TITLE: Adjective fronting in Modern Irish

AUTHORS NAME: Kenji Oda (Oda is my surname)

AFFILIATION: Syracuse University

E-MAIL: koda100@syr.edu

ADDRESS: Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics

340 Huntington Beard Crouse Hall

Syracuse University

Syracuse, New York

13244-1160

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Abstract

Modern Irish Gaelic has a peculiar case of 'adjective fronting' that has not yet been investigated in detail. The goal of this paper is to further empirical understanding of this construction, and to suggest that a correct account of the pattern should employ head-movement of the 'fronted' adjective out of the fronted NP predicate. The result of this investigation suggests that the grammatical process of movement is less constrained than we previously thought.

1. INTRODUCTION.[1] Modern Irish Gaelic (Irish hereafter) has a peculiar case of 'adjective fronting' that has not yet been investigated in detail. Carnie (1995) outlines a possible account of the pattern, which resorts to fronting of the AP predicate and adjunction of a DP. The goal of this paper is to further empirical understanding of this construction, and to suggest that a correct account of the pattern should employ head-movement of the 'fronted' adjective out of the fronted NP predicate. The result of this investigation suggests that the grammatical process of movement is less constrained than we previously thought.

　　　This paper proceeds in the following fashion. In section 2, I briefly introduce the phenomenon of adjective fronting, which I call the Adjective Fronting Construction. Section 3 reviews the analysis that Carnie (1995) proposes. Section 4 tests the empirical predictions made by Carnie's analysis and shows that his proposal appears to be partially untenable. In section 5, we review the predicate fronting approach of the Irish copular construction: I show that the 'predicate' fronts even in the Adjective Fronting Construction. Section 6 shows that the fronted adjective undergoes further head-movement from the fronted position, showing a rather unusual instance of head-movement. Section 7 provides a short summary and conclusion.

2. ADJECTIVE FRONTING. The data in this section forms the baseline of what follows in this work. In the Irish copular construction, the nominal predicate precedes the subject[2] in a copular clause, as shown in 1.[3]

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[1] The data in this paper come from consultations with Dónall Ó Baoill, unless mentioned otherwise.

[2] Note that in Irish when the subject of a copular clause is pronominal, it appears always in accusative form. It has been argued elsewhere that the so-called 'nominative forms' of pronouns are clitics. See Doherty (1996) on this point.

[3] Abbreviations:

3SG: 3rd person singular, COP: copula, F: feminine, M: masculine, NEG: negation, NOMPRED: nominal predicate, PRES: present, PRT: particle, PST: past, Q: interrogative

(1)   a.   Is   [NomPred duine deas]   é.

             COP.PRES   person nice   him

             'He is a nice person.'

    b.   Is   [NomPred leabhar maith]   í Finnegans Wake.

             COP.PRES   book   good   it

             'Finnegans Wake is a good book.'

The copular particle *is* appears in clause initial position. The particle is highly functional, and is thought to be located either in INFL/T (Doherty 1996, McCloskey 2005, Acquaviva 2015) or in C (Carnie 1995).[4] I assume in this paper that the copula is located on T for the sake of clarity, although what is discussed below will not be affected by this assumption. Note also that the data in

(1 show that the nominal predicate is phrasal, and that attributive adjectives appear post-nominally in Irish.[5]

        The sentences in 1 have marked counterparts, shown in 2.

(2)   a.   Is   **deas an duine**   é.

             COP.PRES   nice the person   him

             'He is a NICE person.'

    b.   Is   **maith an leabhar** í Finnegans Wake.

             COP.PRES good   the book   it

             'Finnegans Wake is a GOOD book.'

In 2, the adjectives are FRONTED: The adjectives appear pre-nominally, immediately after the copular particle *is*. The rest of the nominal predicate comes with the definite article *an* 'the', although native speaker intuitions suggest that the flavour of definiteness is absent in 2 (see Stenson 1981). Except a few scattered remarks (e.g. Stenson, 1981: §3.1.4.5 and §3.3.3, Ó

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[4] Carnie (1995: 132) analyzes the copula as a C element due to the fact that it cannot co-occur with other particles that are uncontroversially analyzed as C, although he also notes that the copula may co-occur with the complementizer particle *go* or the interrogative particle *an* in certain dialects.

[5] Except a few adjectives, such as *sean* 'old'.

Siadhail 1989, Carnie 1995), no detailed descriptions of the construction are available. I will use the term ADJECTIVE FRONTING CONSTRUCTION (AFC) to refer to this construction. It will be shown later (§5 and §6) that the adjective is in fact 'fronted' in the standard generativist sense; for now, we remain agnostic whether the construction is created by any derivational process.

Two final notes are in order. First, this article focuses on the syntax of the AFC and abstracts away from the semantics effects that it yields. The construction gives some sort of 'emphasis' to the fronted adjective, which I indicate by capitalizing the adjective in the translations, following Ó Siadhail's (1989) convention.

Secondly, the AFC is unique to the copula construction, and it is illicit with DPs (or NPs) in argument positions, as illustrated in 3.

(3)   a. *Thug [$_{SUBJECT}$ deas an fear] cuairt orainn.

       gave   nice the man   visit   on.us

       'A NICE man visited.' (ok: *fear deas*)

    b. *Cheannaigh mé   [$_{OBJECT}$ maith an leabhar].

       bought   I   good   the book

       'I bought a GOOD book.' (ok: *leabhar maith*)

    c. *Chas mé le   [$_{PP-OBJECT}$ deas an fear] ag an chóisir.

       met I   with   nice   the man at the party

       'I met a NICE man at the party.' (ok: *fear deas*)

3. ADJUNCTION ANALYSIS. Carnie (1995: §6.5) suggests that the AFC sentence in (2a, should be interpreted as 4b, instead of 4a.
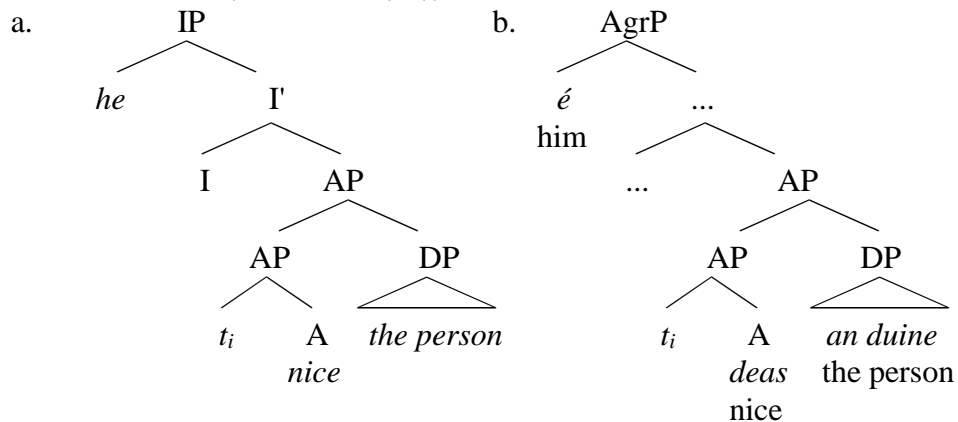
(4)   Is   deas an duine   é.

