Lexical and grammatical meaning: attributive adjectives in French

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Outline

1. **Data** – pre-nominal and post-nominal adjectives

2. **Previous analyses** – too restrictive (heterogeneous data)

3. **Our analysis**

4. **Some complications** – nothing's ever that simple with language …

5. **Conclusion**

Post-nominal position

- The canonical position for intersective attributive adjectives in French is post-nominal:

(1)   Le ballon rouge est lourd.
        the ball   red   is heavy

- All adjectives that can be used predicatively can also appear post-nominally with their predicative meaning:

(2) Le   ballon est rouge.
        the ball   is   red

Post-nominal position

- This is the default, and where newly coined/borrowed intersective adjectives appear:

(3) du   contenu **tweetable**

    some content tweetable

(https://bloginfos.com/creer-un-lien-tweetable/)

(4) des   produits **high tech**

    some products high tech

(http://www.lhommemoderne.fr/13-high-tech-culture)

Pre-nominal position

- However, certain adjectives appear pre-nominally, often with a non-restrictive meaning. *Satané* in (5) appears in pre-nominal position and has an 'expressive' meaning (Potts, 2005):

(5)   Le satané   chien était sur le canapé.
       the EXPRESSIVE dog   was on the sofa
       'The damn dog was on the sofa.'

Variable position

- A number of adjectives can appear both post- and pre-nominally, but with different meanings in the different positions:

(6) a. La Bible est sacrée.
         the bible is sacred

     b. La Bible sacrée est lue pendant la   messe.
         the bible sacred is read during   the mass

     c. La   sacrée   Bible est si difficile   à lire!
         the EXPRESSIVE bible is   so difficult to read
         'The bloody Bible is so difficult to read!'

Expressivity and pre-nominal position

(7)   a. Tes   bottes sales laissent des   traces partout.
        your boots dirty   leave   some marks everywhere
        'Your dirty boots are leaving marks everywhere.'

      b. Sale   mec!
         EXPRESSIVE guy
         ≈'Bastard!'

Expressivity and pre-nominal position

- This phenomenon can be more or less subtle. Consider the different uses of *célèbre* 'famous' in (8) below (adapted from Jones 1996: 321):

(8) a. Les acteurs célèbres gagnent beaucoup d' argent.
    the actors famous earn lots of money
    'Famous actors make lots of money.'

  b. Les célèbres acteurs gagnent beaucoup d' argent.
    the famous actors earn lots of money
    ≈'Actors, who are famous, make lots of money.'

Pre-nominal position

- We have seen that adjectives can have expressive meanings when they occur pre-nominally.

- Adjectives can also have intensional and 'specificational' meanings in this position.

Intensional adjectives

- Do not describe the properties of a noun's denotation, but rather modify the meaning of the noun in some way.

(9) a. Le président est ancien.
    the president is   old

  b. le   président ancien
    the president old

  c. l'   ancien président
    the former president

Intensional adjectives

- *X est un président ancien $\implies$ X est un président*
- *X est un président ancien $\implies$ X est ancien*

- *X est un ancien président $\nRightarrow$ X est un président*
- *X est un ancien président $\nRightarrow$ X est ancien*

Intensional adjectives

(10) a. un fumeur gros
     a   smoker fat

   b. un gros   fumeur
     a   heavy smoker

- (10b) is actually ambiguous between the intersective meaning ('fat') and the intensional one ('does X a lot') – cf. the exact same ambiguity in English *heavy smoker*.

Specificational adjectives

- "help to identify which member of the class described by the noun is being referred to" (Jones 1996: 314):

(11) a. Le mouchoir   est propre.
   the handkerchief is clean

  b. le mouchoir   propre
   the handkerchief clean

  c. mon propre   mouchoir
   my   SPECIFICATIONAL handkerchief
   'my own handkerchief'

Descriptive generalisations

- Traditional grammarians of French (e.g. Milner 1978, Jones 1996) have noted the following contrast:

    (A) The post-nominal position is associated with restrictive/predicative meanings.

