

Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives*

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In the recent literature on the cross-linguistic placement of adjectives it has been observed (Cinque 2005, among others) that the Germanic languages and the Romance adjectives display a mirror pattern with respect to the placement of adjectives. In this paper I show that while the corresponding generalizations put forward in Cinque (2005) may hold for the majority of the Romance languages, French seems to be much freer in the distribution of adjectives than would be predicted on the basis of these generalizations. To account for the observed differences, I pursue the claim made by Lamarche (1991) and others that the placement of adjectives in prenominal or postnominal position in French is sensitive to information-structural and morphosyntactic restrictions that are not found in the other Romance languages. I show that in the cases where French exhibits unexpected adjective-noun combinations these restrictions are relevant, and can be captured with the Local Dislocation Hypothesis (cf. Embick & Noyer 2001) in the framework of Distributed Morphology.

1. Introduction

In the recent literature on the distribution of adjectives in the Romance languages, two specific, related questions have been addressed: (i) the question of ambiguity, i.e. the observation that adjectives receive different interpretations in prenominal and postnominal position in the Romance languages (and, to some extent, in the Germanic languages as well), and (ii) the preferences in the placement of adjectives, i.e. the attempt to classify adjectives according to their default placement. This is particularly obvious with adjectives that do not occur in both prenominal and postnominal position in Romance but are seemingly restricted to the one of the positions, notably the prenominal position.

In this paper I will discuss the situation in French, which, in many respects, differs from the distributional generalizations that can be made for the other Romance languages. Not only is the distribution of ambiguity slightly different (in most cases, the ambiguous adjective is perceived to be unambiguous) but the restrictions regarding the placement of adjectives exclusively in prenominal or postnominal position seem less severe than in the other Romance languages. It is the second point, the relative freedom that French displays with respect to adjectival distribution that will be the main concern of this paper. Specifically, I

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will argue that French differs from the other Romance languages in that it is sensitive to morpho-phonological requirements that are not found in the other Romance languages:

- (i) There is a clear preference for placing polysyllabic adjectives in postnominal position.
- (ii) Participles are usually found in postnominal position.

The hypothesis I put forward in this paper is that these requirements, which are clearly non-syntactic, and do not necessarily influence the interpretation of the adjective, can be captured in terms of a post-syntactic movement operation, the Local Dislocation operation.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I will introduce the data to be discussed. Section 3 will be concerned with the Local Dislocation operation, summarizing the main assumptions connected to this movement within the framework of Distributed Morphology and illustrating the movement with the case of the English comparative and superlative construction. In section 4 I show how Local Dislocation can account for those instances of adjective placement in French that run counter to the generalizations for the other Romance languages. I support my claim with additional evidence from the interaction between adjectives and complements (of both adjective and noun), which can be explained with the adjacency requirement of the Local Dislocation operation, and with data from the re-ordering of objects according to heaviness in regular sentences. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Data and Generalizations

In this paper I will discuss three specific cases where French exhibits unexpected behaviour with respect to the other Romance languages:

- (i) the modal vs. implicit relative clause reading: the adjective *possible*
- (ii) the stage-level vs. individual-level distinction: the adjective *invisible*
- (iii) adjectival participles.

2.1 The modal vs. implicit relative clause ambiguity

French differs from both English and the Romance languages in that both the prenominal and the postnominal position yield an ambiguity with respect to the modal vs. implicit relative clause interpretation of the adjective *possible*. Consider first the different readings, illustrated with the English example in (1). In the

Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives

example in (a), where the adjective is in prenominal position, both the modal interpretation (i) and the implicit relative clause interpretation (ii) are available. In the (b) sentence, however, the adjective is in postnominal position, which only yields the implicit relative clause reading.

- (1) a. Mary interviewed every possible candidate. (*ambiguous*)
(i) Mary interviewed every potential candidate. (*modal reading*)
(ii) Mary interviewed every candidate that it was possible for her to interview. (*implicit relative clause reading*)
- b. Mary interviewed every candidate possible. (*unambiguous*)
(ii) Mary interviewed every candidate that it was possible for her to interview. (*implicit relative clause reading*)

In contrast to English, the same adjective in Italian, *possibile*, is unambiguous in prenominal position, and ambiguous in postnominal position.