      COP.PRES   nice the person him

    a. 'He is a NICE person.'

    b. 'He$_i$ is nice, the person$_i$.'

What Carnie (1995) suggests is that the DP-like string[6] immediately following the fronted adjective is an appositive phrase adjoining to the predicate phrase headed by the adjective. Based
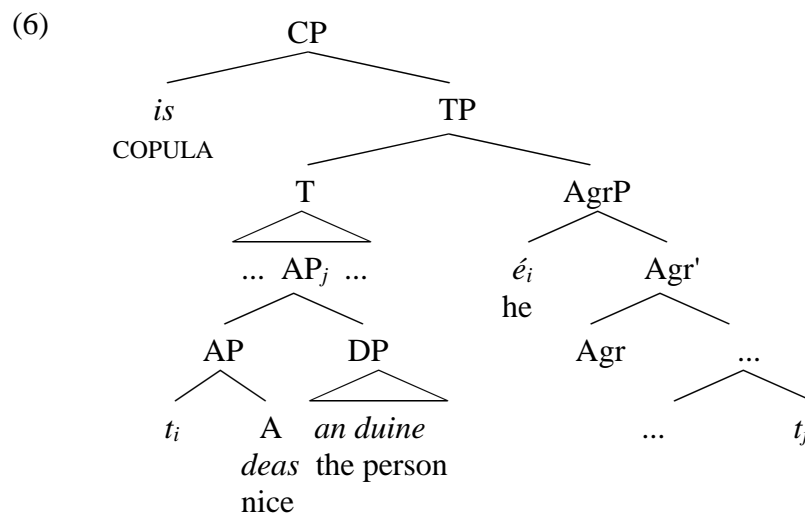
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[6] For the sake of simplicity, I will assume that the string of a determiner and a noun following the inverted adjective to be a determiner phrase (DP), simply due to the presence of the definite

on this claim, Carnie proposes the structure in 5b for 4, analogous to the English counterpart in 5a.

(5) based on Carnie (1995: 209, (48))

a.
```
                IP
              /    \
           he        I'
                   /    \
                  I      AP
                        /    \
                      AP      DP
                     /  \      \
                   t_i   A    the person
                       nice
```

b.
```
                AgrP
              /      \
            é         ...
           him       /    \
                   ...      AP
                           /    \
                         AP      DP
                        /  \      \
                      t_i   A    an duine
                          deas  the person
                          nice
```

Adopting his central claim that a phrasal constituent may undergo head-movement given the Bare Phrase Structure (Chomsky, 1995), Carnie accounts for the AFC by proposing that the AP in 5b undergoes head-movement to T in the adjective inversion construction yielding the surface representation given in 6.

(6)
```
                        CP
                      /    \
                    is      TP
                  COPULA   /    \
                          T      AgrP
                        / | \    /    \
                    ... AP_j ... é_i    Agr'
                       /    \    he    /    \
                     AP      DP     Agr    ...
                    /  \      \     /  \
                  t_i   A    an duine  ...  t_j
                      deas  the person
                      nice
```

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article *an* 'the'. A good piece of evidence suggesting that the particle *an* is indeed a determiner is that this element agrees with the following noun. For example, in (26 below, the article is in the plural form, showing number agreement with the following plural noun.

This analysis relies on two crucial assumptions. First, it is a 'phrase' that fronts (by head-movement), and secondly, the DP that follows the inverted adjective is an adjunct. Let us call the analysis ADJUNCTION ANALYSIS. The Adjunction Analysis makes several predictions about the AFC, which we review in the following section.

4. EVIDENCE AGAINST PHRASE FRONTING AND ADJUNCTION ANALYSIS. In this section, we put the Adjunction Analysis under scrutiny by considering its empirical predictions. The result of this section will suggest that the Adjunction Analysis is inadequate for the AFC.

4.1. NATIVE INTUITION. First, native speakers generally agree with the conventional translation, and they do not find the idiomatic translation in 4b that Carnie proposes to be an accurate English translation of the Irish AFC sentence in 2a. Stenson (1981: 102) echoes this point, stating that despite the presence of the definite article *an* with the post-adjective DP, the DP seems to have some indefinite flavour. Although intuitions of this kind are not necessarily strong evidence, they certainly cast doubt on the Adjunction Analysis.

4.2. USE OF FIRST AND SECOND PERSON PRONOUN. The crucial assumption of the Adjunction Analysis is that the DP following the fronted adjective is an adjunct. Let us now focus on this particular assumption, and consider what it predicts. As the sentences in 7 below illustrate, when the subject is either the first- or second-person pronoun, apposition yields semantic oddity.

(7)   a. #**I**$_i$ am nice, the person$_i$.

        b. #**You**$_j$ are nice, the girl$_j$.

For the sake of completeness, I assume that the awkwardness of the sentences in 7 is attributed to the assumption that appositives provide some sort of ancillary meaning that is obvious and/or redundant when the subject (i.e. the topic of a sentence) is either the speaker or the hearer. If the DP following the fronted adjective in the AFC is an adjunct, and the final DP is the subject of the clause, as Carnie (1995) claims, we expect then that the same result would obtain with the AFC. However, this prediction is not borne out; the adjective fronting is possible with a first or second person pronoun subject.

(8)   Is   deas an   duine **mé/thú**.

        COP   nice the person I/you

'I am/You are a NICE person.'

4.3. RESTRICTION ON THE DP. Let us consider another prediction that the Adjunction Analysis makes. It is commonly understood that adjuncts are not selected by the head of the phrase to which they adjoin. This entails that a wide range of definite[7] DPs should be able to occupy the adjunct position. This point is borne out in English, as the examples in 9 illustrate; either a proper name, a DP with a possessive pronoun, or a DP with a demonstrative may felicitously appear in the adjunct position.

