. It can either mean: it was intelligent of John to answer the question (Group 2), or the question John gave was an intelligent one (Group 3). However, (i.b) can only mean that it was intelligent of John to give a stupid answer. Here, since stupidly is already adjoined to VP, intelligently can only be adjoined to TP, hence the "Group 2 reading".

<sup>9</sup> As observed by Jackendoff, the correspondence is not perfect between adjectives and adverbs. For instance, intelligent is not equivalent to intelligently in the sentential reading:

- 
- (i) The intelligent response of the union to the government.
  - (ii) The union intelligently responded to the attack by the government.

10 I will not discuss argument adjectives here, e.g. with respect with the co-occurrence with adjunct adjectives.

11 Contrary to adverbs, adjectives cannot be right-adjoined:

- (i) \*L'invasion de Jupiter complète.  
*the invasion of Jupiter complete*
- (ii) Ils ont envahi Jupiter complètement.  
*they invaded Jupiter completely*

12 Co-occurrence of probable and fréquente is a little awkward since fréquente implies that an invasion has taken place many times, while probable does not imply that an invasion has indeed taken place. That is why I will use the plural form of the head noun when these two adjectives co-occur.

13 Thanks to D. Sportiche for pointing this out to me. Given the discussion about (27), it is conceivable that the determiner cliticizes onto the head noun (or vice-versa), since in a sequence Det-N, liaison is obligatory:

- (i) Les ([z]) amis de Louise.  
*the friends of Louise*

14 It is possible that the gender in derived nominals is carried by the nominalizing morpheme. For instance, any new noun formed with the nominalizing morpheme -tion will invariably come out as feminine. Nothing hinges on this in the present discussion.

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