- (2) a. Maria ha intervistato ogni possibile candidato. (*unambiguous*)
Maria has interviewed every possible candidate
'Mary interviewed every possible candidate.'
- (i) Mary interviewed every potential candidate. (*modal reading*)
- b. Maria ha intervistato ogni candidato possibile. (*ambiguous*)
Maria has interviewed every candidate possible
'Mary interviewed every possible candidate.'
- (i) Mary interviewed every potential candidate. (*modal reading*)
- (ii) Mary interviewed every candidate that it was possible for her to interview. (*implicit relative clause reading*)

The observation that the Germanic languages (in this case, English) and the Romance languages (notably Italian, as above) follow a mirror pattern has been observed in e.g. Cinque (2001). The overall distribution of the relevant readings in prenominal versus postnominal position can be summarized as in (3) for the Germanic languages, and in (4) for the Romance languages (the tables are based on Cinque 2001).

(3) Germanic Languages (English)

Prenominal Adjectives	Noun	Postnominal Adjectives
<i>implicit relative reading or modal reading</i>	N	<i>implicit relative reading</i>
<i>stage-level or individual-level</i>	N	<i>stage-level</i>

(4) Romance Languages (Italian)

Prenominal Adjectives	Noun	Postnominal Adjectives
<i>modal reading</i>	N	<i>modal reading or implicit relative reading</i>
<i>individual-level</i>	N	<i>stage-level or individual-level</i>

Based on this perceived dichotomy between the Germanic languages and the Romance languages, we would expect French to pattern like Italian (cf. (2) above). However, this prediction is not borne out, since in French, as mentioned above, and as illustrated in (5), both the prenominal and the postnominal position yield an ambiguity in the interpretation of the adjective *possible*.

- (5) a. Marie a interrogé tous les possibles candidats. (*ambiguous*)
 Marie has interviewed all the possible candidates
 ‘Mary interviewed every possible candidate.’
- (i) Mary interviewed every potential candidate. (*modal reading*)
- (ii) Mary interviewed every candidate that it was possible for her to interview. (*implicit relative clause reading*)
- b. Marie a interrogé tous les candidats possibles. (*ambiguous*)
 Marie has interviewed all the candidates possibles
 ‘Mary interviewed every possible candidate.’
- (i) Mary interviewed every potential candidate. (*modal reading*)
- (ii) Mary interviewed every candidate that it was possible for her to interview. (*implicit relative clause reading*)

French is thus special with respect to the ambiguity pattern outlined above in that it seemingly combines properties from the Germanic languages and the Romance languages in having the ambiguity of interpretation of the adjective in prenominal position, like English, whilst having, at the same time, the same choice of interpretation in the postnominal position, like Italian and other Romance languages.

While French thus allows more freedom in the interpretation of the adjective *possible*, and is able to accommodate both the modal interpretation and the implicit relative clause reading in both positions, it is more restricted than either English or Italian with respect to the stage-level versus individual-level interpretation of adjectives, as we will see in the following paragraph.

2.2 The individual-level vs. stage-level ambiguity

One well-known example for adjectival ambiguity concerns the individual-level vs. stage-level reading. While the individual-level adjective describes a permanent property of the noun, the stage-level reading induces an interpretation in terms of a temporary, transient property of the noun in question. In the English example in (6) the adjective *visible* can yield both the individual-level and the stage-level interpretation.

- (6) a. The visible stars include Aldebaran and Sirius. (*ambiguous*)
- (i) The stars that are generally visible include Aldebaran and Sirius. (*individual-level*)
- (ii) The stars that happen to be visible now include Aldebaran and Sirius. (*stage-level*)
- b. The (only) stars visible are Aldebaran and Sirius. (*unambiguous*)
- (ii) The stars that happen to be visible now include Aldebaran and Sirius. (*stage-level*)

Again, with respect to the distribution of the ambiguity, Italian in (7) follows the opposite pattern: the prenominal position is unambiguous, yielding only the individual-level interpretation, and the postnominal position is ambiguous.