(9) a. He's nice, **John**.　　　　　(Proper name)

    b. She's nice, **my daughter**.　(DP with possessive determiner)

    c. She's nice, **that girl**.　　　(DP with demonstrative determiner)

From this, the Adjunction Analysis predicts that a wide range of definite DPs can appear in the adjunct position after the fronted adjective in the Irish AFC as well. However, as the examples in 10–12 below show, the results in the Irish AFC are contrary to what the Adjunction Analysis predicts.

(10) a. *Is　　deas　**Séamus** é.

        COP　nice　Séamus　him

        'He is nice, Séamus/Séamus is NICE.'

    b. *Is　　deas　**Finnegans Wake** í/é.

        COP　nice　Finnegans　Wake　it

        'It is nice, Finnegans Wake/Finnegans Wake is NICE.'

    c. *Is　　álainn　**An Earaigail**　í/é.

        COP　nice　　the Errigal　　it

        'It is beautiful, Mt. Errigal./Mt. Errigal is BEAUTIFUL.'

(11) a. *Is　maith　**mo leabhar** í　Finnegans Wake.

        COP good　my　book　　it　Finnegans Wake

        'Finnegans Wake is my GOOD book.'

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[7] Carnie (1995) correctly points out that appositive elements (*the person* in 5a) are always definite, which accounts for the fact that the DP following the fronted adjective is always headed by the definite article *an/na*.

b. *Is   maith **an leabhar sagam**   í Finnegans Wake.

    COP good   the book   COP.at.me it Finnegans Wake

    'Finnegans Wake is my GOOD book/a GOOD book of mine.'

c *Is   cliste **m'inion**   í   Bríd.

    COP clever my.daughter her   Bríd

    'Bríd is my CLEVER daughter.'

(12)   *Is   maith **an leabhar sin**   í Finnegans Wake.

    COP good   the book   that   it Finnegans Wake

    'Finnegans Wake is that GOOD book.'

The examples in 10 have a proper name in the adjunct position. The examples in 11 have a DP with possessive marker, and in 12 the position is occupied with a DP with demonstrative expression *sin* 'that'. These examples are unequivocally unacceptable, suggesting that a proposal that takes the DP after the fronted adjective string as an adjunct of a predicate phrase is inadequate.

4.4. INTERSECTIVE VS. NON-INTERSECTIVE ADJECTIVES. Let us now turn to the assumption that the fronted adjective heads a predicate AP.

It is a well-known fact of English that the adjective *beautiful* is ambiguous (Larson 1998, among many others).

(13)   the **beautiful** dancer

Meaning A (non-intersective): the dancer who dances beautiful (but is not necessarily beautiful himself/herself)

Meaning B (intersective): the dancer whose appearance is beautiful (but does not necessarily dance beautifully)

This ambiguity is unique to the attributive use of the adjective, and the ambiguity disappears (or at least there is a strong disposition towards 'the intersective reading') when the adjective is used predicatively. This is illustrated in 14 below.

(14)   The dancer is **beautiful**.

??/*Meaning A (non-intersective): the dancer who dances beautifully (but is not necessarily beautiful himself/herself)

√Meaning B (intersective): the dancer whose appearance is beautiful (but does not

necessarily dance beautifully)

The Irish adjective *álainn* 'beautiful' exhibits the same ambiguity as its English counterpart when it is used attributively. The examples in 15 are ambiguous in the manner described in 13.

(15)   a.   an   damhsóir **álainn**

           the dancer   beautifuln

           'the beautiful dancer'

   b.   Is   damhsóir **álainn**   í.

           COP dancer   beautiful her

           'She is a beautiful dancer.'

   c.   Is   damhsóir **álainn**   (í) Áine.

           COP   dancer   beautiful her Áine

           'Áine is a beautiful dancer.'

According to the Adjunction Analysis, the fronted adjective in the AFC heads the AP predicate, and thus the adjective in the construction is expected be unambiguous, with the B reading in 14. Nonetheless, the adjective remains ambiguous in the AFC.[8]

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[8] Unlike in English, the predicative use of adjectives does not always rule out ambiguity in Irish, as shown in (i) below.

(i)   Tá an damhsóir go **hálainn**.

       is the dancer   PRT beautiful

       'The dancer is beautiful.' (ambiguous)

This may be attributed to the fact that *álainn* 'beautiful' belongs to the set of adjectives which may appear with the adverbial marker *go* in the predicate position. Stenson (1981: footnotes 60 and 61) observes that this adverbial marker forces an 'eventive' interpretation of the predicate adjective, which seems to correspond to what I describe as the non-intersective meaning.

Also, it should be noted that it is not clear whether the adjective is ambiguous when it is used in the copular construction for exclamative purposes, as in (ii) and (iii).

(16)   a.   Is **álainn**   an damhsóir í.

            COP beautiful the dancer   her

            'She is a BEAUTIFUL dancer' (ambiguous)

       b.   Is **álainn**   an damhsóir (í) Áine.

            COP beautiful the dancer   her Áine

            'Áine is a BEAUTIFUL dancer.' (ambiguous)

4.5. PRE-ADJECTIVE INTENSIFIER. Irish has a handful of pre-adjective intensifiers, including *an-* 'very' and *iontach* 'wonderful' shown in 17.

(17)   a.   Tá an leabhar go **han**-mhaith.

            is   the book   PRT very-good

            'The book is very good.'

       b.   Tá an leabhar **iontach**   maith.

            is   the book   wonderful good

            'The book is very good.'

The examples in 17 use the verb *bí* corresponding to the English copula verb *be*, which supports an AP predicate.[9] If the inverted adjective is an ordinary predicative adjective phrase, as the Adjunction Analysis assumes, we should then expect pre-adjective intensifiers to be able to modify the adjective. However, the ungrammaticality of the examples in 18 shows this expectation is not borne out, suggesting that the fronted adjective does not constitute a phrase.

(ii)   Is **álainn**   (í) an damhsóir!

          COP beautiful her the dancer

          'The dancer is beautiful!'

(iii)   Nach   **álainn**   (í) an damhsóir!?

          COP.NEG.Q   beautiful her the dancer

          'Isn't the dancer beautiful!?'

