WHEN ARE ADJECTIVES RAISERS? TOUGH TO GET IT

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Abstract: This article deals with some unsolved problems raised by *Tough*- adjectives in Romance languages. We present some new data from some Romance languages (Romanian, French, Italian) supporting a raising analysis, and we argue that in these languages, unlike in English, infinitivals in TCs are reduced structures, which do not case-mark the object. Since arguably the same reduced structures appear in modal non-finite relatives, we will extend our analysis to these constructions.

1. The debate concerning *tough* adjectives

Tough- adjectives are characterized by the alternation pattern exemplified in (1). The construction exemplified in (1b-c) is known as the T(ough) C(onstruction), illustrated here in its predicative use (1b) and in its attributive use (1c), the latter being less addressed in the literature.

(1) a. Il est difficile de lire ces livres. (Fr.)
'It is hard to read those books.'
b. Ces livres sont difficiles à lire. (predicative use)
These books are hard to read
c. des livres difficiles à lire (attributive use)
'books hard to read'

This pattern distinguishes *tough*-adjectives from other adjectives taking an infinitival:

(2) a. Cette femme est belle à regarder. (Fr.)
This woman is beautiful to look at
b. *Il est beau de regarder cette femme. (Fr.)
it is beautiful to look at this woman

The TC illustrated in (1b) has been a long standing problem in the P&P framework. The debate is still open today. The various competing analyses can be subsumed under two main classes: with raising of the subject (Rosenbaum 1967, Postal 1971, Berman 1973, Bayer 1990, Sportiche 2002, 2006, Hicks 2003), and with the subject base generated. This latter class has the following variants: (i) object deletion under identity (Akmajian 1972, Ross 1967), (ii) null operator movement (Chomsky 1977) and (iii) complex predicate formation by reanalysis (Nanni 1978, 1980, Chomsky 1981)

2. Arguments for Raising

2.1 General arguments

Some well- known arguments put forward in the literature on raising also have been argued to hold for TCs. The most important are the following.

First, the subject seems not to be theta-marked by the *tough*-adjective. This is shown for instance by the possibility to have idiom chunks, illustrated in (3);

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(3) a. The hatchet is hard to bury after long years of war. (Berman 1973)
b. La justice sera difficile à rendre. (Fr.) (Ruwet 1991)
The justice will be difficult to render

Moreover, the nominalization is unavailable (Miller and Chomsky 1963, Chomsky 1970 – cf. (4a-b). When the nominalization is obtained, as in (4c), it is however not for the form that selects the infinitival.

(4) a. *John's easiness to please
b. John's eagerness to please
c. Mary's prettiness (*to look at)

Goh (2000) argues against Kim (1995) which claims that the subject in TC is assigned a Cause role, being somehow causally related to the easiness/difficultness. (5b) is Goh's counterexample, which shows that the subject cannot be inherently a cause of the difficulty.

(5) a. This mountain is difficult to walk up. (Kim 1995)
b. Even the smallest mountain is difficult to walk up while wearing size 14 stilettos. (Goh 2000)

Another argument comes from properties indicating reconstruction. On the one hand, TCs allow low readings of numerals. The sentence in (6) has a reading in which *dix livres* "ten books" is interpreted under the modal introduced by the infinitival ("it is hard to find ten books"). This reading can only be derived by reconstructing the subject inside the infinitival, providing an argument in favor of raising.

(6) Dix livres de mathématiques sont difficiles à trouver dans cette maison. (Fr)
ten books of mathematics are hard to find in this house

On the other hand, variable-binding is possible. In (7), *his* can only be interpreted in a position c-commanded by *every photographer*, so it must have raised from such a position:

(7) Pictures of his$_i$ friends are hard for every photographer$_i$ to sell t_i. (Sportiche 2002)

The same reasoning holds for anaphor-binding, illustrated in (8).

(8) A book about himself$_i$ would be tough for John$_i$ to forget.

