

Verbal Participles and the Prenominal Position in English

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Introduction.

In his earlier works, Chomsky analyzed passive participles as transformationally derived (Chomsky 1957, 1965), which entailed that prenominal participles should also be analyzed as reduced relative clauses. Chomsky's analysis actually entails that all passive participles are verbal. This idea has been challenged more than once throughout the years by Freidin, 1975; Bresnan, 1982, 1995; Wasow 1977; Levin and Rappaport 1986, among others, who claimed that all prenominal participles are adjectival. For more than two decades the most influential works on passive participles rejected the possibility of having verbal participles in prenominal position in English.

Cinque (2003, 2005a, b) offers a detailed analysis of the prenominal modification area. His theory returns to the old idea in terms of the possibility to have verbal participles in front of the noun. It suggests that the prenominal position is not reserved for adjectives only but that reduced relative clauses, including verbal participles, must also be able to occur prenominally in English. English prenominal participles, however, do not provide much evidence on what their character is – verbal or adjectival. Therefore, suggestions about the verbal character of prenominal participles in English have been made mainly on the basis of data coming from other languages (see Laczkó, 2001, who bases his analysis on data from Hungarian).

In this paper, I will try to show that the empirical data come in support of the analyses which assume that reduced relative clause elements and verbal elements in particular are allowed prenominally in English. First, I will discuss a group of participles, which I will call postmodified participles, namely, participles which are postmodified by adverbs. I will claim that these participles are real verbal participles, something that has been, to my knowledge, unnoticed so far. Basing myself upon data from Bulgarian, where postmodified participles can occur in front of the noun, I will suggest that their impossibility to occur in prenominal position in English is simply due to the right recursion restriction and not to their being verbal. I will provide also some semantic evidence showing that prenominally used participles are not necessarily “stative”. I will provide direct evidence from English that it is possible to isolate real verbal participles in prenominal position also in this language. Finally, I will show that the possibility to use the modifier *very much* prenominally, unequivocally suggests that reduced relative clauses (IPs) are allowed in this position.

1. Theoretical overview.

1.1. On the grammatical status of participles.

The most wide-spread view on the prenominal English participles is that they are simply adjectives. This work will dwell upon passive participles in more detail but the generalizations will hold for all types of participles that can appear in prenominal position.

Passives seem to be the most widely-discussed group of participles. Initially, they were analyzed as obtained as a result of syntactic transformations discussed in detail in Chomsky's early works (Chomsky 1957, 1965). During the seventies, very influential lexicalist theories were developed, whereby participles were considered a product of lexical processes, which do not involve syntactic transformations (Freidin, 1975; Bresnan, 1982). Wasow (1977) challenges this idea claiming that there is a group of passives which are syntactically derived and another group which are lexical formations, and are derived by means of lexical redundancy rules, without involving transformations. Wasow notes that many of the participles exhibit ambiguity between the verbal and the adjectival reading. For example, the verb *to be* is a context which allows both an adjectival and a verbal reading. Notice that the following sentence has two interpretations:

- (1) The shop was closed when she went out.

The example above could mean either "They closed the shop as soon as she went out" or "When she went out the shop was in the state of being closed". In the first case the verb *to be* is an auxiliary verb and in the second case it is not. Wasow develops several well-defined criteria for distinguishing between lexical rules and transformations – corresponding to the two ways in which participles are derived. According to him the passives which are syntactically derived are verbs, and those which are lexically derived are adjectives. The prenominal position is used as a test for adjectivity. This is later found also in the work of Levin and Rappaport (1986).

Haspelmath (quoted in Laczkó, 2001) also considers prenominal participles pure adjectives. In his words, "Both past passive participles [...] and past unaccusative participles [...] characterize their head by expressing a state that results from a previous event. The fact that they express a state has to do with the fact that they are adjectives." (p. 159...)

In this paper, I am not going to take a position as to the derivation of the verbal and the adjectival participles but will limit myself to identifying their distribution within the noun phrase in English.