[9] The verb *bí* and the copula particle *is*, both roughly correspond with the English copula *be*. While the copula *is* belongs to some functional category in the C/T layers, *bí* is a true verb and behaves like other lexical verbs. See Carnie (1995) and references therein for discussions.

(18)   a. *Is   an-mhaith   an   leabhar   í.
          COP very-good   the   book   it
          'It is a VERY GOOD book.'

     b. *Is   iontach   m(h)aith   an   leabhar   í.
          COP wonderful   good   the   book   it
          'It is a VERY GOOD book.'

4.6. ELLIPSIS/RESPONSE SYSTEM. Lastly, let us consider the constituency of the structure derived with the Adjunction Analysis. In Irish, the head of the predicate of the question is repeated in order to express 'yes' or 'no'.

(19)   Q: An bhfuil   tú   tinn?
           Q   be.PRES   you sick
           'Are you sick?'

     A: Tá/Níl.
           be.PRES/be.PRES.NEG
           'Yes/No.'

The response system is considered to be generated by the process of ellipsis, which targets a phrasal constituent (Doherty 1996, McCloskey 2005), as illustrated in 20.

(20) Tá < [XP mé tinn] >

```
              YP
           /      \
          Y        XP
         Tá       /  \
      be.PRES   mé  tinn
                I   sick
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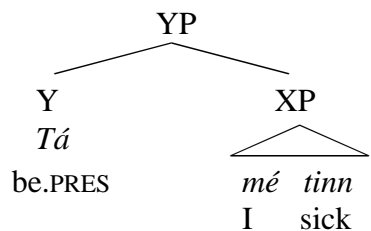
Crucially, the fronted adjective in the AFC survives in the response system.

(21)   a. A: Nach   maith an   leabhar í!?
              COP.NEG.Q good   the   book   it
              'Isn't it a GOOD book!?'

        B: Is   **maith**, cinnte!
              COP good   certain
              'Yes, indeed!'

b. A: Nach   scaltach an   t-uisce é!?

COP.NEG.Q   scalding the water it

'Isn't it SCALDING water!?'

B: Is   **scaltach**, cinnte!

COP scalding   certain

'Yes, indeed!'

c. A: Nach   donn   an   mála é !?

COP.NEG.Q brown the bag   it

'Isn't it a BROWN bag!?'

B: Is   **donn**,   cinnte!

COP brown certain

'Yes, indeed!'

Under the structure derived by the Adjunction Analysis given in 6, the pattern that the examples in 21 show remains mysterious; there is no constituent that targets the elided string, suggesting that the analysis is inadequate.

4.7. SUMMARY. A close examination of these six descriptive properties of the AFC have indicated Carnie's (1995) Adjunction Analysis is not quite tenable as one might have hoped. It should also be noted that that this conclusion is due to the assumption that the post-adjective DP adjoins to the AP predicate headed by the fronted adjective. Recall that the proposal that Carnie (1995) makes consists of two major sub-claims, and we have addressed to only one of them. In the following section, we will make a brief consideration of the second component of Carnie's proposal: the non-verbal predicate fronts to some left-peripheral position.

5. FRONTING OF THE PREDICATE PHRASE. Recall that the Adjunction Analysis assumes that the non-verbal predicate phrase 'fronts' via head-movement. Regardless of whether the fronting is achieved via head-movement or phrasal XP movement, we will have to accept this assumption (at least to the extent that Kayne's (1994) Linear Correspond Axiom holds), as we will see below.

      First, the binding facts suggests that the non-verbal predicate in the Irish copular construction is in the position c-commanded by the subject argument (Carnie 1995, Doherty 1996, Legate 1997, McCloskey 2005, among others).

(22)   a.   Is   [$_{AP}$ cosúil **lena chéile**   ] iad.

            COP   like   **with**.**each**.**other**   them

            'They are like one another.'

       b. *Is   [$_{AP}$ cosúil leo   ]   **a chéile**.

            COP   like   with.them   **each**.**other**

            'Each is like the other.'   (Legate, 1997: 87; Doherty 1996: (31&32))

(23)   a.   Is   [gar   i   ngaol **dá**   chomharsa béal   dorais]   **Eoghnaí**.

            COP   close in   kinship to.**his**$_i$ neighbour   next   door   **Eoghnaí**$_i$

            'Eoghnaí is closely related to his next-door neighbour.'

       b. *Is   [gar   i   ngaol do   chomharsa béal   dorais **Eoghnaí**]é.

            COP   close in   kinship to   neighbour   next   door   **Eoghnaí**$_i$ **him**$_i$

   'Eoghnaí is closely related to his next-door neighbour.'   (McCloskey, 2005:(35))

The sentences in 22 are minimally different: In 22a, the reciprocal expression *a chéile* 'each other' appears within the AP predicate which precedes its antecedent. On the other hand, the positions of the reciprocal expression and its antecedent are reversed in 22b, which is ill-formed. Thus, the grammaticality of the sentences in 22 is attributed to Binding Condition A, which suggests that the complement of the AP predicate is c-commanded by the element in the subject position at some point in the derivation although it precedes the subject.

      The examples in 23 show that the Condition C effects point to the same conclusion. The well-formed example in 23a has the proper name *Eoghnaí* in the subject position, and the possessive pronoun (expressed together with the preposition as *dá* 'to his') correferential with the subject is located inside the non-verbal phrasal predicate. The ungrammatical example in 23b is minimally different in that the proper name *Eoghnaí* now appears inside the non-verbal XP

predicate, while its coreferent *é* 'him' is now in the subject position. The ungrammaticality of 23b suggests that the proper name is bound in the sentence, meaning that the XP predicate and its constituents are c-commanded by the subject argument at some point in the derivation.