    I.e. meanings of the form $\mathbf{Adj}(x) \wedge \mathbf{Noun}(x)$

    (B) The pre-nominal position is associated with non-restrictive meanings: those which do not simply restrict the denotation of the head noun, but modify it in some way.

    I.e. meanings of the form $\mathbf{Adj}(\mathbf{Noun}(x))$

Our proposal

- Post-nominal position is associated with a particular meaning.
  - We associate that syntactic position with a meaning constructor which takes predicative adjectives and turns them into intersective attributive ones.

- Pre-nominal position is not associated with any grammatically-provided meaning.
  - Pre-nominal position is freer; allows for a range of (lexically-specified) non-intersective meanings.

Previous work

- Waugh (1977) and Bouchard (1998) both present semantic-based analyses.

- Crucial difference from our proposal: they claim *both* positions are associated with a specific manner of combination.
  - The 'mobile' adjectives can then be assigned a single lexical meaning.

- Bouchard: pre-N adjectives "modify components internal to N", whereas post-N adjectives modify "the components of the N as a whole".

Bouchard (1998)

- A minimal pair:

(12) un mensonge parfait
    a lie   perfect
    'a perfect lie' (perfectly constructed; without flaws)

(13) un parfait   mensonge
    a perfect lie
    'a perfect/total/complete lie' ("It's all lies!")

Problems

- Too categorical!

- There are times when order makes no difference to interpretation (Thuilier 2013: ¶29):

  (14) un jeune homme charmant ~ un charmant jeune homme
  a   young man   charming

Problems

- Some pairs of Adj+N do not show the same semantics (Thuilier 2013: ¶30):

  (15) un gros   fumeur
       a   *fat/big smoker*

  (16) un gros   coiffeur
       a   *fat/big hairdresser*

- Only (15) can have the 'intensifying' meaning ("a heavy smoker").

- (15) is also ambiguous: it need not have the intensifying meaning.

Problems

- Attempts to provide a uniform semantics lead to odd/very underspecified meanings.

- Even for e.g. *ancien*, not clear what a constant model-theoretic interpretation would be.

- What is the uniform meaning of *faux* in *de faux pianos* vs. *des pianos faux*?

- Perhaps there is some intuitive link, but formally …?

Problems

- Expressives don't fit this characterisation at all.

  (17) ce   sacré chien
       this EXPR dog

- Not obviously modifying something noun-internal.

- Instead, adding an additional proposition (Potts 2005):

  (18) $\langle \mathbf{dog}(x), \text{🙁}(speaker, x) \rangle$

Summary

- The identification of the post-N position with intersective adjectives is relatively clear.

- But identifying a particular meaning associated with the pre-N position is not such an easy task.

- We conclude therefore that the post-N position is associated grammatically with the intersective meaning, but that the pre-N position is free with respect to meaning type.

Our analysis

- We borrow the syntactic analysis of Arnold & Sadler (2013): pre-N adjectives are non-projecting; post-N adjectives project full phrases.

- We take the predicative rather than attributive use of adjectives to be basic (cf. Börjars & Payne 2018).

- The NP-modifying AdjP position is associated with a meaning constructor which lifts adjectives from the predicative to the attributive type.

- Thus, all post-N adjectives must be compatible with this meaning, but pre-N, all meanings are lexically provided (and so are much freer).

Syntax

- Syntactically, it has often been noted that pre-N adjectives in a variety of languages are more restricted.

- We follow this tradition, specifically borrowing the proposals of Arnold & Sadler (2013) for English.