2.2 Arguments specific to the Romance family

We add to this list some new arguments from the Romance domain. First, we may notice that TCs license subject bare nouns:

(9) a. Prestiti stranieri sono difficili da obtenere. (It.)
loans external are difficult to get
b. Împrumuturi externe sunt greu de obținut. (Rom.)
c. Informații de calitate privitoare la piață sunt dificil de obținut. (Rom.)
pieces of information of quality regarding market are hard to get

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As is well known (see Dobrovie-Sorin 1997, Beyssade and Dobrovie-Sorin 2004, Kleiber 2001, McNally 1995, 1998), argumental bare plurals in Romance languages are allowed only with predicates that provide existential closure, typically "localizing" predicates:

(10) a. *În cameră erau bolnavi/trişti copii. (Rom.)
in room were ill/sad children
a´. *Nella stanza erano /tristi bambini. (It.)
b. *Admir/respect profesori. (Rom.)
I-admir/I-respect teachers
b´. *Ammiro/rispetto professori. (It.)
c. În cameră dormeau copii. (Rom.)
in room were-sleeping children
c.´ Nella stanza dormivano bambini. (It.)
d. Caut/ascult profesori. (Rom.)
I search/listen teachers
e. Această demonstrație conține erori. (Rom.)
this proof contains errors
f. Pe pereți erau hieroglife. (It.)
on walls were hieroglyphs

Tough-adjectives don't qualify as localizing predicates, as proven by (11). We have to conclude that in the examples (9), the subject must be interpreted inside the non-finite clause.

(11) a. * Prestiti stranieri sono difficili. (It.)
b. * Împrumuturi externe sunt dificile. (Rom.)

Another piece of evidence is represented by the existence of non-agreeing *tough*-adjectives. In Romanian, unlike in the other Romance languages, the adjective in the TC doesn't agree with the subject, although the copula does. This proves that in this language the subject is not the external argument of the adjective:

(12) Aceste ipoteze sunt greu/*grele de acceptat (Rom.)
these hypotheses.fpl. are difficult.msg/difficult.fpl to accept

3. Problems for the raising analysis

The raising analysis, however, is not without problems.

First, this constructions has both A and A' movement properties. The target position is a case position, which indicates A-movement. But other properties are incompatible with A-movement. For instance, the base position seems to be a case position, which would lead to improper movement

(13) a. The solution is easy to find_.
b. This tray is easy to forget about_
(14) *John is likely that comes.

Furthermore, according to Kaplan and Bresnan (1982), the base position may be inside a finite clause, which point to a less local movement in the case of TCs:

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(15) Mary is tough for me to believe that John would ever marry.

Finally, licensing of parasitic gaps seems to be possible in TCs:

(16) This book is hard to understand without reading twice.

A mixed solution has been proposed in order to capture these mixed properties: it is a special kind of movement wich has some of the properties of A-bar movement + A movement (Brody (1993), Hornstein (2001), Hicks (2003)). To discuss the most recent, Hicks (2003) avoids the case problem by resorting to the hypothesis of a 'big-DP': the higher DP, headed by the Null Op, would receive case in the embedded clause, while its DP complement would raise from Spec of the embedded C to the matrix subject position. This analysis also has some problems. On the one hand, there is not enough evidence for big DPs in general. On the other hand, there is no clear semantic role for the Null Operator; this item is normally interpreted as forming a predicate, but it is not clear how a predicate of individuals can combine with a *tough*-adjective.

Moreover, a raising analysis should be able to deal with the attributive use of TCs, illustrated in (17), and this is not addressed in the afore-mentioned papers.

(17) This is a movie hard to forget.
C'est un film difficile à oublier. (Fr.)
Ăsta e un film greu de uitat. (Rom.)

4. Towards an analysis of TC in Romance

4.1 The infinitival in TC and modal reduced relatives – reduced structures

The proposal that we defend here is that in Romance TC the infinitival represents a reduced structure, which does not case-mark the object, behaving on a par with participles and not with finite relatives. We propose a unified analysis following this line for TC and modal reduced relatives. Our main arguments in support of this view come from a parallel behaviour observed for the two kinds of structures, concerning the form of the embedded verb, the distribution and the locality constraints.