As McCloskey (2005) points out, there are two possible structures that can provide the desired c-command relation between the subject and the element in the non-verbal XP-predicate. One is the structure given in 24a, as Doherty (1996) proposes, where the subject of the copular construction is a right-branching specifier, and the complement of the XP predicate is c-commanded with no further structure-changing derivation. The other possibility, which has been argued by Legate (1997) and Oda (2002, 2005) as well, is laid out in 24b:[10] The subject is a leftward specifier of some projection, as commonly assumed, and the non-verbal XP predicate moves to a specifier position of some projection F higher than the subject. Since the XP predicate originates in a position c-commanded by the subject, its copy is c-commanded by the subject.
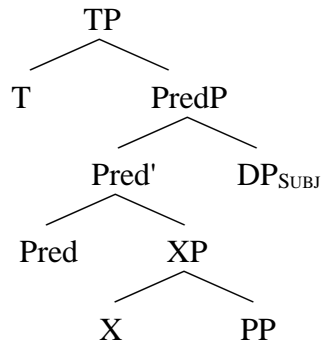
(24) a.   b.
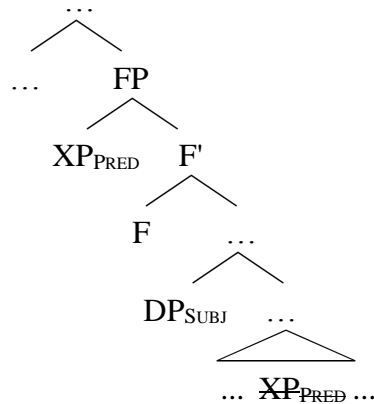
I reject the former analysis in 24a in this work on two grounds. First, assuming the Linear Correspondence Axiom (LCA) which states that the surface linear order is derived from hierarchical relations (Kayne 1994), the rightward specifier is theoretically ruled out. The second reason is that the analysis does not explain why the subject appears in a rightward specifier position only in the copular construction. It has been consistently assumed elsewhere in Irish syntax that the subject appears in some leftward specifier position in a clause with a verbal predicate. While

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[10] Also, Carnie's (1995) analysis shares some insights with Legate (1997) and Oda (2002, 2005), although Carnie assumes that the non-verbal XP predicate undergoes head-movement to head T.

it may be descriptively appropriate to assume the rightward specifier for the subject of the copular clause, it leaves us with the question of where in the grammar we stipulate the direction of a specifier in a certain projection. Moreover, languages that were once assumed to have a rightward specifier have been reanalyzed in terms of a leftward specifier (see, for example, Travis 2005 for a reanalysis of the Malagasy clause structure using the left-branching subject and VP-fronting). This leaves us with the analysis presented in 24b, and I adopt it in the remaining of this work.

Now let us come back to the AFC. Consider 25 below.

(25) a. Is   deas   an chuideachta ag a chéile   iad.
          COP NICE   the company   at each.other them
          'They are NICE company for each other.'

    b. Is   [cuideachta dheas ag a chéile   ] iad.
          COP company   nice   at each.other   them
          'They are nice company for each other.'

(26) a. Ba   mhaith   na comharsanaí ag a chéile   iad.
          COP.PST good   the neighbours   at each.other them
          'They were GOOD neighbours to each other.'

    b. Ba   [comharsanaí maithe ag a chéile   ] iad.
          COP.PST neighbours   good   at each.other   them
          'They were good neighbours to each other.'

25a and 27a contain an AFC predicate, and the PP complement of the post-adjective DP contains an anaphoric expression *a chéile* 'each other' that is coreferential with the subject *iad* 'them'. Crucially both 25a and 26a are grammatical, just like the non-AFC conterparts in 25b and 27b. This suggests, then, that the anaphoric expression embedded within the post-adjective DP in 25a/27a is c-commanded by the subject at some point in the derivation, which means that, given the LCA, the post-adjective DP has undergone movement.

6. TOWARD A HEAD-MOVEMENT ANALYSIS OF THE ADJECTIVE FRONTING. What we have covered so far suggests that the DP following the fronted adjective is not an adjunct and, given the binding facts, is base-generated in the position c-commanded by the subject. Now we must account for the surface position of the fronted adjective. Recall that in section 4.4, we saw that the fronted adjective in the AFC attributively modifies the noun in the DP that follows it. While there are many approaches to account for attributive adjectives, the current consensus seems to be that the adjective occupies some specifier position of a nominal functional layer (e.g. Svenonius 2008 and Cinque 2010), as schematized in 26 below.[11]

(26)
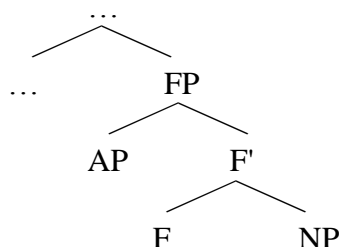
Adopting this assumption, I claim that the fronted adjective moves out of the post-adjective DP.[12] Now let us consider the way in which the fronted adjective moves out of the DP. Has it undergone

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[11] The fronted adjective in the AFC may be further embedded under DegP, since the fronted adjective carries emphasis, and a normally non-gradable adjective receives a gradable interpretation in this construction. For example, the adjective *marbh* 'dead' in sentence (i) is used figuratively, and it does not indicate that the dragon is literally dead.

(i)   Is   marbh an   dragan   é.

   COP dead   the   dragon   it.

       'It's a DEAD dragon.'

I leave aside DegP in the structure in 26, since the analysis does not hinge on the presence/absence of DegP.

[12] While it is commonly assumed that a displaced constituent forms a syntactic island, often referred as subtypes of 'Freezing Effects', there are successful proposals which assume such a process. For example, Collins (2005) provides a "smuggling" approach of the English passive