1.2. Cinque's theory of adnominal modification.

Building on the left-right asymmetry hypothesis advocated in Kayne (1994 and subsequent work), Cinque (1999, 2003, 2005a,b, 2006) claims that the head of the phrase is categorically and cross-linguistically the right-most element in the syntactic structure. It follows from this that all modifiers of the noun, including the relative clauses, should be base-generated to the left of the noun. All occurrences of reduced or full relative clauses to the right of the noun are assumed to have moved to that position as a result of a series of movement operations, namely leftward attraction and subsequent remnant movement (Kayne 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005). As one of the proponents of the cartographic approach to phrase structure, Cinque (1994) claims that adjectives are generated/merged not as adjuncts, but as specifiers of functional projections. Cinque (2005b) pays particular attention to the fact that adjectives can actually be obtained from two sources – there are adjectives that are generated/merged as direct modifiers of the noun, which are purely attributive adjectives, and those which are derived from a relative clause source, called predicative adjectives or indirect modification adjectives (using Sproat and Shih's term). When used in adnominal position, predicative adjectives actually represent reduced relative clauses, IPs. Cinque (2005b) presents evidence that the predicative adjectives occur higher in the structure than the attributive adjectives. The predicative layer of the adnominal modification area contains bare adjective reduced relative clauses, complex adjective reduced relative clauses and verbal-participle reduced relative clauses. According to the theory, the English verbal reduced relative clauses, will be able to occur in prenominal position, in case other restrictions do not intervene, (like the right recursion restriction, according to which English does not allow right branching complements of prenominal modifiers). Just in the case of the full relative clauses there is an obligatory leftward attraction and subsequent remnant movement (Kayne, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005), so these are obligatorily found in postposition in English.

2. The difference between verbal and adjectival participles.

There are a number of tests, proposed in the literature, on the basis of which the distinction between verbal and adjectival participles is drawn. What is usually done is to isolate adjectival contexts and claim that those participles which can enter in the adjectival contexts in question have adjectival reading. This is what we are going to do as well. For this purpose, we are going to present some of the tests proposed in the literature.

2.1. *The complement position of some verbs.*

One of the very common adjectival positions is the complement position of verbs like *look*, *remain*, *seem* and *sound* and several others. Therefore, Wasow (1977) and Levin and Rappaport (1986), among others, assume that the participles found after these verbs have an adjectival reading. We present below the examples offered by him:

- (2) a. John looked eager to win. (adapted from Wasow, 1977)
- b. John seemed annoyed at us.
- c. John remained elated.
- d. John sounded convinced to run.

2.2. *The adjectival prefix un-*

Another test, very commonly cited in the literature (Siegel, 1973; Wasow, 1977; Levin and Rappaport (1986); Bresnan, 1995, among others), concerns the use of the adjectival prefix *un-*. The meaning this prefix holds is “an event that has not taken place”. (This adjectival prefix should be distinguished from the verbal prefix *un-* which has a “reversative” meaning). Wasow reports several examples in which passive participles hold this prefix and states that since this prefix can be attached only to the passive form, it would be strange to call these forms verbs.

- (3) Our products are untouched by human hand. (Wasow, 1977)
- (4) The island was uninhabited by humans.
- (5) All his claims have been unsupported by data.

Notice that the following verbal forms do not exist: *to *untouch*, *to *uninhabit* or *to *unsupported*.

2.3. *The direct object complement.*

As Emonds (2000) says, only verbal participles have the internal structure of a VP and thus only these participles can preserve the direct object complement of the verb. He suggests that, in verbal passives, the lexical head is V and it can assign case within the VP. The V in an adjectival passive is not a lexical head and so case cannot be assigned, hence no internal argument is allowed.

Emonds gives the following examples in support of this claim.

- (6) Peter was forgiven his sins. (Emonds, 2000)
- (7) Ann was given the letter.

- (8) * Peter felt forgiven his sins¹.
- (9) * The letter remained unsent all the candidates.