- (7) a. Le invisibili stelle di Andromeda sono molto distanti. (*unambiguous*)
the invisible stars of Andromeda are very distant
'The invisible stars of Andromeda are very far away.'
- (i) The stars of Andromeda which are generally invisible, are very far away. (*individual-level*)
- b. Le stelle invisibili di Andromeda sono molto distanti. (*ambiguous*)
the stars invisible of Andromeda are very distant
'The invisible stars of Andromeda are very far away.'

- (i) The stars of Andromeda which are generally invisible, are very far away. (*individual-level*)
- (ii) The stars of Andromeda which happen to be invisible now, are very far away. (*stage-level*)

French, as already mentioned, differs from both the Germanic and English pattern in that it seems to place severe restrictions on the occurrence of *invisible* in prenominal position. The French counterpart to the English and Italian sentences in (6) and (7), for instance, disallows *invisible* in prenominal position, as illustrated in (8) below. Quite unexpectedly, too, *invisible* in postnominal position only yields the individual-level reading, rather than being ambiguous.

- (8) a. *Les invisibles étoiles d'Andromède sont très lointaines.
the invisible stars of Andromeda are very distant
'The invisible stars of Andromeda are very far away.'
 - b. Les étoiles invisibles d'Andromède sont très lointaines.
the stars invisible of Andromeda are very distant
'The invisible stars of Andromeda are very far away.'
- (i) The stars of Andromeda which are generally invisible, are very far away. (*individual-level*)

Notice, however, that while the adjective *invisible* seems to be ungrammatical or marginal in the context above, it is nevertheless possible to front this very adjective to the prenominal position in other sentences, such as in the example in (9) (cited from Goes (1999: 95)):

- (9) De tous les points de Suisse, et même de l'étranger, on était accouru pour voir ... l'invisible objet.
'Of every part of Switzerland, and even from foreign countries, people had come to see the invisible object.'¹

However, Goes (ibid.) points out that the prenominal use of the adjective in (9) may be due to literary purposes, given that the example in question is taken from a novel where, it seems, a considerable number of other instances of unexpectedly prenominal adjectives exists. Still, even if the adjective occurs in prenominal position, no contextual information (as represented in Goes) encourages the attribution of a different reading to the adjective in prenominal position.

¹ English paraphrase mine.

In conclusion, then, it seems that irrespective of the availability of both prenominal and postnominal position, French yields only the individual-level reading for the adjective *invisible*.

A further instance where French differ from the Romance languages and the Germanic languages is the distribution of adjectival participles, as we will see in the next section.

2.3 Adjectival Participles

It is a well-known fact that there exists a class of adjectives that can only occur in prenominal position in both Romance and Germanic. The adjectives *former* and *alleged*, for instance, are ungrammatical in postnominal position.

However, in the case of *alleged*, a second factor comes into play that may effectively influence the placement of the adjective, as we will see in what follows. More precisely, *alleged* is an adjective that is based on a participial form, that is, at least in its morphological form, it is a participle that functions as an adjective.

Consider the data below, which illustrates the distribution of the adjective *alleged* in English (10), Italian (11), and French (12).

- (10) a. the alleged murderer
b. *the murderer alleged
- (11) a. il presunto assassino
the alleged murderer
'the alleged murderer'
b. *l'assassino presunto
the murderer alleged
'the alleged murderer'
- (12) a. ?le présumé assassin²
the alleged murderer
'the alleged murderer'
b. l'assassin présumé
the murderer alleged
'the alleged murderer'

As we can see from these examples, the English adjective *alleged* and its Italian counterpart *presunto* only occur in prenominal position. In French, on the other hand, the adjective *présumé* (alleged, presumed) is marginal in prenominal

² Speakers vary in their acceptance of *présumé* in prenominal position (F. Martin, A. Mari, p.c.). A preliminary search on *Google* (data provided by F. Martin) yielded a clear preference for *présumé* in postnominal position, but also returned results with *présumé* in prenominal position.

position, while it is fully acceptable in postnominal position. This, obviously, distinguishes French from the Germanic and Romance languages alike.

On the basis of the generalisations discussed in the following section, this peculiar distribution of French adjectival participles such as *alleged* can later be accounted for with Local Dislocation in Distributed Morphology.