- Pre-N adjectives are Âdj, and so adjoin to N.
    (19) N → Âdj N

- Post-N adjectives are Adj, project a full AdjP, and so adjoin to NP.
    (20) NP → NP AdjP

Syntax

- This accounts for some of the 'closeness' phenomena observed:

- Pre-N adjectives cannot have complements:
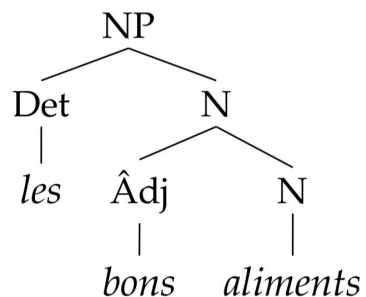
(21) a. les bons aliments
        the good foods

    b. *les bons pour la   santé aliments
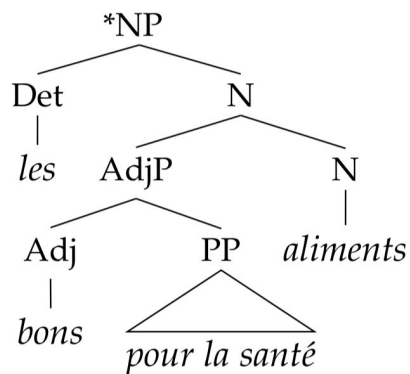   *the good for   the health foods*

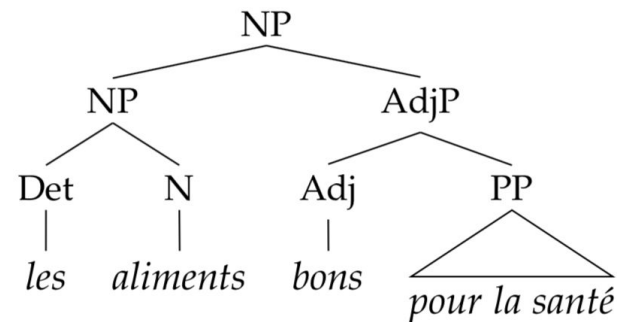   c. les aliments bons pour la santé

Syntax

(22) a.

b.

c.

Syntax

- We also follow Arnold & Sadler (2013) in assuming that rules like (23) are also permitted, accounting for the possibility of some limited modification of pre-N adjectives:

(23) Âdj → Âdv Âdj

(24) un très grand homme
    a   very tall   man

Liaison

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- It may also go some way to accounting for the facts of liaison.

- *Liaison*: French sandhi phenomenon whereby certain consonants are inserted between vowels at word boundaries:

(25) les chats [leʃa]
but
(26) les hommes [le**z**ɔm]

Liaison

- Liaison is sometimes obligatory, sometimes optional, sometimes forbidden.

- Another case where pre-N adjective is 'closer' to N than post-N adjective:

  - Between pre-N adjectives and the noun, liaison is (all but) obligatory:

(27) un mauvais ami [œ̃movɛ**z**ami] NOT [œ̃movɛami]

  - Between post-N adjectives and the noun it is more often not realised:

(28) des amis anglais [dezamiɑ̃glɛ] NOT [dezami**z**ɑ̃glɛ]

Semantics

- We assume that adjectives in French always take subjects (Zweigenbaum 1988), and that the basic meaning constructors of predicative adjectives therefore look like those for intransitive verbs:

  (29) *rouge*   Adj $\lambda x.\mathbf{red}(x) : [(\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma]$

- Crucially, the MC is type $\langle e, t \rangle$ – the wrong type to be used attributively.

- For attributive adjectives, we need type $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$.

Semantics

- The job of 'lifting' the predicative to the attributive type is accomplished by a meaning constructor like (30):

(30) $\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda x . P(x) \wedge Q(x) : \textit{adj} \multimap \textit{noun} \multimap \textit{adj-noun}$

- In Dalrymple's (2001: 266) analysis of English, this meaning constructor is lexically encoded on the adjective. We instead associate it with a phrase-structure position.

Grammatically-encoded meaning

(31) $\textsc{Intersect} :=$
$\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda x. Q(x) \wedge P(x) :$
$[(\uparrow \textsc{subj})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma] \multimap$
$[[((\textsc{adj} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \textsc{var}) \multimap ((\textsc{adj} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \textsc{restr})] \multimap$
$[((\textsc{adj} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \textsc{var}) \multimap ((\textsc{adj} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \textsc{restr})]]$

(32) NP $\rightarrow$ NP   AdjP
$\uparrow = \downarrow$ $\downarrow \in (\uparrow \textsc{adj})$
$@\textsc{Intersect}$

- Because the call of $\textsc{Intersect}$ is not optional, any adjective appearing here must contribute a lexical meaning constructor of a compatible type (i.e. $\langle e, t \rangle$).