2.4. Concessional phrases beginning with “however”.

This test, used by Bresnan (1995), is still another way to isolate an adjectival context. As she says, only adjectives and not verbal expressions can head concessional phrases beginning with “however”.

- (10) *however* AP vs. **however* VP: *however supportive of her daughter she may have been* vs. **however supporting her daughter she may have been...* (Bresnan, 1995)

Thus, we expect that participles that can enter this construction have an adjectival and not verbal interpretation.

2.5. The degree quantifier “more”/“most”.

The use of the degree quantifier is another way to isolate an adjectival context. In English, only adjectives and not verbs can be premodified by “more” and “most”. Emonds (2006) extends this test to all degree words. He says that there is not so much clarity on the question of which adjectival passives can be used with the full range of adjectival modifiers. In footnote 8 he makes a division between two types of adjectival passives, a position that I heartily share, namely that adjectival passives are not a homogeneous group, some of them are real lexicalized adjectives and therefore can be used with all adjectival modifiers, others are, as he puts it ““created anew” at each use”. What is crucial, he says, is that verbal participles cannot take degree words and if we ensure in another way that the passive is really a verbal passive, we can form reliable tests. He does this by using certain verb forms of which he claims that they are incompatible with the stative/resultative interpretation and therefore cannot form adjectival participles. The example he offers is the following:

- (11) * New York is more avoided by tourists than other cities. (Emonds, 2006)

3. In search for verbal participles.

In this section, we will look at postmodified participles and their distribution. More particularly, we will focus on participles postmodified by adverbs of manner. We will provide evidence that these participles exhibit verbal properties both in English and in Bulgarian. What is interesting is that, as we will see, in Bulgarian

¹ The form “felt”, in this case, provides an adjectival context, like “remained”.

these participles can occur in prenominal position. This gives us the right to question the assumption that the prenominal position in English contains only elements with adjectival properties. It may well be that postmodified participles do not occur prenominally in English for some other reason. Indeed, the impossibility of these participles to occur in front of the noun will be attributed to the right recursion restriction which applies in English and independently bars heads with complements or postmodifiers to appear prenominally.

In order to show that participles postmodified by adverbs of manner like *carefully*, *cleverly*, *well*, *politely* etc exhibit verbal properties, I will use some of the tests enumerated above. I assume that most of the English participles, if taken by themselves, are syntactically ambiguous between the verbal and the adjectival reading (there are others, like *avoided*, which are incompatible with the stative reading and are therefore only verbal).

When we apply the tests, we will see that those participles which are premodified by the above mentioned adverbs are also ambiguous between the adjectival and the verbal readings. On the other hand, those of them which are postmodified by adverbs of manner exhibit only verbal properties, hence they cannot be used in adjectival contexts.

3.1. *The complements of verbs like “seem”.*

As was mentioned earlier, only adjectives and not verbs can occur in the complement position of verbs like *seem*. Interestingly, only pre-modified and not post-modified participles can appear in this environment.

- (12) The floor has not been waxed and the curtains are still dirty, but the silver, at least, seems carefully polished.
- (13) * The floor has not been waxed and the curtains are still dirty, but the silver, at least, seems polished carefully.
- (14) The red lentils still have pieces of dirt and stone in them, but the green ones seem carefully sorted.
- (15) * The red lentils still have pieces of dirt and stone in them, but the green ones seem sorted carefully.
- (16) The present seems carefully wrapped up.
- (17) * The present seems wrapped up carefully.

- (18) The room seems carefully cleaned.
- (19) * The room seems cleaned carefully.
- (20) The issue seems carefully explained (in a suitable context it sounds fine)
- (21) * The issue seems explained carefully².

3.2. *The adjectival negative prefix un-*

The adjectival prefix *un-* can attach only to adjectives and never to verbal forms. What is of interest for us here is that passives containing this prefix, can be pre-modified but not post-modified by adverbs.

- (22) The invitations, politely unaccepted, lay strewn upon the table.