2.4 Generalizations: Morphophonological Preferences

As mentioned in the introduction, French differs from the other Romance languages (and from the Germanic languages as well) in the extent to which its surface word order seems to make allowance for morphological and phonological requirements and preferences. As we will see from the application of the prescriptive rules in (13) and (14) below (which are only two of several morphosyntactic preferences active in French), the influence of these requirements is such that it eventually overrules syntactic placement.

The first prescriptive rule, as found in many prescriptive grammars of French, concerns the number of syllables in a given adjective.

- (13) French favours polysyllabic adjectives in postnominal position and monosyllabic adjectives in prenominal position (mostly high-frequency adjectives).

The second such rule, which is equally relevant for the analysis of the data presented in §2, prescribes the position of adjectival participles.

- (14) Adjectival participles occur postnominally as a rule (cf. Goes 1999).

Given that these rules, although non-syntactic in nature, are highly respected (even to the extent that the placement of adjectives in the non-prescribed position may result in ungrammatical configurations, as we will see below), I claim that they should be considered in the distribution of French adjectives.

Taking the above-mentioned preferences into account allows us to explain the differences between French and the other Romance languages that have been illustrated above. In their formal implementation, these prescriptive rules may be captured by means of the Local Dislocation operation in the theoretical framework of Distributed Morphology, which I will discuss in what follows.

3. Towards an Analysis: Local Dislocation

3.1 Grammar Architecture in Distributed Morphology

The architecture of the grammar in Distributed Morphology, as described in e.g. Embick & Noyer (2001), differs in a number of assumptions from the grammar architecture as perceived in generative syntax. In what follows, I will briefly

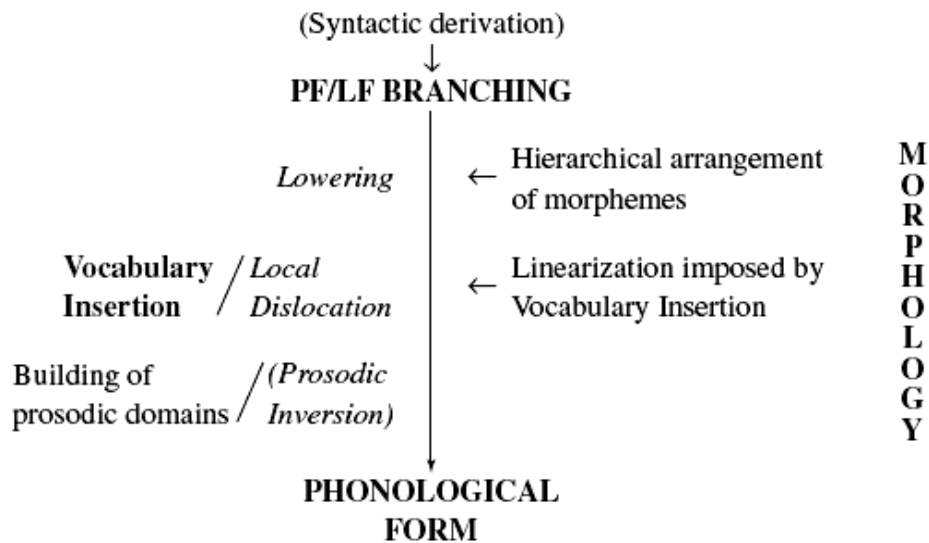
Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives

mention some points that are particularly interesting in view of the present paper (cf. e.g. Embick & Noyer 2001 for an extensive overview of the key claims of Distributed Morphology).

One of the key characteristics of the grammar as perceived in the framework of Distributed Morphology is that the morphological component of the grammar is situated on the phonological branch (deriving the phonological form, PF) of the derivation, which follows the syntactic derivation. That is, morphology essentially takes the syntactic structures as its input.

On the PF-branch of the grammar, in turn, several distinct operations can be located, as illustrated in (15) below (taken from Embick & Noyer 2001). One of these prerequisites for the resultant phonological form of a given derivation is Vocabulary Insertion, by means of which the phonological material is inserted in the structure provided by the syntax. (This process is also known as *Late Insertion*.)