Consequence 1

- All post-N adjectives must have an intersective meaning.

- We therefore follow Dalrymple (2001: 263) in claiming that subsective adjectives like *habile* 'skillful', and *bon* 'good', are intersective in the sense that their mode of composition involves conjunction.

- They just have some additional standard-of-comparison argument, which may be provided from context:

(33) *bon* Adj $\quad \lambda \mathcal{S} \lambda x . \mathbf{good}(x, \mathcal{S}) : (\uparrow_\sigma \textsc{std}) \multimap (\uparrow \textsc{subj})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma$

Consequence 2

- All predicative adjectives can appear post-N (and vice versa).
  (corollary: there are no predicative only adjectives in French)

- This seems to be borne out (there are no equivalents of the English *a*-adjectives in French).

Consequence 3

- Pre-N adjectives must have their meanings fully lexically specified, including their mode of composition.

- This means we expect a heterogeneous group of meaning types here, as we observe.

- It also means that e.g. intensional or expressive adjectives cannot appear post-nominally or predicatively, since there is a type mismatch.

- Corollary: this means we are forced to claim that the positional variants of *ancien*, *simple*, *sacré*, etc. are different lexical entries.

Ambiguity

- This seems warranted, however, since these alternations are not systematic.

- For instance, near synonyms of *ancien*, such as *vieux* 'old' or *âgé* 'aged', do not receive the same intensional interpretation pre-N.

(34) un vieux ami = an old friend
     (i.e. one who has been my friend for a long time, and still is)

(35) *un âgé ami

(36) un ancien ami = former friend (who is not any more)

Flexible adjectives

- Along with these adjectives that have clearly distinct meanings pre-N and post-N, there are also several which can appear in both positions but with only slight differences in meaning.

  (37) a. un bon   linguiste
             a good linguist [= good as a linguist]
         b. un linguiste bon

- In (37a), the standard-of-comparison argument is linked to the noun; in (37b) it is not (necessarily).

Flexible adjectives

- The Âdj version of these adjectives has some more specified meaning:

(38) *bon*   Adj $\lambda \mathcal{S} \lambda x.\mathbf{good}(x, \mathcal{S}) : (\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma$

(39) *bon*   Âdj $\lambda \mathcal{S} \lambda x.\mathbf{good}(x, \mathcal{S}) : (\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma$

$$\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda x. P(Q)(x) \wedge Q(x) :$$
$$[(\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma] \multimap$$
$$[[((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{RESTR})] \multimap$$
$$[((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{RESTR})]]$$

- Includes a specialised version of the INTERSECT meaning constructor which passes the noun in as the standard-of-comparison argument.

Flexible adjectives

- *Bon linguiste* then has the following meaning:

(40) $\lambda x.\mathbf{good}(x, \mathbf{linguist}) \wedge \mathbf{linguist}(x)$

Assessment of the analysis

- In some respects we make only a weak prediction, namely that all post-nominal adjectives are intersective.

- (And not, crucially, that all intersective adjectives are post-nominal.)

- Pre-nominally, all bets are off.

- We feel that this is all that is justified, however, given the heterogeneous state of pre-N adjectives.

Assessment of the analysis

- What would be most damning for our analysis, therefore, are post-N adjectives which are not intersective.

- Two putative counterexamples, which we can explain.

- Some lingering problematic examples, which we cannot.

Event-denoting nouns

(41) le   bombardement américain
      the bombardment   American

- Two solutions:
  - This is *semantically* intersective, with the further specified meaning coming from pragmatics.
  - There is a more complex compositional situation here.