phrasal XP movement to some specifier position, or head-movement to a head position? I claim in this section that the fronted adjective undergoes head-movement to a position where the copular particle *is* is. Some of the empirical findings that we have covered thus far point to this conclusion, which I review below.

6.1. HEAD-MOVEMENT ANALYSIS OF ADJECTIVE FRONTING. First, recall the ellipsis/response system fact presented in section 4.6, repeated in 27. The response to an interrogative sentence with the AFC consists only of the copula *is* and the fronted adjective. This pattern can be readily accounted for, if we assume that the fronted adjective undergoes head-movement to some functional head Y, as schematized in 28.

(27)   Is   maith   < ~~an leabhar í~~ >, cinnte!

     COP   good   the book   it   certain

      'Yes, indeed!'

(28)
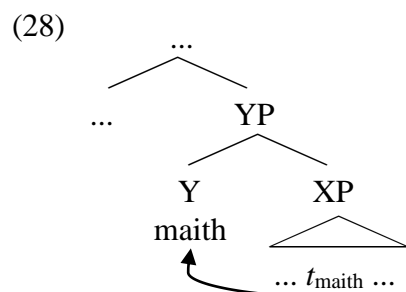
       The head-movement approach is also supported by the distribution of pre-adjective intensifiers discussed in section 4.5. Recall that the fronted adjective cannot accompany pre-adjective intensifier.

(29)   a. *Is   **an**-mhaith   an   leabhar   í.

         COP very-good   the   book   it

         'It is a VERY GOOD book.'

This ungrammaticality is readily explained once we make two non-controversial assumptions: (i) the presence of an intensifier indicates a phrasal constituent headed by the adjective, and (ii) a phrasal constituent cannot undergo this fronting movement, since it is a type of head-movement

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construction, where the surface subject of a passive sentence is 'smuggled' by remnant movement of a verbal complex.

(pace Carnie 1995). A potentially competing analysis to the proposal above is that the fronting of an adjective with an intensifier is impossible on semantic grounds: the fronting of an adjective introduces some kind of emphasis, and it interferes with the meaning of the intensifier. However, an alternative based on the semantics of the adjective fronting ultimately fails to capture a wider generalization regarding copular sentences with an adjectival predicate. There are a handful of adjectives that appear with the copula particle *is* (with a rather distinct meaning describing psychological states). *Maith* 'good', as in 30a below, is one such adjective, providing the meaning of 'to like'. These adjectives pattern with the fronted adjective in the AFC, and they cannot take the pre-adjective intensifiers, as shown in 30b.

(30) a. Is **maith** liom an leabhar.

        COP good with.me the book

        'I like the book.'

    b. *Is **an-maith** liom an leabhar.

        COP very-good with.me the book

        'I like the book a lot.'

If we assume that the ungrammaticality of the sentences in 18 is due to the incompatibility of the semantics of the emphasis signified by the adjective fronting and the semantics of the pre-adjective intensifier, we are forced to attribute the ungrammaticality of 30 to some external reason. Crucially, the head adjective in this instance survives ellipsis, as shown in 31. This parallels what we find with the fronted adjectives in 21.

(31) a. Nach **maith** leat an chathaoir sin?

        COP.NEG.Q good with.you the chair that

        'Don't you like that chair?'

    b. Ní **maith**.

        COP.NEG good

        'No (I don't).' (Ó Siadhail 1989, 245(173))

This correlation between the behaviour of the fronted adjectives in the AFC and that of the adjectives that can co-occur with the copula particle *is* is straightforwardly explained once the head-movement analysis of the adjective is assumed.

Furthermore, focus-fronting (clefting) of the fronted adjectives triggers ungrammaticality, as in 32.

(32) a. Is **breá** an lá é.

      COP fine the day it

      'It is a FINE day.'

   b. ***Breá** is ea an lá é.

      fine COP *ea* the day it

      'It is a FINE day.'

This contrasts with fronting of a nominal predicate, which is grammatical in some dialects of Modern Irish, particularly the Southern (Munster) varieties.[13]
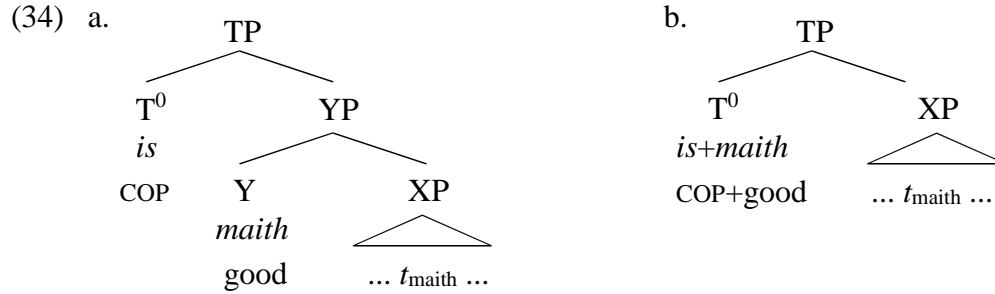
(33) a. Is **pub maith** é

      COP pub good it

      'It is a good pub.'

   b. **Pub maith** is ea é

      pub good COP *ea* it

      A good pub, it is.' (Stenson, 1981:116(57))

This is simply a case of focus-driven movement targeting a phrasal constituent. The NP predicate is phrasal, and the N head does not undergo head-movement.[14] Therefore the NP predicate can undergo subsequent A'-movement. We can thus attribute the contrast to the claim that the nominal predicate is phrasal, whereas the inverted adjective is not. With these pieces of evidence we may conclude that the fronted adjective has undergone head-movement.

Having established that the AFC is derived by head-movement of the fronted adjective, let us now consider the landing site of the adjective. There are two possibilities, relative to the copula *is*, which we assume is in T. The first possibility is that the adjective moves to some functional category below TP, which is schematized in 34a. The second possibility is shown in 34b in which the adjective moves and head-adjoins to the copula.

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[13] The word *ea* that follows the copula is a semantically expletive element, which appears when the non-verbal predicate does not appear immediately after the copula.

[14] McCloskey (2005) provides an observation that the N head of a NP predicate in the copula construction does not undergo head-movement whereas the Adj head and the P head of the Adj and PP predicates do (at least optionally), though we do not have a principled reason why this is the case.

(34) a.

