Agreeing invariable adjectives in French

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Aims

- to analyze non-agreeing (invariable) adjectives in French (such as (1) and (2)), and
- to present novel data and account of those variants which do show agreement (3)

(1) Marie mange *sain*.
Marie eats *healthy.MASC.SG*
‘Mary eats healthily.’

(2) Marie travaille *dur*.
Mary works *hard.MASC.SG*
‘Mary works hard.’

(3) Cette fleur *sent* *bonne*.
this flower *smells.FEM.SG good*
‘This flower smells good.’
Claims

We look at various types of postverbal adjectives in French and claim that

- postverbal adjectives that can show agreement are all adjuncts
- they may be (re)analyzed as predicative adjuncts and in that case, they have to agree with a nominal
- in the latter case, they are structurally similar to depictive secondary predicates
- adjectives that behave as (direct) complements can never show agreement
Outline

1. Background

2. The data: “adverbal adjectives” (AA)

3. Diachronic/Romance Perspective

4. Analysis

5. Conclusions
1 Background

2 The data: “adverbal adjectives” (AA)

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5 Conclusions
Functions of adjectives in French

- French adjectives agree with a noun in gender and number, no matter if they are in attributive, or in predicative function
  - attributive function
    
    (4) les grandes maisons
    the.PL big.FEM.PL house.PL
    ‘the big houses’
  - predicative function
    
    (5) Les maisons sont grandes.
    the house.PL are big.FEM.PL
    ‘The houses are big.’
Adjectives as secondary predicates

Adjectives show agreement in this function as well (see Legendre 1997, Godard 2006):

- subject-oriented depictives

  (6) Marie est partie contente.  
      Mary is left happy.FEM      
      ‘Mary left happy.’

- object-oriented depictives

  (7) Elle loue des apparts vides.  
      she lets flat.PL empty.PL  
      ‘She lets flats empty.’
Adjectives modifying other categories

Adjectives can modify various other categories as well. In these cases they are (supposed to be) invariable, since there are no gender/number features to agree with:

- adjective or adverb

(8) Jean le voit tout clair.
    Jean it sees all clear
    ‘John sees it absolutely clearly.’

(9) C’est fort bien.
    it is strong well
    It is very good.

- verb

(10) Marie mange sain.
    Marie eats healthy.MASC.SG
    ‘Mary eats healthily.’

(11) Marie travaille dur.
    Marie works hard.MASC.SG
    ‘Mary works hard.’

- preposition

(12) Jean va direct à la gare.
    Jean goes direct to the station
    ‘John is going directly to the station.’
Agreement without a noun

Adjectives can show agreement with a noun that they do not directly modify:

- modifying another adjective, where that adjective agrees with the subject nominal

(13) Marie est *toute* émue.
Marie is all.FEM.SG moved
‘Mary is totally moved.’

(14) Les fenêtres sont *grandes* ouvertes.
the windows are big.FEM.PL open
‘The windows are wide open.’

- modifying a verb

(15) Cette fleur *sent* bonne.
this flower smells.FEM.SG good
‘This flower smells good.’
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Types of verb-adjective constructions I

1 Intransitive verb: the adjective is interchangeable with (and interpreted as) a manner adverb

(16) Jean parle *franc*/franchement.
Jean speaks *frank*/frankly.
‘John speaks frankly.’

2 Transitive verb: two construction types

1 Group A: the adjective-adverb is not compatible with any (other) complement
→ two possible interpretations

★ optionally transitive verbs: the verb stands without a complement, but it is semantically transitive, the adjective modifies the verb and/or an implicit generic object

(17) Jean mange *sain* (*une salade).
Jean eats *healthy* a salad
‘John eats healthily.’
exclusively transitive verb: the adjective is the direct complement of the verb (if another complement is present, it is introduced by a preposition)

(18) La valise pèse **lourd** (*25 kilos).
the suitcase weighs heavy (*25 kilograms)
‘The suitcase weighs a lot.’

(19) Jean coupe **court** à nos protestations.
Jean cuts short to our protests
‘Jean interrupts our protests.’