(15) Grammar Architecture in Distributed Morphology (Embick & Noyer 2001)



Local Dislocation, the process that I claim to be responsible for the surface word order of the adjective-noun complexes illustrated in §2, is dependent on the information provided via Vocabulary Insertion, as we will see below.

3.2 Local Dislocation

The Local Dislocation operation itself is characterized as follows. Firstly, it is directly related to the Linearization process, which is assumed to be imposed by the insertion of phonological material in the structure (i.e. Vocabulary Insertion).

Specifically, Embick and Noyer (2001) propose the Late Linearization Hypothesis, as summarized in (16).

(16) *Late Linearization Hypothesis (Embick & Noyer 2001)*

The elements of a phrase marker are linearized at Vocabulary Insertion.

Thus, as illustrated in (15) above, since Local Dislocation applies at the point in the derivation where the structure is linearized, the relevant structural relationship for Local Dislocation is the relation of linear precedence and adjacency (cf. Embick & Noyer 2001: 563). As a consequence of this structural definition, Local Dislocation, as the name already suggests, is a strictly local operation. As Embick and Noyer (2001: 564) put it, it ‘cannot skip any adjoined elements... Only adjacent elements can be reordered by the operation, and an intervening (syntactic) adjunct cannot be ignored’. As we will see in the application of this movement to the distribution of adjectives in French, this strict locality of the operation is a key point of the proposed analysis.

Since, in the framework of Distributed Morphology, the operations assumed to occur in morphology and the operations that occur in the syntax bear certain similarities to one another, it is not surprising that Local Dislocation takes on two different shapes. It can either operate on the XP level (which is defined as the Morphological Word (MWd) level), or on the X^0 level (that is, on the Subword (SWd) level). As in syntax, SWs (like heads) can only move to similar positions, while MWds can only target corresponding MWd positions. The relevant mechanisms of Local Dislocation are schematized in (17) below.

(17) a. [X * [Z * Y]] *base structure*

X immediately precedes [Z * Y]

Z immediately precedes Y

b. [X * [Z * Y]] *Local Dislocation*



Local Dislocation targets the next available position

c. [[Z + X] * Y] *Result of Local Dislocation*

X adjoins to Z to yield the complex [Z + X]

both X and Z still precede Y

Given that Local Dislocation is local, X cannot adjoin to Y, hence, (18) is an illicit configuration (indicated with '#').

(18) # [Z * [Y + Y]] *illicit configuration*

The requirements that trigger Local Dislocation are not syntactic or semantic in nature, given that morphology is situated on the PF branch of the derivation. The only requirements that may influence movement at this point of the derivation are thus morphological and phonological requirements, which, as we will see below, naturally accommodate the morphophonological preferences that are present in French.

A final point concerns the directionality of movement of Local Dislocation. The movement is generally considered to go from left to right, similar to the Lowering operation (which can, however, skip intervening elements; cf. Embick & Noyer 2001).

In the next section I will briefly discuss the derivation of the English superlative and comparative, as presented in Embick & Noyer (2001), to illustrate the role of linear order and, importantly, the sensitivity to specific Vocabulary. Both these properties will be crucial for the analysis of the distribution of French adjectives.

3.3 Local Dislocation Illustrated: English Comparatives and Superlatives

Embick & Noyer (2001) give the formation of English Comparatives and Superlatives as one example of how the Local Dislocation hypothesis is implemented.

The derivation of the English superlative and comparative form in Distributed Morphology not only illustrates the strict locality of Local Dislocation (in the derivation of the superlative form) but also its sensitivity to specific Vocabulary (in the derivation of the comparative form), which entails particular morphosyntactic requirements.

Consider the comparative forms in the sentences in (19) (Embick & Noyer 2001: 564).

- (19) a. John is smart-er than Bill.
b. John is mo-re intelligent than Bill.
c. *John is intelligent-er than Bill.
d. ?*John is mo-re smart than Bill.

In their analysis of the English comparative, Embick & Noyer (ibid.) make use of the observation that the formation of the comparative in English exclusively depends on the morphophonological properties of the gradable adjective.