The non-finite form in TC is the same as the one used in modal reduced relatives (as noticed, for French, by Kayne 1972).

(18) a. Ces livres sont difficiles **à lire**. (Fr.)
these books are hard *à* read.Inf
b. livres **à lire** "books to read"
books *à* read.Inf
(19) a. Questi libri sono difficili **da leggere**. (It.)
these books are hard *da* read.Inf
b. libri **da leggere**
books *da* read.Inf
(20) a. Aceste cărți sunt greu **de citit**. (Rom.)
these books are hard *de* read.Sup
b. cărți **de citit**
books *de* read.Sup

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The non-finite form used in TC is different from the form used in clausal complements of evaluative control adjectives of the type *clever, kind* (which do case-license the object) (in western Romance, the introductory element is different - fr. *de* vs. *à*, it. *di* vs. *da*; in Romanian, the form itself is different – supine in TC and modal relatives vs. subjunctive in control clauses):

(21) a. Vous avez été gentil **de** le faire. (Fr.)
you have been kind *de* it do
b. cela est difficile **à** faire
this is difficult *à* do
(22) a. Lei è gentile **di** averlo fatto. (It.)
you are kind *de* have-it done
b. Questo e difficile **da** fare.
this is hard *da* do
(23) a. Ați fost amabil **să** o fac**ești**. (Rom.)
you-have been kind Subj it you-do
b. Asta e greu **de** făc**ut**.
this is hard *de* do.Sup

In Western Romance, in the impersonal use of tough-adjectives, the clausal complement has the same form as with control adjectives, which is different from that used in TCs.

(24) a. Il est difficile **de** soutenir cette analyse. (Fr.)
it is difficult *de* defend this analysis
b. Cette analyse est difficile **à**/*de soutenir.
this analysis is difficult *à* defend
(25) Il a été gentil **de** soutenir cette analyse. (Fr.)
he has been kind *de* defend this analysis

In Romanian, both forms may be used: the subjunctive and the supine (see discussion under 42 below).

(26) a. E greu să răspundem la aceste întrebări. (Fr.)
is hard Subj answer.1pl to these questions
b. E greu de răspuns la aceste întrebări. (Fr.)
is hard *de* answer.Sup to these questions

Assuming that the formal resemblance between infinitivals in TC and in Modal relatives reflects a similar structure, it is worth noticing that Romance modal infinitival relatives are reduced relatives, unlike their English counterparts. They verify indeed Bhatt's (1999) criteria for reduced relatives, namely:
(i) they can appear in postcopular position (cf., for this criterion, Embick 1997, Iatridou et al. 1999):

(27) a. Ces livres sont à lire jusqu'à mardi. (Fr.)
these books are *à* read until Tuesday
b. Questi libri sono da leggere fino a martedì. (It.)
c. Aceste cărți sunt de citit pînă marți. (Rom.)

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(28) * These books are to read until Tuesday.
(ii) relativization is strictly local:
(29) a. * Un livre à dire à tes enfants de lire (Fr.)
a book *à* tell to your children *de* read
b. *O carte de zis copiilor să citească (Rom.)
a book *de* tell.Sup children.the.D Subj. read.3pl
(30) A book to tell your children to read

On the other hand, infinitival relatives involving relativization of the subject, which in English do qualify as reduced structures, do not exist in Romance:

(31) a. a man to fix the sink
b. *un homme à réparer l'évier (Fr.)
c. *un om de reparat chiuveta (Rom.)

A further difference is that periphrastic passive is not allowed in Romance, as opposed to English:

(32) a. a book to be read
b. *un livre à être lu

Some of these properties are also found with TCs. First, the gap in the non-finite clause only corresponds to the object:

(33) a. ces livres / *ces personnes sont difficiles à lire. (Fr.)
these books/these persons are hard to read
b. *Cette personne est difficile à dormir.
this person is difficult to sleep
c. *Cette personne est difficile à parler avec.
this person is tough to speak with

Secondly, the gap cannot be further embedded inside the complement of the infinitival, it must be an argument of the infinitival, unlike in English:

(34) a. *Un livre difficile à convaincre tes enfants de lire. (Fr.)
b. *O carte greu de convins pe elevi să (o) citească. (Rom.)
c. A book hard to convince your children to read

On the other hand, no periphrastic passive is allowed:

(35) * un livre difficile à être lu (Fr.)
a book difficult to be read

The Romanian supine, used in TCs and modal reduced relatives, arguably has a more reduced structure than the infinitive, since it does not allow clitics of any sort, nor "clausal" negation (which is the same as constituent negation in Romanian) – it only allows a participial negation (*ne*) in the reduced relative construction, which then gets a special meaning (impossibility; the obligation meaning is lost), as shown by Soare (2002):

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(36) a. înainte de a-i spune (Rom.)
before of to-him(DCl) do.Inf
b. * e greu de-i spus (Rom.)
is hard *de*-him(DCl) tell
c. pentru a nu rata (Rom.)
for to not fail
d. *carte greu de nu citit (Rom.)
book hard *de* not read.Sup

Bhatt (1999) proposed, for English, the generalization that reduced relatives are only based on the relativization of the *external* argument. However, this formulation can extend neither to Romance modal relatives, where it is the object that it is relativized, nor to the English passive participle. We propose then to replace the term 'external' by the term 'non-case-marked' in Bhatt's generalization. This implies that modal reduced-relatives are passive-like structures, in spite of their active morphology. Some evidence for this comes from the fact that in Romanian, agent adjuncts with supine (in modal relatives and even in TCs) are possible for some speakers; French also allows PP agents in modal infinitival relatives, as seen in (38):

(37) a. Sunt multe lucruri de rezolvat de către Ministerul Agriculturii. (Rom.)
are many things *de* solve.Sup by ministry.the agriculture.the.G.
'There are many things to be solved by the Ministry of Agriculture.'
(www.amosnews.ro/PrintArticle201911.phtml)
b. Japonia este greu de înțeles de către cineva care nu locuieşte acolo
Japan is hard *de* understand.Sup by somebody who not lives there
'Japan is difficult to understand for somebody who doesn't live there.'
(www.targetonline.ro/articol_168/soc_cultural_in_japonia.html)
(38) livre à lire par tous (Fr.)
book to read by all

Based on the formal and syntactic resemblances between non-finite forms used in TCs and in modal reduced relatives, we can assume that the same structure underlies both. Then we can conclude that raising in TC in Romance is based on A-movement, and that TCs as well as modal reduced relatives are based on a passive inflection.

We consider this inflection to be an inflection with modal properties, I_{Mod}, which normally combines with a Pred head in order to externalize the object, as passive morphology normally does in these languages. The only exception would be TCs, in which the t*ough*-adjective directly selects I_{Mod}. Since the introductory element appears both in attributive/predicative uses and in argument uses (in TC), we cannot take it to represent C or Pred, so we consider the whole complex WRom. *à*+Inf., Rom. *de*+Sup. to represent the Spell-Out of I_{Mod}. We assume that I_{Mod} has a subspecified modal meaning. Either it is modal by itself – deontic necessity under Pred –, or it is selected by a modal, when selected by the *tough*-adjective. We assume that *tough*-predicates introduce modality (see Giurgea and Soare forth.). Moreover, in Romanian, under Pred with participial Negation (*ne*-), it expresses impossibility:

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(39) carte de necitit (Rom.)
book *de ne*-read.Sup
'unreadable book'

This analysis encounters some potential problems. One of them is that these structures use active morphology. The answer that we could suggest runs in the following terms. Historically, the origin of the construction is the nominal use of the infinitive. This is clear in Romanian, where the supine form is also one of the complex-event-nominalizations, and in Latin, where it can also build simple and complex event nominalizations. (Latin uses its 'Supine' in TCs but not in modal reduced relatives, for which it has a special participial form – *-nd-us*).