- Either is possible. In the latter case, we require some variant of INTERSECT which can apply the meaning of the adjective to one of the arguments of the noun, rather than the noun itself.

Chinese chefs

- A reviewer asks about the status of NPs like (42):

    (42) un chef chinois
          a chef Chinese
          [intended: a chef who cooks Chinese food]

- It seems that such readings are not available: *un chef chinois* comes from China, and may cook Italian food.

Real problems

- Thuilier (2013: ¶27) provides the following examples:

(43) L'émergence du mot « folie » correspond à l'inquiétude d'un poète qui cherche encore les moyens de restaurer l'**unité ancienne**.

(44) Peut-on dire que le sarkozysme est le **produit le plus pur** de la Ve République ?

(45) Le personnage de John C. Reilly, un type **brave et mou** qui se métamorphose au milieu de la scène en gros con macho.

Real problems

- To the extent that they are acceptable, these are genuine counterexamples.

- However, they are rare, and definitely marked. Somewhat literary feel?

- Possibly relates to the interaction of syntax-semantics with considerations of euphony or balance …

Complexities

- Thuilier (2013) discusses a number of factors which bear on the statistical distribution of adjectives pre- or post-nominally – especially of those which can appear in both positions with (approximately) the same meaning.

- E.g. frequency, morphological complexity.

- Insofar as these are questions of usage (performance), not grammar (competence), they fall outside our scope.

- There is one case where our claims are challenged, however.

Coordination

- Coordinated adjectives possible in both positions, but (slightly) preferred post-N.
  - Is this just the common 'short before long' tendency in SVO languages?

- Troubling for us: it appears strictly pre-N adjectives like *ancien* or *faux* can appear post-N when coordinated (Abeillé & Godard 1999):

(46) les sénateurs anciens ou actuels
    the senators former or current
    'the former or current senators'

(47) des   coupables vrais ou faux
    some guilty.ones true or false
    ≈'rightly or wrongly accused people'

Coordination

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- A false generalisation?

(48) #mon amie ancienne et/mais gentille
     my friend former   and/but kind

(49) #un Renoir faux mais toujours cher
     a Renoir fake but   still   expensive

(50) #un chien sacré et   méchant
     a dog   EXPR and mean

Coordination

- Something special about *vrais ou faux*, *anciens ou actuels*: they are in some sense totalising.
  - a particular N must be either real or fake
  - there are only current and former Ns in existence (assuming we aren't clairvoyant and so can't pick out future instances of N)

- Telling that real-life examples often look like this:

(52) le peuple qui veut toujours des coupables vrais ou faux **peu importe**
   'people who always want someone to blame, **regardless** of whether they're guilty or not'

Coordination

- Has the feeling of an appositive, an after-thought, a clarification.

  (53) … tous désirent la même chose : retrouver leur argent perdu, ou, à
       défaut, avoir la peau des coupables, vrais ou faux.
       '... all desiring the same thing: finding their lost money, or, failing that,
       finding someone to punish, whether guilty or not.'
        (http://www.cinefemme.be/spip.php?film1534)

- If they're not actually in the post-N adjectival position, these are not
  counterexamples.

Conclusion

- The predicative use of adjectives is the basic one: attributive uses of predicative adjectives are mostly via the grammatically-provided type-lifting meaning constructor INTERSECT.

- Some adjectives cannot appear predicatively or post-nominally; they have lexically-specified higher types.

- Some adjectives can appear in both positions with the same core meaning, although usually with some additional restriction or more complex meaning pre-nominally.

Conclusion

- This gives us three kinds of adjectives in French:

1. Adj-only (e.g. concrete properties such as colour, nationality, shape or classificatory adjectives).

2. Âdj-only (e.g. intensional or expressive adjectives).