(20) Les mots ne nous trahissent pas [....]: l’erreur du langage en dit **long** sur notre pensée cachée.
the words not us betray the error of the language about says long on our thought hidden
‘The words do not betray us: slips of the tongue reveal a lot about our hidden thoughts.’ (Louis Aragon, Les Aventures de Télémaque, 1922)
Group B: the adjective is compatible with a direct object

(21) Jean a refusé net ta proposition.
Jean has refused neat your proposal
‘John has refused your proposal straightforwardly.’

(22) [Et pourquoi doit-on identifier quelqu’un selon sa nation?]
Pourquoi pas selon sa citoyenneté et dire tout
why not according to his citizenship and say all
court qu’il est canadien?
short that he is Canadian
Agreement on invariable As

Postverbal adjectives can show agreement with the subject of an intransitive verb, or with the object of transitive verbs from Group B

(23) Cette fleur sent bonne.
    this.fem flower smells good.fem
    (Noailly, to appear)

Literary examples from the Dicoadverbe databank (University of Graz):

(24) La lampe brûlait très haute.
    the lamp was burning very high.fem
    (Rougon-Macquart: Une page d’amour, 1878, via Frantext)

(25) Car, que la pluie tombe légère ou drue, les [...] spectateurs [...] as, that the rain falls light or thick, the spectators
    n’abandonnent pas la position.
    do not leave the position
    (Roger Caillois ed., Jeux et sports 1967, via Frantext)
Examples from the Internet
they illustrate contemporary, more spontaneous language:

(26) Je suis sur le point d’arrêter nette ma conso de cannabis. I am on the point of stopping neat my consumption of cannabis

(27) Cela signifie qu’ils vont faciles sur les articulations des legs
That means that they go easy on the joints of the legs
http://www.articles-lib.com/gras-et-chauve.html (08.11.2013)

(28) L’entraineur [...] exhorte les joueurs [...] à continuer par se to continue to fight durs pour le match [...].
(29) Qui peux m’expliquer pourquoi les ogives de la munition F5 [..] arrivent droites dans les cibles à 25m (et F5 arrive right into the target to 25m (and of course bien sûr plus loin).

more far)


(30) La danse s’est arrêtée courte, empêchement soudain.

the dance is stopped short, hindrance sudden

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Usual assumptions in the grammars

- AAs are always invariable (?)
- Analyzable as back formation from the corresponding adverbs in -ment
  hautement $\rightarrow$ aimer *haute, aimer haut
  franchement $\rightarrow$ parler *franche, parler franc
- AAs are a restricted group of exceptions
- New phenomenon, substandard language
Oral and written tradition in Romance

Hummel (2013):

- the use of adjectives in adverbial functions goes back directly to Latin
- belongs to the popular-oral tradition
- the only general mechanism of adverb formation that can be found in all Romance languages (no -mente adverbs in those without a written standard or late literacy, ex. Romanian, Sardinian, South Italian dialects)
- more prevalent in language varieties less exposed to the written standard, schooling and literacy (Louisiana and Acadian French, ’habla inculta’ in American Spanish)
- the most frequent adjectives of language (more limited use of descriptive devices than in writing)
Latin

- **two canonical types of adverb formation**
  - *longus, longa, longum* (adj.) → *longē* (adv.) (old instrumental case?)
  - *fortis, fortis, fortē* (adj.) → *fortiter* (adv.)

- **nominative-accusative singular neutral form of the adjective ending in *ē* used as adverb**
  - *brevis, brevis, brevē* (adj.) → *brevē*
  - *difficilē, celerē, dulcē, fidelē, grandē, immanē, immortalē, iugē, mitē, perennē, perspicacē, praecoquē, sublimē, vilē*

- **neutral form ending in *-um* used as an adverb**
  - *tranquillus, -a, -um* (adj.) → *tranquillum* (adv.)
  - *multum, paulum, primum, altum, rapidum, firmum, tranquillum, falsum*

→ the ’exceptional’ forms of Latin correspond roughly to the most common invariable adjectives of Romance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Adjective Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Les hommes travaillent <em>dur/durement</em>.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Frioul.</td>
<td>I oms a lavorin <em>dûr</em>.</td>
</tr>
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Invariable adjectives in Romance

Fr. Les hommes travaillent dur/durement.
Sp. Los hombres trabajan duro/duramente.
Pt. Os homens trabalham duro/duramente.
It. Gli uomini lavorano duro/duramente.
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Sard. Sos omine trabagliana folte.
Frioul. I oms a lavorin dûr.