Crucially, they assume that the affixation process of the comparative morpheme (-er) or the insertion of *more* takes place after the adjective itself is

inserted into the structure. Thus, with the comparative in English, short adjectives (up to two syllables, as a rule) take the comparative suffix *-er*. Longer adjectives, such as *intelligent* in (19b), require the insertion of *more*. Hence, the formation of the comparative in English can be considered to be Vocabulary-specific.

The English Superlative, on the other hand, illustrates the strict locality requirement that is present in Local Dislocation. In particular, locality is crucial once the adjective building the superlative is modified by an adverb, as illustrated in (20) (taken from Embick & Noyer 2001: 565, and slightly modified).

- (20) a. Mary is the most amazingly smart _ person...
b. *Mary is the _ amazingly smart-est person...

As Embick & Noyer (2001) argue, the insertion of the adverb *amazingly*, which modifies the adjective *smart*, will be in a position that precedes the adjective in linear structure. As such, it can be considered to interfere with the placement of the superlative affix *-st*, which is placed before the adjective, like the comparative affix *-er* in comparative sentences (cf. (19) above).

Thus, if, following Embick & Noyer's (2001) assumptions, the superlative affix *-st* must precede the adjective and be adjacent to it for the affixation to take place, the adverb blocks this process because it is in the position immediately preceding the adjective. As a consequence, the superlative affix is taken up by the form *most*.

As we will see in the next section, there are parallels between the English comparative and superlative formation and the distribution of French adjectives, since the latter also incorporates the sensitivity to Vocabulary in terms of the number of syllables, and the strict locality requirement illustrated with the modification pattern in the English superlative.

4. Local Dislocation in French Adjective Placement

4.1 The Modal vs. Implicit Relative Clause Ambiguity

The application of the Local Dislocation operation to adjectives in French permits us to account for the distributional patterns described above. The most straightforward case with respect to Local Dislocation is the modal vs. implicit relative clause ambiguity. Recall from above that French unexpectedly allows ambiguity of the adjective in prenominal position, as illustrated in (21).³

³ A reviewer expresses his concerns regarding the grammaticality of the (a) example above, pointing out that similar sentences such as (i) and (ii) below are ungrammatical (according to his judgment of the data). If this is correct, then the conclusion that French patterns like English with respect to the adjective *possible* is no longer straightforward. However, given the potential flexibility with respect to the directionality of movement in Local Dislocation (cf. the discussion below), the examples below could be captured in terms of optionality of movement (which is clearly possible with Local Dislocation).

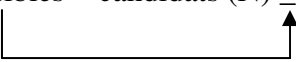
Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives

- (21) a. Marie a interrogé tous les possibles candidats. (ambiguous)
Marie has interviewed all the possible candidates
'Mary interviewed every possible candidate.'
- b. Marie a interrogé tous les candidats possibles. (ambiguous)
Marie has interviewed all the candidates possible
'Mary interviewed every possible candidate.'

The occurrence of the ambiguity can be explained in two different ways. Suppose first that if Local Dislocation, as claimed above, moves elements from left to right, the adjective *possible* in French patterns like its English counterpart by being base-generated in the prenominal position, thereby yielding ambiguity. This base configuration is illustrated in (22).

- (22) possibles (ambiguous) candidats (N)

By means of Local Dislocation, as schematized in (23), the adjective targets the next available position, the position following the noun, resulting in the configuration in (24).

- (23) possibles candidats (N) _

Local Dislocation

- (24) _ candidats (N) possibles

With this process of relocating the adjective, one of the morphophonological requirements present in French is satisfied, that is, that polysyllabic adjectives preferably occur in postnominal position (as in (24)).

The lack of change in the interpretation of the adjective is expected under the Local Dislocation account: movement is for morphophonological reasons only, and therefore does not affect the semantic content of the adjectives.

As implied above, there is a second possibility to derive the above configuration. In principle, if Local Dislocation were allowed to move elements from right to left (parallel to standard syntactic movement), the derived position of the adjective *possible* in French could be the prenominal one. The base position, the postnominal position, would thus conform to the pattern that we find

-
- (i) *Marie a mangé dans tous les possibles restaurants
Marie has eaten in all the possible restaurants
'Mary has eaten in all possible restaurants'
- (ii) *Marie a lu tous les possibles livres
Marie has read all the possible books
'Mary has read every possible book'

in the other Romance languages, in the sense that they display ambiguity in postnominal position. Based on this assumption, the adjective could be locally dislocated to the prenominal position. Crucially, again the reading does not differ. One argument in support of the latter implementation consists in the observation that adjectives ending in *-ible* and *-able* preferably occur in postnominal position (cf. the lists of adjectives provided in Goes 1999 which support that view).