3. Flexible Adj/Âdj (e.g. *bon, petit*, *beau*, ...)
    - Lexically encoded preference for one position or the other; the marked position then comes with some additional meaning

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Spare slides

Cyclic f-structures

(i)

$$\boxed{1}\; b\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`BALL'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{ADJ} & \left\{ r\; \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{`RED}\langle\text{SUBJ}\rangle\text{'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \boxed{1} \end{bmatrix} \right\} \end{bmatrix}$$

(ii) NP $\rightarrow$ NP   AdjP
$$\uparrow = \downarrow \quad \downarrow \in (\uparrow \text{ADJ})$$
$$(\downarrow \text{SUBJ}) = \uparrow$$
$$@\text{INTERSECT}$$

Cyclic f-structures

(iii)
$$b_\sigma \begin{bmatrix} \text{VAR} & [\quad] \\ \text{RESTR} & [\quad] \end{bmatrix}$$

(iv) $\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda x. Q(x) \wedge P(x) : [b_\sigma \multimap r_\sigma] \multimap [b_\sigma v \multimap b_\sigma r] \multimap b_\sigma v \multimap b_\sigma r$

(v) $\lambda Q \lambda x. Q(x) \wedge \mathbf{red}(x) : [b_\sigma v \multimap b_\sigma r] \multimap b_\sigma v \multimap b_\sigma r$

Nombreux

"En conséquence, la mise en valeur des ressources hydrauliques pose dans tous ces pays des problèmes nombreux, tels que …"
(https://books.google.at/books?id=zMM0MsNPnRkC&pg=PA152)

"... c'est en les combinant que nous devons chercher la solution des problèmes nombreux que nous offrent les filons, …"
(https://books.google.at/books?id=35XoO60sZQwC&pg=PA337)

Problems

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- Bouchard argues that there are after all differences in such cases, just subtle ones.

  (i) J' ai   décidé   de ne pas acheter une petite maison.
      I have decided to NEG   buy   a   small house.

  (ii) J'ai décidé de ne pas acheter une maison petite.

- Bouchard: these differ in presupposition: (i) presupposes I am buying a house, but (ii) does not.

Problems

- We disagree with this judgement; in both cases (iii) would be a felicitous continuation:

  (iii) … mais une grande.
         but   a   big

- Possibly this is dialectal?

- Possibly there really is a difference, but not necessarily the one Bouchard wants there to be.

Event-denoting nouns

(i) $\lambda e \lambda x . bombard(e) \wedge \epsilon(e) = x : (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ RESTR})$

(ii) $\lambda P \lambda y \lambda e \lambda x . P(e)(x) \wedge Agent(e) = y :$
$[(\uparrow_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ RESTR})] \multimap$
$(\uparrow_\sigma \text{ AGENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ RESTR})$

(iii) $\lambda y \lambda e \lambda x . bombard(e) \wedge \epsilon(e) = x \wedge Agent(e) = y :$
$(\uparrow_\sigma \text{ AGENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap (\uparrow_\sigma \text{ RESTR})$

Event-denoting nouns

(iv) $\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda e \lambda x. \exists y [Q(y)(e)(x) \wedge P(y)] :$
$[(\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma] \multimap$
$\quad [((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ AGENT}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap$
$\quad \quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad\quad ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ RESTR})] \multimap$
$\quad\quad ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ EVENT}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{ RESTR})$

(v) $\lambda e \lambda x. \exists y [american(y) \wedge bombard(e) \wedge \epsilon(e) = x \wedge Agent(e) = y]$

Lexical factors

- **Frequency**: less frequent > post-N
  - Irregular words tends to be the frequent ones; infrequent words therefore follow the general pattern, i.e. the grammatically given pattern, and so appear post-N.

- **Length**: shorter > pre-N
  - This follows from frequency? Wilmet (1981): the more frequent an adjective the more it tends to be monosyllabic.

Syntactic factors

- **Pre-adjectival modifier:**
    - Strong tendency for adverb-modified adjective to appear post-nominally
        - A simple 'short before long' situation?

    - But also, modification by e.g. *très* tends to loosen otherwise strict tendencies. For instance *bon* is very often pre-N, but *très bon* can much more readily appear post-N.
        - A preference for full phrasal modification over head-adjunction?