```
          TP
         /  \
       T⁰    YP
       is    / \
      COP   Y   XP
          maith  /\
          good  ... t_maith ...
```

b.

```
          TP
         /  \
       T⁰    XP
    is+maith  /\
   COP+good  ... t_maith ...
```

In the remaining part of this section I argue for the structure presented in 34b.

First, the distribution of the copula particle is in order. The non-past form of the copula particle *is* in the utterance initial position can be deleted when the predicate is a nominal XP, while the deletion is barred when an adjective is inverted.

(35)   a.   (Is)   duine   deas   é.

COP   person   nice   him

'He is a nice person.'

b. *(Is)   deas   an   duine   é.

COP   nice   the   person   him

'He is a NICE person.'

In the equative construction, the 'pronominal augment' is found before the subject DP. When the copula is deleted, the augment must be deleted as well (Doherty 1996, Ó Siadhail 1989: §10.4).
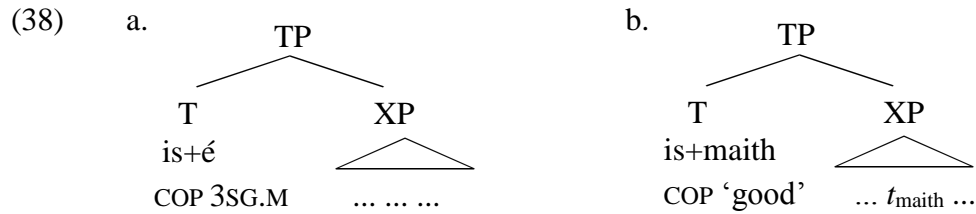
(36)   a.   **(Is   í)**   Éire   mo   thír   dhúchais.

COP   3SG.F   Ireland   my   country   native

'Ireland is my native country.'

b. ***Í**   Éire   mo   thír   dhúchais.

3SG.F   Ireland   my   country   native

'Ireland is my native country.'   (Doherty 1996:(61))

Doherty (1996:§3.1) claims that the pronominal augment is an agreement marker, generated in I^0, with the copula *is*. This accounts for 36, as well as the fact that the copula+augment sequence survives in the response system of the equative construction.

(37)   a.   An   é   Seán   an   dochtúir?

Q.COP   3SG.ACC   Seán   the   doctor

'Is Seán the doctor?'

b. Is   é   < Seán   an   dochtúir >.

    COP   3SG.ACC   Seán   the   doctor

    'Yes.' (Doherty, 1996: §3.1)

I adopt Doherty's (1996) analysis to the AFC. The inverted adjective undergoes head-movement to the position of the copula *is*, as shown in 38b below. The copula in the adjective inversion construction cannot be deleted alone because deletion targets an X^0 constituent. The recoverability condition explains why the copula+adjective sequence of the adjective inversion construction cannot be deleted (though the copula+augment sequence can), as it involves deletion of a meaningful item. The effect of deletion of non-recoverable items is straightforwardly demonstrated by Fiengo and Lasnik (1972).
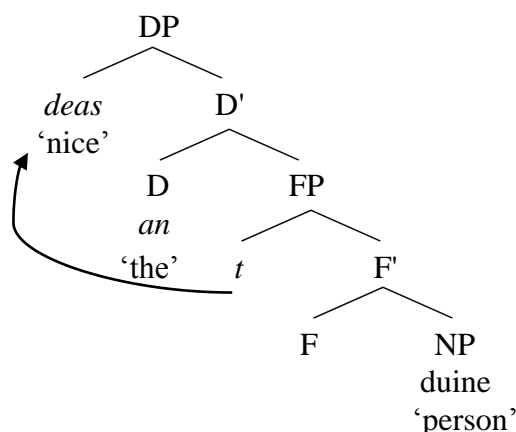
(38)   a.

```
              TP
            /    \
         T          XP
        is+é       /  \
     COP 3SG.M   ... ... ...
```

    b.

```
              TP
            /    \
         T          XP
       is+maith    /  \
    COP 'good'   ... t_maith ...
```

6.2. PUTTING IT TOGETHER. The picture of the Irish AFC that we obtained in this paper is somewhat surprising given our current understanding of the Principles and Parameters approach to syntax. First, the AFC is derived from a structure with a nominal predicate, and the fronted adjective is base-generated as an attributive adjective, in a specifier position of a nominal functional layer. Given the binding facts, the nominal predicate a functional projection above the subject. The adjective moves out of the nominal predicate to the position where the copula is. Movement of an attributive adjective is not an original idea; for example, Hendrick (1990) has proposed A'-movement of an adjectival phrase within the nominal domain to account for wh-sentences of the following kind.

(39)   How tall a man did Jane see? (Hendrick 1990:(1))

Kennedy and Merchant (2000) have made a similar proposal to account for comparative adjectives in the attributive position: an operator that reflects a Degree Phrase moves to a specifier of FP, a nominal functional projection above DP, and the operator moves further to Spec-CP. I assume a similar analysis for Irish as well; that is, in the AFC, the adjective undergoes A'-movement to the left-periphery of the nominal domain (most likely for a semantic

reason, since the fronting is associated with a semantic effect). The structure is schematized in 40 below.[15]

(40)

```
                      DP
                    /    \
               deas       D'
              'nice'     /   \
                        D     FP
                        an   /  \
                      'the' t    F'
                                / \
                               F   NP
                                   duine
                                   'person'
```

In English, the D in this kind of instance must take the indefinite (singular) form; thus, *how tall a man* is acceptable while **how tall the man* is not. In Irish, however, it is the definite form that must appear in this context. We are far from a full understanding of why this is the case. A proper account of the definite article in Irish is beyond the scope of this paper, but I add that the so-called 'definite' article in Irish *an/na* 'the.SG/the.PL' does not necessarily mark definiteness. For example, Ó Dónaill (1992) shows that the article is used even though the noun (phrase) carries an indefinite interpretation.

(41) a. Chonaic mé **an** fear romham.

 saw I the man before.me

 'I saw (to my surprise) a man in front of me.'

  b. **na** céadta leabhar

 the.PL hundreds book

 'hundreds of books'

---

[15] It should be noted that the structure in 40 is bluntly simplified. Given the LCA and the fact that most attributive adjectives follow the head noun, we need to assume that the N (or NP) moves to a projection between the determiner and adjectives. I abstract away from this issue since the issue does not contribute to our understanding of the AFC.

c. deoch **an** fear

drink   the   man

'a drink for each man'   (Ó Dónaill, 1992:42)

We have also seen that the fronted adjective moves out of the nominal predicate. Crucially, this is done by head-movement. The structure would then look like the following.
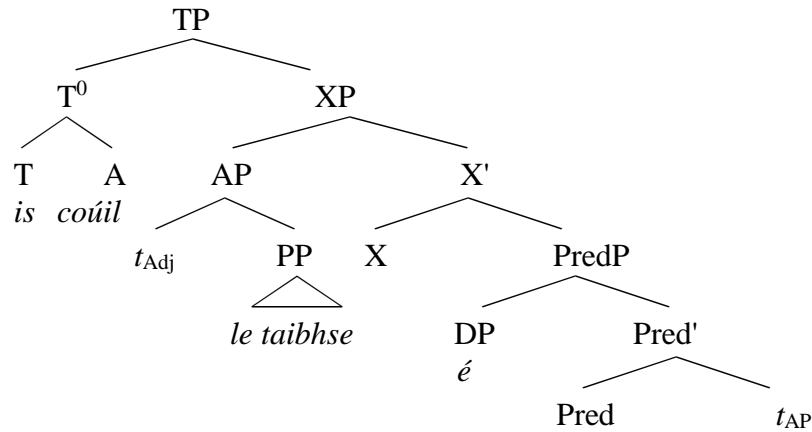
(42)   Is deas an duine é. 'He is a NICE person.'
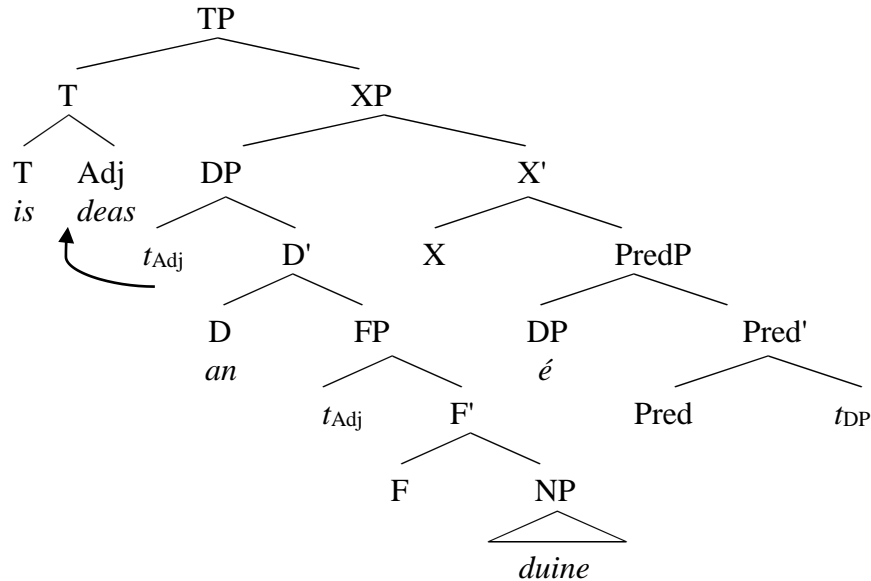
What we find here is similar to what McCloskey (2005) discusses regarding the ellipsis patterns of copular clauses, though the structure of the AFC is slightly more complicated. McCloskey (2005) points out that there are two approaches to the Irish copular construction given in 24, and we have adopted the predicate fronting approach in 24b. He adds that the predicate fronting approach subsequently entails that the head of the moved predicate undergoes further head-movement.
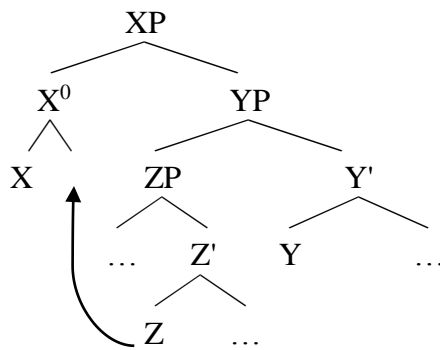
(43)   a. Is   cosúil le   taibhse é.

            COP like   with ghost   him

            'He is like a ghost.'

        b. Is   cosúil

            COP like

            'He is.'   (McCloskey, 2005:(32))

(44)