As shown below, it is impossible to reverse the order adverb-participle.

- (23) * The invitations, unaccepted politely, lay strewn upon the table.

The same contrast can be observed in the examples below:

- (24) The king's argument, respectfully unquestioned, rang throughout the room.
- (25) * The king's argument, unquestioned respectfully, rang throughout the room.

This piece of evidence shows that adjectival passives can be premodified but cannot be postmodified by adverbs. From the examples above, we can draw the conclusion that post-modification by adverbs of manner creates a verbal context.

3.3. *Concessional phrases with "however"*

Another way to test the verbal character of the postmodified participial expressions is to see whether they can head concessional phrases with *however*.

Unmodified participles clearly can head such a phrase, as we see below.

² Notice that, as I mentioned above, native speakers say that the postmodified participles can sound acceptable in this environment in case we imagine that there is ellipsis of the kind "seems to have been" or "seems to be".

(26) However **polished** the floor was, it didn't seem completely clean.

The same holds true for the premodified participial expressions:

(27) However **carefully polished** the floor was, it didn't seem completely clean.

It is, however, completely impossible to place a postmodified participial expression in this environment.

(28) * However **polished carefully** the floor was, it didn't seem completely clean.

It was pointed out to me that example (27) could be irrelevant since, in this case, *however* actually modifies the adverb and not the whole piece. It should be noted, however, that, according to the native speakers' intuition, in examples like (27), the phrase containing *however* is actually ambiguous between the two readings:

1. however [carefully [polished]]
2. however [carefully polished]

For this reason, I continue to consider the results obtained from the example with the premodified participle relevant to the present discussion. Even if they were not, the fact that the unmodified participle is perfectly acceptable as part of the concessional phrase and the postmodified one not, is already quite significant.

3.4. *Stative vs. Eventive use of the participles.*

As it is widely accepted in the literature, the main semantic difference between verbal and adjectival participles is that the former refer to an event and the latter to a state obtained as a result of some event. In this subsection, we would like to explore this semantic contrast in order to provide further evidence for the verbal status of the postmodified participles. What we would like to show with the following examples is that postmodified participles cannot enter, call it, a "stative" context. As I said earlier, the verb "to be" provides an ambiguous context. Notice that, if we want to insert a postmodified participle after the verb "to be", we can do it only if that participle takes part of a clearly "eventive" context. If the context is "stative", the examples are not acceptable. If, for example, we describe what is happening in a movie, as in the following example, the postmodified participle *can* be used.

- (29) First, the man asks Marie to help him out. Then, the room is cleaned carefully.

However, if we are just describing the state of a room, it is perfectly out of place:

- (30) * The table is set, the flowers are gorgeous, and the room cleaned carefully.

At the same time, a premodified participle sounds perfectly acceptable in the same “stative” context, as we see below.

- (31) The table is set, the flowers are gorgeous and the room carefully cleaned.

The same incompatibility between postmodified participles and “stative” contexts is observed in the following examples:

- (32) Now that we have finished cleaning the house, the floor is carefully cleaned.
(33) * Now that we have finished cleaning the house, the floor is cleaned carefully.
(34) * When he entered the house, the room was already cleaned carefully.
(35) * The room is already cleaned carefully.

Examples (32) and (33) present another pair of a premodified and a postmodified participle, which display a different behaviour with respect to the “stative” context. In (34) and (35), on the other hand, the presence of *already* creates a “stative/resultative” context, in which a postmodified participle cannot be placed.

In sum, we have isolated a group of participial expressions, those which are postmodified by adverbs of manner, which behave as verbal forms. As was stated above, postmodified participles cannot occur prenominally in English. In Bulgarian, however, where the right recursion restriction does not apply, postmodified participles *do* occur in front of the noun.