Cat. examples from old written texts in the *Diccionari català-valencià-balear*, http://dcvb.iecat.net/
Mono- and bicategorial systems (Hummel)

Monocategorial system
Oral-popular tradition

Bicategorial system
Written-literary tradition

adjective-adverb
*dur, dure, durs, dures*

adjective
*dur, dure, durs, dures*

adverb
*durement*
Louisiana and Acadian French examples

Acadia

une fois que vous la vendez **légal**
c’était engraisssé **naturel** là
on pourra en parler un petit peu plus **profond**
ton animau grandissait **naturel**

Louisiana (Cajun)

An Il’a espéré **patient**
I nous a oubliés **complet**
Il a fait **aisé**
Ça halait **lourd**
Some Spanish examples

Oral corpus of Chilean Spanish (Kluge 2005):

- adjectives modifying another adjective

  (31) no me gusta mucho dormir porque ya depués (=después) me ando media dormida (Marcela, 835)

toda soñolienta, bastantes vagos, reclutas inútiles totales, tontos rematados, una vecina tonta perdida, mera bonita, de pura tonta, chicos demasiados jóvenes, muchos mayores méritos, mucha más mala leche, niños heridos leves, ciudadanos granadinos enfermos graves

- adjectives modifying a verb

  (32) s .. y, si estudio en algún col-, institU:to en una universidad me pagan elloh directo la carrera .. pagan la mensualidad directo (Sandra, 210)

  pensar positivo, entenderse perfecto, aprender rápido (fácil), ir frecuente, pagar directo, me toca duro, vestirse normal, leer fuerte, cambiar total, pensar igual, hablar distinto (raro, correcto, cantadito, rico, sencillo)
Agreement on adjectives

Based on Hummel (2007, 2014):

(33) les voy a dar tres ejemplos muy rápidos (Argentina)

(34) — Qu consejo les darías, a otros jóvenes de tu región, que piensan en irse a vivir acá [= Santiago de Chile], que deberían hacer, que no
— No sé, que, que se vengan pero: así como, que lo tomen todo como relajadito [Kluge, Julia, 1209]
— Así que estoy sola durante el día, claro así hago las cosas más tranquilas, más relajadas [Kluge, Graciela, 361] (Chile)

Historical Dictionary of Adjective-Adverbs

- 13000 examples already accessible online
- Databank: http://languageserver.uni-graz.at/dicoadverbe/
- source: FRANTEXT corpus
- 698 verbs, 291 adjectives
- 2081 lexicalized verb-adjective combinations
- new examples from the internet

→ small group of exceptions... ?
“Expressions fort savoureuses” (Tesnière)

Vin acheter et vendre chiar (12e)
Le sage parlant parle court (1581)
Voir clair, voir trouble, voir double (1775)
On le gronde tout haut, on l’aime tout bas (1857)
La vie est trop courte pour s’habiller triste (20e)
Chiez dur ou chiez mou, mais chiez dans le trou (20e)
Quand on contraint une foule vivre bas, a ne la porte pas penser haut (1937)
Écrivez petit, vos lecteurs verront grand (1959)
Il [Rasmussen] n’a jamais été contrôlé positif (20e)
Mais non, voyons, je baise utile ! (1982)
Background

The data: “adverbal adjectives” (AA)

Diachronic/Romance Perspective

Analysis

Conclusions
Questions

- Are these (i) adjectives or adverbs, (ii) complements or adjuncts?
- Are they all the same structurally?
- What happens when they are not invariable?
Category: Adjectives or adverbs