However, as the ramifications of the assumption that Local Dislocation can go both ways are not entirely clear yet in the light of other structures it may apply to, I will conclude, for the time being, that French follows the English pattern in this particular respect.

In the instance described in the following section, quite the opposite seems to hold, since the pattern with the individual-level vs. stage-level ambiguity is such that there is no ‘surplus’ ambiguity, as with the modal vs. implicit relative clause case, but a lack of ambiguity instead.

4.2 The individual-level vs. stage-level ambiguity

Recall the pattern of the adjective *invisible* (repeated in (25)) which only yields the individual-level reading in French.

- (25) a. *les invisibles étoiles
 the invisible stars
 ‘the invisible stars’
 b. l’ invisible objet (*individual-level*)⁴
 the invisible object
 ‘the invisible object’
 c. les étoiles invisibles (*individual-level*)
 the stars invisible
 ‘the invisible stars’

Given that French does not display any ambiguity with this particular adjective, the base hypothesis is that the adjective is base-generated in a position where it can obtain the individual-level reading, without any ambiguity. From the cross-linguistic point of view, this leaves us with the assumption that *invisible* should be base-generated in prenominal position, which yields the individual-level reading for this particular adjective in the Romance languages (cf. Italian, repeated in (26) below).

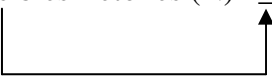
- (26) Le invisibili stelle di Andromeda sono molto distanti. (*individual-level*)
 the invisible stars of Andromeda are very distant
 ‘The invisible stars of Andromeda are very far away.’

⁴ Recall from above that the context of this particular example does not provide any support for a stage-level reading.

Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives

The Local Dislocation process would thus be analogous to the modal vs. implicit relative case schematized in (22) to (24) above. The base configuration for the adjective invisible is illustrated in (27). Local Dislocation then moves the adjective to the right, past the noun, as shown in (28), which subsequently results in the surface word order of (25c), as shown in (29).

(27) invisibles (individual-level) étoiles (N)

(28) invisibles étoiles (N) _

Local Dislocation

(29) _ étoiles (N) invisibles

Again, this movement serves to satisfy the requirement that in French, polysyllabic adjectives should occur in postnominal position. Moreover, it explains the availability of the example in (25b): if the adjective is generated in prenominal position, and Local Dislocation as post-syntactic movement is an optional (albeit very frequent) process, the adjective may remain in its base position. This, of course, does not explain why invisible should be ungrammatical with the noun *étoiles*, as in (25a). However, as the somewhat special situational context of (25b) suggests (that is, a certain literary flavor), the sentence in (25a) might also be grammatical in a particular, maybe similar, context.

Thus, with this particular adjective, French seems to follow the Romance pattern, crucially, though, without creating any kind of ambiguity in prenominal or postnominal position.

As we will see in the next section, the second morphophonological preference discussed above, that is, that adjectival participles preferably occur in postnominal position, can also be accommodated with the Local Dislocation movement.

4.3 French Participles

As illustrated in §2, French quite unexpectedly allows adjectival participles that are restricted to prenominal position in both Romance and Germanic, in postnominal position, as illustrated in the contrast between (30) (French) and the overview of the other languages in (31).

(30) a. ?le présumé assassin
the alleged murderer
'the alleged murderer'

- b. l'assassin présumé
 the murderer alleged
 'the alleged murderer'

(31)	<i>prenominal position</i>	<i>Noun</i>	<i>postnominal position</i>	
	presunto	assassino	*presunto	(Italian)
	alleged	murderer	*alleged	(English)

In fact, in French, the more natural position for the adjective actually seems to be the postnominal position, as illustrated by a corpus example (one of many) in (32).