- (36) podredenite vnimatelno dokumenti
ordered-the carefully documents

This is a good reason to question the widely accepted assumption that the prenominal position in English is reserved only for adjectives. Postmodified participles in Bulgarian also exhibit verbal properties. If a selected sample of the

above tests for adjectivity is applied to Bulgarian participles, we will obtain the same results.³

4. Intermediate summary.

So far, I have isolated one group of real verbal participles, basing my discussion on some of the tests suggested in the literature. We have seen that postmodified participles consistently fail to enter adjectival contexts. As to the premodified ones, I have shown that they are allowed in adjectival contexts, but as I said in the beginning, I would like to show that they are not completely adjectival but rather ambiguous between the verbal and the adjectival reading. I will assume that the same holds true also for non-modified participles. This is what I am going to discuss in the following section, where I will analyze the prenominal participles in English.

5. The prenominal participles – are they really adjectives?

As we mentioned above, the postmodified participles are found always in postnominal position in English. It was suggested that the right recursion restriction does not allow for a postmodified participle to occur in front of the noun. In this section, I will try to present direct evidence that verbal elements do occur in front of the noun in English.

First, I would like to return to Wasow's (1977) paper. As mentioned above, this paper suggests that there are two sources of participle derivation, a lexical and a transformational source. Wasow tries to illustrate these two sources discussing the ambiguity of the participle in the following example.

(37) The door was closed. (Wasow, 1977)

As Wasow notes, the sentence above is ambiguous between the following two readings:

1. The door was not open.
2. Someone/something closed the door.

The interpretation in 1. corresponds to the adjectival reading and the one in 2. corresponds to the verbal reading.

If, then, as Wasow and others claim, the prenominal position can host only adjectives, we would expect that, in front of the noun, we would have only the adjectival reading, the one in 1. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Maybe

³ For a more detailed discussion on Bulgarian data I refer to Laskova (2006).

an example like *the closed door* is not the best illustration but examples like the following show more clearly that even prenominal used participles can have an eventive interpretation.

- (38) the evacuated house

In this example we refer to the event that has taken place and not to a state, note that in the moment of the utterance the house may no longer be empty, (and may have been re-populated).

Another interesting thing to mention would be that, as Emonds (2006) notes, there are certain verbs, namely *approach*, *accompany*, *avoid*, *hand*, etc., which are incompatible with the “stative” meaning. He says that, for this reason, these verbs cannot enter adjectival contexts. Therefore, the examples below are ungrammatical.

- (39) *New York seems (very) approached in the tourism.
- (40) *Many polluted cities remain avoided during the summer.
- (41) *The clay looked (too) handed around to students. (Adapted from Emonds (2006))

Notice, however, that the passive participles of some of these verbs *can* occur in prenominal position.

- (42) When being courted by dominant males, females frequently tried to approach other males. This was frequently prevented because the courting male and **the approached male** escaped and avoided contact with him.
<http://cat.inist.fr/?aModele=afficheN&cpsidt=3692462>
- (43) **The avoided energy costs** in this Bulletin are adjusted to reflect the various losses appropriate to the voltage level at which purchases are made.
<http://www.energy-arkansas.com/content/price/tariffs/avoidedcostsbulletin.pdf>

I think that, at this point, it is quite clear that we have a really serious reason to question the claim that the prenominal position in English is strictly adjectival. It seems to me that it is clear that the difficulty to illustrate the verbal nature of the prenominal elements is simply due to the right recursion restriction. Those who claim that prenominal participles could only be adjectives, either give no syntactic evidence and take it for granted or come up with semantic evidence, actually simply intuitions, saying that prenominal passives are stative and assume this to be a reason enough to call them adjectives. We have seen above, however, that even the

semantic evidence shows the opposite. Moreover, there are languages that, unlike English, allow for right-branching complements of the prenominal modifiers and in these languages verbal participles are allowed in prenominal position.