```
                         TP
              ┌───────────┴──────────┐
             T⁰                      XP
          ┌───┴───┐          ┌────────┴────────┐
          T       A         AP                 X'
         is     coúil    ┌───┴───┐         ┌────┴──────┐
                       t_Adj    PP    X         PredP
                              ┌─┴─┐        ┌──────┴──────┐
                            le taibhse    DP           Pred'
                                          é        ┌────┴────┐
                                                  Pred      t_AP
```
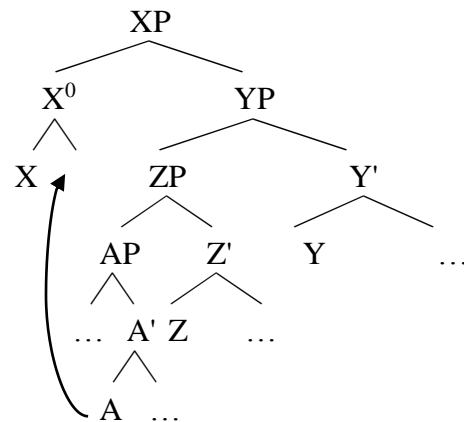
An immediate cosequence of the analysis presented in 44 is that the Head-Movment Constraint (Travis 1984) needs to be reformulated in such a way that the head of the specifier of the immediately dominated projection is allowed to undergo head-movement, as schematized in 45a.[16] What we find with the AFC suggests something even more radical, in that the specifier of the specifier of the immediately dominated projection can undergo head-movement, as shown in 45b.[17]

(45)   a.

```
            XP
      ┌──────┴──────┐
     X⁰             YP
    ┌─┐        ┌─────┴─────┐
   X          ZP           Y'
          ┌────┴───┐   ┌───┴───┐
         …    Z'    Y        …
            ┌─┴─┐
           Z    …
```

   b.

```
            XP
      ┌──────┴──────┐
     X⁰             YP
    ┌─┐        ┌─────┴─────┐
   X          ZP           Y'
          ┌────┴───┐   ┌───┴───┐
         AP   Z'   Y        …
        ┌─┐
       … A' Z
         ┌─┐
        A   …
```

---

[16] Donati (2006) also questions common assumptions regarding movement, and she suggests that long-distance wh-head-movement is available in narrow syntax.

[17] I am not aware of any empirical case where the head of the "specifier of the specifier of the specifier" can undergo head-movement. However, ruling out such a scenario with no principled reason seems to contravene what generative grammar has discovered so far.

Legate (personal communication) points out the possibility that the case in 44/45a may be derived by combining conventional step-by-step head-movement of the predicate head from the base position to the landing site and XP-movement of the rest of the predicate. While Legate's suggestion can account for the pattern in 44/45a, the analysis of the AFC presented in 43/45b still requires unconventional head-movement from a specifier position. In this respect, this investigation on the AFC strengthens McCloskey's (2005) observation.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS. This paper considered a subtype of the copula construction in Irish where an attributive adjective within the nominal predicate fronts, which we called the Adjective Fronting Construction. Our findings suggest that the DP following the fronted adjective cannot be treated as an adjunct, and the fronted adjective appears to originate as an attributive adjective. We have also found that the fronted adjective undergoes head-movement to adjoin to T, where the copula is located. This examination AFC has revealed that head-movement is more unconstrained than previously thought.

This paper provides a first step towards the full understanding of the phenomenon of the AFC in Irish, and this small step has given us more questions. While head-movement from a specifier of a specifier is empirically motivated, it is certainly not an operation that is ubiquitously observed in any other languages. Also, the semantics of the 'emphasis' encoded in the AFC and the nature of the 'definite' article have yet to be explored. Our current understanding of the AFC is rudimentary; this paper provides a direction of inquiry that will lead to a better understanding of the construction and Irish syntax.

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