(40) tunsul oilor de către păstori (Rom.)
sheep.the.Gpl. by shepherds
(41) a. facile dictū (Lat.)
easy say-*tu*-Abl. (*tu* = Sup)
b. (frequens) concursus omnium
frequent gather-*tu*-Nom. all.Gpl. (*tu* = Nominalizer: *-ing*)
c. (...) a mulieribus, quas frequens partus debiles reddit
from women which.Apl. frequent childbirth.Nsg. weak.Apl. makes

In Western Romance, the nominal use of the Infinitive is more sporadic, but still possible:

(42) le manger (Fr.)
the eat.Inf

Since with event nominalizations, the object is not accusative-marked, but case-marked by some nominal functional material (getting genitive), we must conclude that v* is lacking[1]. So lack of v* is not incompatible with infinitive morphology. We consider that the same lack of v* is found with I_{Mod}. The difference is that case-marking does not come from a nominalizer (since I_{Mod} is not a nominalization), so it must obtain externally to the structure.

Another potential problem concerns object case-licensing in the Romanian supine. We saw that in Romanian the supine may also appear in the impersonal use of *tough*-adjectives, where we don't expect a passive form (see 26 above). However, the supine only marginally allows an object in the impersonal construction. DPs morphologically marked for Accusative are impossible (pronouns including clitics and PE-accusatives):

(43) *E greu de convins pe deputați/ pe mine. (Rom.)
is hard *de* convince.Sup Ac deputies/Ac me

Even DPs without an explicit Accusative marking are not always good; only weak DPs seem to be allowed:

[1] Active nominalizations do exist, cf. Borer (2005), Cornilescu (2001), contra Grimshaw (1990), but they still do not assign accusative in English and in Romanian. English allows two types of genitive in this case, whereas in Romanian these nominalizations are unergative. For these cases, we should assume an active v without the property of accusative case assignment.

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(44) a. E greu de trimis atîtea pachete prin poştă. (Rom.)
is hard *de* send.Sup so-many packs by post
b. ??E greu de trimis aceste pachete prin poştă
is hard *de* send.Sup these packs by post

This could indicate that in Romanian there are two kinds of object case assignment: a strong Accusative and a weak one (for strong vs. weak Accusative, see Cornilescu and Dobrovie-Sorin (2006) and that in the supine construction strong Accusative case is not available.

Since weak DPs may also raise, we must assume that weak case assignment is always optional:

(45) Atâtea pachete sunt greu de trimis. (Rom.)
so-many packs are hard *de* send.Sup

Finally, another question that could be raised with respect to this analysis is the nature of raising found in attributive uses of TCs and in reduced relatives. The following section is devoted to this matter.

4.2 The trigger of raising and case marking. Raising reduced relatives

Given the present hypothesis, the ultimate trigger of raising in predicative TCs is T, which case-licenses the object assigning it Nominative. However, for attributive TCs, a different mechanism is needed. We assume raising reduced relatives.

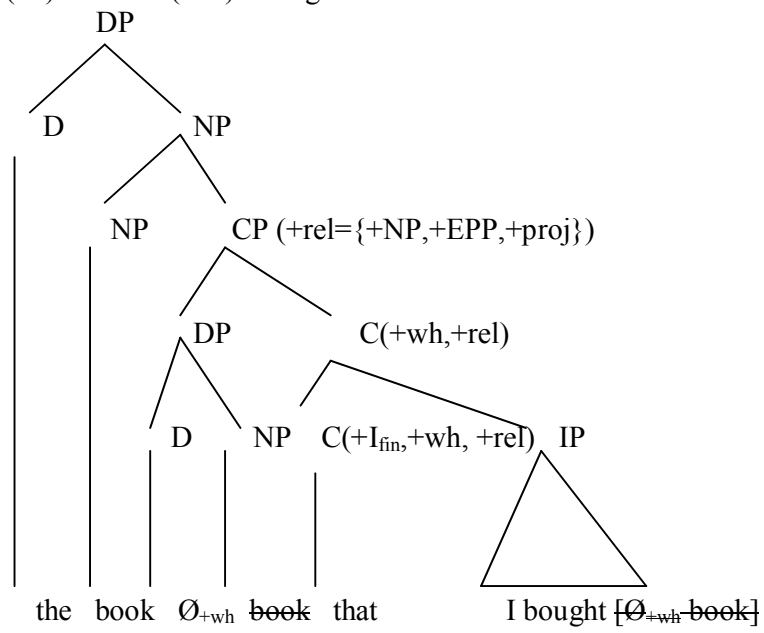
Bhatt (1999) shows that the arguments which support raising relatives also apply to reduced relatives:

(46) a. The headway made — Idiom chunks
b. the twenty people likely to come for dinner — Low reading of numerals

So, we propose that if a raising analysis can be assumed for full relatives, the same kind of analysis could very well apply to reduced relatives. For the implementation of raising relatives, we follow Bhatt (1999) and Bhatt (2002). In these works, he develops two proposals which try to solve a drawback of the standard analysis of raising relatives, whose most recent and full-fledged variant can be found in Bianchi (1999). The problem which Bhatt addresses concerns the selectional properties of D: in the standard analysis, one must assume that D as well as other functional nominal items merged above relatives do not always select for a +N projection, but may sometimes select for a CP. Bhatt solves this problem by considering that raising relatives become, during the derivation, nominal projections. In the 1999's analysis, he uses the idea of 'projecting movement', initially proposed by Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski in various drafts of their 2001 paper for free relatives: the idea is that raising relatives instantiate a structure where a selected item, the NP outer specifier of the relative C, gives its label to the object formed by its merger with the CP. This analysis is represented, for full relatives, in the trees below, where we introduced a feature +proj signalling label inheritance from the specifier, for the second specifier of the relative C:

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(47) the book (that) I bought



Chomsky (2000, 2001) proposed a general labelling rule for the operation Set Merge, according to which the label of the object formed by Merge (α, β) is the label of whichever of the two selects the other. As he acknowledges, this is an assumption independent of the other principles of the system. Chomsky suggests that building this rule into the computational system reduces computational burden. But we may also consider it a default rule, which can be overridden by a positive specification on the selector head which indicates that the label of the object formed by Merge will be the label of the selected item. The effect of reducing computational burden may be achieved by default rules too. If selector-projecting is the default, we may assume that selectee-projecting is triggered by a special feature, let's say +proj, always associated to a selectional feature (in this case EPP, but it is conceptually possible that this feature may be c-selectional; perhaps, this could work for conjunctions, and even for adjuncts). For raising relatives, the feature-complex {+N +EPP} will have a +proj feature[2].

In this analysis, in order to account for the differences between full and reduced relatives, we propose that in reduced relatives, the head responsible for raising is not $C_{+rel+wh}$, but rather $Pred_{+rel}$. This head does not have a +wh feature, so that is cannot attract a nominal with a special mark (namely +wh). It just looks for a +N, with the effect that the closest nominal will be attracted:

(48) [$_{NP}$ [$_{NP}$ carte] [Pred(+N+proj) [$_{IP}$ de citit ~~carte~~]]]
book *de* read

If we assume Chomsky's activeness condition, this closest nominal must lack case in order to be accessible to attraction. Since it does not have an unsatisfied +wh feature to make it active,

[2] Chomsky (2005) proposes another labelling mechanism, based on two principles: (i) in {H, α), H an LI, H is the label, and (ii) if α is internally merged to β, forming {α, β} then the label of β is the label of {α, β}. This system allows "projecting movement" only when the moved item is a head, in which case either item may project. Following Donati (2006), he takes free relatives to illustrate this situation.

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the only feature which could do this job for him is Case. This explains the generalization that in reduced relatives relativization is strictly local and only affects non-case-marked arguments.

The lack of case-marking of the relativized nominal explains the predicative use of reduced relatives, which is another feature distinguishing them from full relatives. In the predicative use, all we have to assume is a Pred not endowed with + rel+proj. The un-case-marked argument raises (perhaps through the specifier of this Pred) in order to be case-marked by T or by another higher head in the sentence (e.g. v* or AgrO for ECM).