In what follows, I will present some direct evidence trying to show that verbal elements *do* occur in prenominal position also in English. In order to do that, I will use the so called *by*- phrase. Since the *by*- phrase actually introduces the agent we could assume that it would be compatible with a verbal and not with an adjectival participle. The literature gives two opposite opinions as to its possibility to isolate verbal contexts. There are authors who claim that the *by*- phrase introduces a verbal context (Laczko 2001, Embick 2004 among others). There are a lot of authors, however, who present evidence against this view, showing that the *by*-phrase can be used also with adjectives. Wasow's examples, which I introduced in section 2, illustrate exactly this – the *by*- phrase can combine with participles that use the adjectival prefix *un*-. The examples are repeated below:

(44) Our products are untouched by human hand. (Wasow, 1977)

(45) The island was uninhabited by humans.

(46) All his claims have been unsupported by data.

What we can notice in these examples is that the agent the *by*- phrase introduces is a generic agent. We could assume that adjectival passives can be used with the *by*-phrase only under this condition. Therefore, we would expect that in those cases in which the *by*- phrase is used with a concrete (non-generic) item, it will not tolerate adjectival passives. I will limit myself to simply mentioning these characteristics of the *by*- phrase without suggesting any conclusion. The matter seems, actually, not that simple since Bresnan (1982) provides the following example.

(47) One fact is unexplained by this formulation. (Bresnan, 1982)

At the same time she, herself admits that “*by*- objects are more restricted with adjectival passives than with verbal passives”.

I will conclude here that the properties of the *by*- phrase deserve a more profound analysis, which is outside the scope of this paper.

With the following test I would like to present the observation that certain premodified participles, which are otherwise ambiguous between the adjectival and the verbal reading, when used with the *by*- phrase fail to enter adjectival contexts.

There is a construction in which the prenominal premodified participle can appear with the *by*- phrase (the *by*- phrase remaining in postnominal position)⁴.

(48) The cleverly selected topics by the university committee showed that...⁵
(in the sense that the topics were selected by the university committee)

(49) The beautifully cared for garden by the university students showed that...

The next step would be to make sure that the modified participle can become the complement of a verb like LOOK. This is also possible:

(50) The topics look cleverly selected.

Now we know that the piece “cleverly selected” can also be an adjectival expression (something that we have already mentioned in the previous sections). Now notice that, if we add the *by*- phrase to this example, it degrades considerably.

(51) * The topics looked cleverly selected by the university committee.

Notice the same think once again below:

(52) The floor looked carefully polished.

(53) * The floor looked carefully polished by the proprietor.

What examples (50) – (53) show, is that there is a sharp incompatibility between the piece “cleverly selected by the university committee” and the complement position of the verb LOOK. What this incompatibility shows is that, in this environment, the premodified participial expression is a verbal expression and, crucially, in (48), the premodified participial expression is in prenominal position.

⁴ It seems that examples like (48) and (49) sound more acceptable to British than to American speakers. It seems also that younger speakers accept them more easily.

⁵ Notice that in this example the participle is in prenominal position while the *by*- phrase occurs after the noun. This discontinuity is not supposed to create problems, however, since the *by*- phrase continues to be interpreted as the agent of the passive construction. I attribute this discontinuity to the right recursion restriction. Notice that in Bulgarian, a language in which this restriction does not hold, the *by*- phrase occurs in prenominal position.

6. One more piece of evidence for the existence of an IP in prenominal position.

In this section I am going to discuss the modifier “very much”⁶. It has been claimed in the literature that adjectives and verbs differ with respect to which exact form of this modifier they are compatible with. Adjectival passives are believed to be able to be used with “very” but without “much”. Verbs, on the other hand, can occur only with the form “very much”, as can be seen from the examples below.

(54) I very *(much) appreciate your efforts.

(55) I am very (*much) grateful to your sister.

While trying to construct a test containing “very much” in prenominal position, in order to isolate prenominal verbal participles, however, I noticed that, indeed, it can occur prenominally but, unfortunately, it is not used *only* with verbs. Consider the following example⁷.

(56) Excellent opportunity to purchase this full site solid brick home tucked down a right of way in **a very much prestigious location**.