Syntactic factors

- **'Balance':**
  - other post-N material promotes pre-N adjective; better to have one Adj either side than two on one side, etc.

- **Choice of determiner:**
  - indefinites tend to go with post-N, definites with pre-N
  - Is this just to do with the kinds of adjectives we get here?

Fixed expressions

- E.g. *sous haute surveillance* but not *#sous surveillance haute*.

- These are presumably just listed.

Flexible adjectives

- It is easy to see how correspondences such as this could be captured by rule, thus removing some of the stipulative character of the analysis:

(i) For all word forms *word* and predicates *R*:

$$word \quad \text{Adj} \quad \lambda \mathcal{S} \lambda x. R(x, \mathcal{S}) : (\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma$$

$$\Downarrow$$

$$word \quad \hat{\text{A}}\text{dj} \quad \lambda \mathcal{S} \lambda x. R(x, \mathcal{S}) : (\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma$$

$$\lambda P \lambda Q \lambda x. P(Q)(x) \wedge Q(x) :$$
$$[(\uparrow_\sigma \text{STD}) \multimap (\uparrow \text{SUBJ})_\sigma \multimap \uparrow_\sigma] \multimap$$
$$[[((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{RESTR})] \multimap$$
$$[((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{VAR}) \multimap ((\text{ADJ} \in \uparrow)_\sigma \text{RESTR})]]$$

Expressivity and pre-nominal position

- We saw above that adjectives can have an expressive dimension when they precede the noun. Other examples include…

(i)   a. La victime pauvre
         the victim poor
         'the poor (poverty-stricken) victim'

      b. La pauvre   victime
         the EXPRESSIVE victim
         'the poor (pitiful) victim'

Continued...

    (ii)   a. Un problème véritable
                      a problem   real
                      'A genuine (not invented) problem'

                b. Un véritable   problème
                      a EXPRESSIVE problem
                      'a real (serious) problem'

Expressivity and pre-nominal position

Similarly…

- Jones (1996: 321) notes that **excellent** 'excellent' in *je vous remercie de cet excellent repas* 'I thank you for this excellent meal' 'does not distinguish the meal in question from other less noteworthy meals but acts as a way of paying a compliment'.

- **Beau** 'beautiful, handsome' can also have an expressive or otherwise speaker-oriented interpretation in pre-nominal position: *Mère Teresa est une belle femme* roughly means 'Mother Theresa is a good (≈ morally beautiful) woman' whereas *Mère Teresa est une femme belle* means 'Mother Theresa is a beautiful (= attractive) woman'.

Expressivity and pre-nominal position

Continued...

- ***Belle*** in *une belle fortune* 'a great fortune' or *une belle récolte* 'a good harvest' is not denoting a property of the noun it modifies.
- It is used figuratively: it functions to express a positive attitude towards the fortune.
- Other figurative uses of beau are seen in *un beau salaud* 'a bastard' (lit.: 'a beautiful bastard'), *une belle ordure* 'a nasty piece of work' (lit.: 'a beautiful bastard'), and *un beau menteur* 'a good liar' (lit.: 'a beautiful liar'), where beau functions to intensify the insult (Mateiu 2014: 271-2).

Beau can only have these non-literal interpretations when it is used in prenominal attributive position.

Specificational adjectives

(i)   a. un individu   certain

        a   individual certain

        'An individual who is sure of themselves'

    b. Un certain   individu

        a   SPECIFICATIONAL individual

        'A particular individual'

Bouchard (1998)

(i) le   futur   président
   the future president

(ii) le   supposé   communiste
   the supposed communist

- In (i), *futur* modifies some time index

- In (ii), *supposé* "modifies (in model-theoretic terms) the denotation assignment function *f* of *communiste* and indicates that some postulated assignment may be false".

Event-denoting nouns

(42) le   bombardement américain
      the   bombardment   American

- This is not straightforwardly intersective: the bombardment is not literally American; rather, it is perpetrated/orchestrated by America(ns).