For the interpretation of an NP without a +wh D, we may assume that Trace-Conversion creates the expression {the x. N(x)^x=n}, where n is λ-bound by the relativizer, anyway, regardless of the presence of a D (see Fox 2003 for Trace Conversion).

For attributive TCs, we assume a $Pred_{+rel}$ above the *tough*-adjective.

Bhatt (2002) replaces projecting movement, which is not a standard device in the current minimalist syntax (although its possibility is recognized by Chomsky 2005), with a nominalizer head. Then, instead of having an outer specifier in (47), we would have a Nom head selecting a +wh CP, attracting an NP in its specifier and marking the projection as nominal. Bhatt does not develop this analysis for reduced relatives, but we can assume that the Nom head selects a PredP in their case.

5. Agreement in TCs

Recall (12): in standard Romanian the *tough*-adjective doesn't agree with the "subject" (or head-noun in attributive use), while in western Romance and regional varieties of Romanian: the *tough*- adjective does agree:

(49) a. Aceste ipoteze sunt greu/*grele de acceptat (Rom.)
these hypotheses(fpl) are difficult.msg/difficult.fpl to accept
b. Ces hypothèses sont faciles à admettre. (Fr.)
these hypotheses(fpl) are difficult.fpl. to accept
c. Queste ipotesi sono difficili da accettare. (It.)

We propose that this difference comes from the selectional properties of the *tough*-adjective. We consider that predicative adjective agreement is realized in the configuration SpecPred - Comp-Pred. Agreeing *tough*-adjectives take the clause as an internal argument. Furthermore they project a Pred (or a) endowed with an attracting feature. Raising adjectives are adjectives combining with a Pred endowed with an attracting feature. So, we assume that SpecPred is a position which can also be filled by Movement, not only by Merge.

Non-agreeing *tough*-adjectives do not have two c-selectional patterns, one with an internal argument and one without. Their subject may be a DP, a full clause or a reduced clause. When it is a reduced clause (the supine) and there is an object in need for case-licensing, the object directly moves to SpecTP, triggering agreement with the copula but not with the adjective[3]. It cannot pass through SpecPredP because this position is occupied by the IP (the clause to

[3] Non-agreeing *tough*-adjectives have also been analyzed as adverbs inside the non-finite clause (IP here) by Soare (2002), Soare and Dobrovie-Sorin (2002). However, this does not seem to be correct, as no *bona fide* adverb can ever appear before the *de* head which introduces the non-finite clause:
(i) cărți greu de citit
books hard *de* read.Sup
(ii) *cărți bine/adesea de citit
books well/often *de* read.Sup
(iii) cărți de citit bine/adesea
books *de* read.Sup well/often

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which it belongs). We have to assume that a clausal 'subject' (SpecPred) is always linearized to the right.

(50) a. E [$_{PredP}$ [$_{Pred}$ Pred [$_{AP}$ greu]] [$_{CP}$să susții această ipoteză]].
is hard Subj hold.2sg this hypothesis
b. Această ipoteză e [$_{PredP}$ [$_{Pred}$ Pred [$_{AP}$ greu]] [$_{IP}$de susținut ~~această ipoteză~~]].
this hypothesis is hard *de* hold.Sup

This may be viewed as an instance of a rightward placement rule of heavy constituents, which underlies many linearization phenomena across languages:

(51) a. I often came to this conference.
b. I (*many times) came to this conference (many times).
(52) a. I carefully did the job.
b. I (*with care) did the job (with care).

Left-hand sentences are generally marked. So we may consider them to be in a peripherical position (SpecTop):

(53) Să susții această ipoteză e greu.
Subj hold.2sg this hypothesis is hard

In the attributive use, the Pred$_{+rel}$ takes as a complement the entire *tough*+IP construction, which is a PredP, finding the un-case-marked nominal inside the IP as the closest matching goal:

(54) o [$_{NP}$ [$_{NP}$ ipoteză] [$_{Pred}$ Pred$_{+rel}$ [$_{PredP}$ [$_{Pred}$ [$_{AP}$greu] Pred] [$_{IP}$ de susținut ~~ipoteză~~]
a hypothesis difficult *de* hold.Sup

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