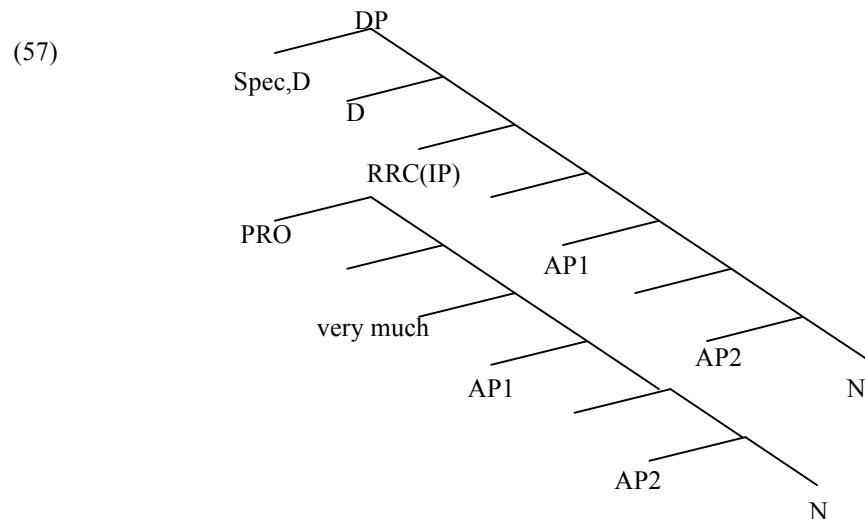
<http://www.aucklandpropertyforsale.co.nz/property.php?id=151932>

In spite of being unable to isolate a verbal context, however, “very much” can serve to illustrate another very important characteristic of the prenominal position, which we mentioned above, when discussing Cinque’s theory. The use of this modifier in front of the noun seems to illustrate the presence of a reduced relative clause, or an IP.

As was mentioned in section 1.2., the prenominal area of the noun phrase contains a layer of attributive or direct modification adjectives and a layer of adjectives derived from a relative clause source, which are actually reduced relative clauses. Let us have a closer look at the structure of the adjectival reduced relative clauses. As was already mentioned, the base position of all relative clauses is the prenominal position. Cinque (2003) analyses all prenominal reduced relative clauses as IPs having an empty PRO subject. The structure is shown on the diagram below:

⁶ I thank Guglielmo Cinque for having pointed out to me the peculiarity of “very much” I am going to discuss here.

⁷ It seems that not all speakers accept examples in which “very much” is in prenominal position. My examples of instances of prenominally used “very much” phrases, however, have not been rejected by all of my informants. Such phrases can also be found online.



As we saw above, “very much” *can* occur with adjectives. However, as we see in (59), it fails to occur with direct modification adjectives (exemplified with AP1 and AP2 on the tree diagram). It can occur only with predicative source adjectives.

(58) a very much prestigious location

(59) * the very much poor citizen

This example is intended to show that, “very much” cannot modify the adjective “poor” in the case when “poor” means “wretched”. What this actually means is that “very much” is not a modifier as part of the attributive layer, it is excluded from the attributive layer. It can only be part of a reduced relative clause, or an IP. This piece of evidence shows that the prenominal position in English *does* host reduced relative clauses.

7. Conclusion.

In this paper, I tried to show that participles provide evidence in support of the idea that the prenominal position in English contains reduced relative clause elements and in particular verbal participles, as suggested by the theory of Cinque. First, I isolated a group of verbal participles, able to occur only in postnominal

position. Of those I claimed, however, that their impossibility to appear in front of the noun should be attributed to the right recursion restriction and not to the fact that they are verbal elements and not adjectives. I supported my claim with some tests and with cross-linguistic evidence. I presented evidence from English showing that, contrary to what has been widely accepted in the literature, the prenominal position in English is not reserved only for adjectives, but can also host real verbal participles. Finally, we saw that the use of the modifier “very much” confirmed the existence of prenominal reduced relative clauses (IPs).

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