- (32) Toujours silencieux, Volkert Van der Graaf, *le meurtrier présumé* de Pim Fortuyn, a été placé pour dix jours en détention préventive par un tribunal d'Amsterdam.

'Still remaining silent, Volkert Van der Graaf, the alleged murderer of Pim Fortuyn, has been put in remand for ten days by a tribunal in Amsterdam.'⁵

Again, this curious behavior of the French adjectival participle with respect to its counterparts in other languages may receive two different interpretations.

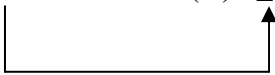
On a syntactic basis, one could argue (e.g. A. Fabrégas, p.c.), as has generally been implied in the literature on adjectival participles, that these participles have a different structure than regular adjectives. As such, due to their verbal character, they are base-generated as reduced relatives, which would amount to generating them in postnominal position. By means of movement of XPs, these adjectives end up in prenominal position in both Italian and English. French, however, differs from these two languages by having a clear preference for the participles in postnominal position, thereby preventing movement that would result in having participles in prenominal position.

While the morphophonological preference of having adjectival participles in postnominal position in French thus might fall out from the structural behavior of participles on the above analysis, the second way to account for the above data is, again, Local Dislocation. Let us first consider how Local Dislocation explains the distribution of the French adjectival participle *présumé*.

On the basis of the cross-linguistic configuration illustrated in (31) above, the participial adjective *présumé* in French could also be considered to be base-generated in prenominal position, as shown in (33). From this position, it subsequently undergoes Local Dislocation (34) to the postnominal position (35).

- (33) présumé assassin (N)

⁵ Example taken from the TWIC Corpus, *Le Monde 2002*. English Paraphrase mine.

(34) présumé assassin (N) _

Local Dislocation

(35) _ assassin (N) présumé

Again, the readings are not affected, and the strong preference in French for placing participial adjectives in postnominal positions (along with the preference for polysyllabic adjectives in postnominal positions) is satisfied.

At first glance, then, both approaches seem to be able to account for the data. One argument for the syntactic approach lies in the fact that many participles cannot occur in prenominal position, as shown with the participle *brûlé* (burnt) in (36) below, which is virtually impossible in prenominal position (F. Martin, p.c.). On the other hand, my informants do not strictly rule out participles such as *présumé* in prenominal position either, as indicated with the question mark in (30a), repeated in (37) below, which would quite unexpected under a (syntax-based) account that does not allow adjectival participles in prenominal position in French.

- (36) a. *le brûlé pain
the burnt bread
‘the burnt bread’
b. le pain brûlé
the bread burnt
‘the burnt bread’

(37) ?le présumé assassin
the alleged murderer
‘the alleged murderer’

Pending further investigation concerning a potential difference in interpretation in prenominal or postnominal position, I therefore conclude that the Local Dislocation operation, in its sensitivity to morphophonological requirements, account for the distribution of French participles, without taking recourse to the syntactically and structurally complex character of participles as such.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have argued that Local Dislocation (cf. Embick & Noyer 2001) can account for the unexpected placement of adjectives in French.

Specifically, I have shown that adopting an analysis that employs the re-ordering of syntactic structure in the morphology component of the grammar (as postulated in the framework of Distributed Morphology) allows us to incorporate

two of the morphophonological preferences that are active in French but not in the other Romance languages or Germanic languages:

- (i) the preference for placing polysyllabic adjectives in postnominal position, and
- (ii) the preference for also placing adjectival participles in postnominal position.

These preferences, I have argued, can be captured with Local Dislocation, and ultimately explain the peculiarities in the distributional pattern of adjectives in French in three different cases:

- (i) the modal vs. implicit relative clause interpretation adjectives, illustrated with the adjective *possible*,
- (ii) the individual-level vs. stage-level ambiguity, illustrated with the adjective *invisible*, and, finally,
- (iii) the unexpected behavior of the French adjectival participle *présumé* (alleged), which, unlike its counterpart in Italian or English, preferably occurs in postnominal position.

Being post-syntactic in character, however, Local Dislocation can only apply if the displacement operation does not affect the interpretation of the adjective. I have shown that in the three sets of data that I have discussed, the readings remain stable.

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Local Dislocation in the Distribution of French Adjectives

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