- semantically they are closer to manner and resultative adverbials than to regular adjectives
- morphologically, they are generally invariable, but “look like adjectives” (cf. *net vs. nettement*)
- syntactically they are analyzed as adjectives and not adverbs (Bonami, to appear), since:
  - unlike adverbs, they cannot appear between the auxiliary and the past participle in complex verb tenses
    - (36) *Jean a **dur** travaillé.
    - Jean has hard worked
    - (37) Jean a soigneusement travaillé.
    - Jean has carefully worked
  - they cannot precede infinitives like adverbs do
    - (38) a. Il a décidé de soigneusement travailler.
    - b. *Il a décidé de **dur** travailler.
    - c. Il a décidé de travailler **dur**.
Complements or adjuncts I

- Abeillé & Godard (2004) analyze them as direct complements to the verb, however
- we follow Noailly (to appear) in claiming that a difference between complements and adjuncts is necessary:
  - Group 1 adjectives (which modify intransitive verbs) are clearly adjuncts with a manner adverb interpretation

(39) Jean parle franc.
Jean speaks honest
‘John speaks honestly.’
• Within Group 2, Group B adjectives are also adjuncts (since they can co-occur with a direct complement) (Abeillé & Mouret 2010)

(40) Jean a refusé net notre proposition.
    Jean has refused neat our proposition.

(41) Marie chante faux la Marseillaise
    Marie sings false the Marseillaise.
Group A adjectives can be complements (42) (exclusively transitive verb), or adjuncts (43) (optionally transitive verbs) (Noailly 1994, Abeillé & Godard 2004)

(42) Marie risque **gros** (*sa vie).
Marie risks great her life.

(43) Marie mange **sain** (*une salade).
Mary eats healthy a salad
Agreement: where do we stand?

Adjectives in French exhibit number and gender agreement when

- they modify a noun (which has \( \phi \) features)
- they modify another adjective that agrees with a noun in \( \phi \) features
- they are primary predicates (e.g. in copular constructions)
- they are secondary predicates (e.g. depictives)

They are invariable when

- they modify prepositions
- they are adjuncts next to some (agentive) intransitive verbs
- they are complements of transitive verbs (\textit{peser lourd, risquer gros}) or modifiers next to optionally transitive verbs (\textit{manger sain})
- they are adjuncts next to exclusively transitive/unaccusative verbs
  → this is the category that has variation w.r.t agreement

How do we account for this pattern?
Invariable that agrees

- unaccusative verb (Group 1)

\[(44)\] Cette fleur sent **bonne**.
this.fem flower smells good.fem
(Noailly, to appear)

\[(45)\] La lampe brûlait très **haute**.
the lamp was burning very high.fem
(Rougon-Macquart: Une page d’amour, 1878, via Frantext)

- transitive verb (Group 2/B)

\[(46)\] Je suis sur le point d’arrêter **nette** ma conso
I am on the point of stopping neat my consumption
de cannabis.

of cannabis

http://egeria.overblog.com/faites-taire-votre-gremlin
(06.12.2013)
Proposal 1

Our take on the previous issues:

- these are adjectives, which can be used adverbialey, i.e., can function as adverbial adjuncts in the clause
- the variable (usually invariable) adjectives are adjuncts
- they agree with a nominal since they are predicative
Analysis:

- French adjectives show agreement when predicated of a nominal
- The agreeing forms of ‘invariable’ as suggests that they are reanalyzed as predicative adjuncts
- Since they are VP adjuncts (even as regular adjuncts), they agree with internal arguments

\[(47) \quad [vP \ [v \ \text{refusé}] \ [vP \ [vP \ \text{net} \ [V \ [V \ \text{refusé}] \ [DP \ \text{notre proposition}]]]]] \]

They show formal agreement with a nominal:

They agree with the object of transitive verbs or the subject of unaccusative verbs (not with Agents) (see also Ledgeway 2011 on Southern Italian dialects)
intermediate stage between classical Latin and modern Romance:
active/stative orientation in the morphosyntactic (nominal and verbal) system

verbal system: “split intransitivity” — perfective forms of unaccusative verbs and passives formed with auxiliary esse, perfective forms of unergative and transitive verbs with habere

nominal system: the accusative case generalized to mark all undergoer participants (also subjects)

adverbial syntax: in Southern Italian dialects, manner adverbs are expressed by the corresponding adjective, which can agree with undergoer participants

(48) tu li sa canusciri **buoni** li disturbi di saluti
you them know good.MASC.PL the.MASC.PL complaintsMASC.PL of health
‘You can recognize health problems expertly.’
(eastern Sicilian dialect, from Ledgeway 2011: 38, ex. 10a)

(49) havi tri ghiorna ca mi priparu, ma **bona** nisciu, averu?
it.has three days that me prepare but good.FEM.SG come.out true
‘I’ve been preparing for three days, but I’ll do alright, won’t I?’
(eastern Sicilian dialect, from Ledgeway 2011: 38, ex. 10c)
A similar construction: depictive secondary predicates

Predicative adjectives show agreement

- when they are complements (50-a)-(50-b)...

(50)  a. Jean rend Marie heureuse.
      John makes Mary \textit{happy}.FEM
      ‘John makes Mary happy.’

   b. Marie est heureuse.
      Marie is \textit{happy}.FEM
      ‘Mary is happy.’
A similar construction: depictive secondary predicates II

...and when they are adjuncts
depictive secondary predicates are usually considered to be adjuncts
they can be subject-oriented or object-oriented ((51-a) and (51-b); see Legendre 1997, Godard 2006).

(51)  a. Marie est partie contente.
      Mary is left happy.FEM
      ‘Mary left happy.’

b. Elle loue des appartements vides.
      she lets flat.PL empty.PL
      ‘She lets flats empty.’
A similar construction: depictive secondary predicates III

- object-oriented depictives are assumed to be VP-adjuncts in general, for French they have also been proposed to be complements of V (Legendre 1997, Irimia 2005)

- they agree with the internal argument
  Schultze-Berndt & Himmelmann (2004): cross-linguistically this often differentiates depictives from general adjuncts in agreement marking

(52) Jean mange la viande crue.
   Jean eats the meat raw.\text{FEM}
   ‘John eats the meat raw.’

(53) Marie a vu Claire bourrée.
    Marie has seen Claire drunk.\text{FEM}
    ‘Marie saw Claire drunk.’
Word order properties

- depictives follow the complement of the verb (when there is one)

(54) Jean loue son appartement vide.
      Jean lets his flat empty.

- ‘invariant’ adjectives generally precede the complement

(55) *Jean a refusé notre proposition net.
      Jean has refused our proposal neat

- however, these adjectives can follow the object nominal when they are themselves modified

(56) Il a refusé notre proposition tout net.
      he has refused our proposal completely neat
      ‘He has absolutely straightforwardly refused our proposal.’

- this word order is the same as that of depictives, and is a further difference between complement and adjunct adjectives
Reanalysis

- the As in question are associated with the internal argument (as part of the VP)
- the V-(DP)-AP surface order probably helps their reanalysis into predicative adjuncts as it is the same as that of secondary predicates although it is hard to find evidence that there would be more agreeing examples in final position (i.e., following the object when there is one)
- since these elements are adjectives, they agree with the nominal they are (structurally) predicated of (contrary to PPs, AdvPs)
Conclusions

- we looked at the types of invariant adjectives, and found that some of them have agreeing variants
- the agreeing variants always agree with the internal argument of the verb
  - they are predicative adjuncts
  - them being (structural) predicates is what gives rise to the agreement pattern
- this makes them similar to depictive secondary predicates, but their word order is different (though it exhibits variation)
- analyzing agreeing ‘invariant’ adjectives as predicative adjuncts has the consequence that predicates are shown to uniformly agree with their subjects in French, distinguishing them from general adverbial adjuncts
Thank you!
Selected references


http://languageserver.uni-graz.at/dicoadverbe/