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DEGREE MODIFICATION AND ADJECTIVES OF TEMPORARY AND/OR PERMANENT PROPERTY

As all High Degree Modifiers (HDMs), *πολύ* in Greek and *très* and *beaucoup* in French express the high degree in which a predicate holds for its subject. Due to this nature of degree-ness, all DMs are predicted to combine with gradable predicates such as *love/αγαπώ/aimer* and *tall/ψηλός/grand* (Kennedy 1999 et Kennedy & McNally 2008). However, *beaucoup* is problematic with the adjective *grand* but combinable with an adjective like *sick/malade/άρρωστος*. *Πολύ* and *très* combine with both predicates. In this paper, we support the hypothesis that *beaucoup* combines only with adjectives of either permanent or temporary property and is problematic with adjectives that specialize with either of these two facets (see Martin 2008). In doing so, it assumes the role of a disambiguator. It signals that, in a specific context of use, an ambiguous adjective (with a permanent and a temporary reading) is used under the second reading only. *Πολύ* and *très* combine with all types of adjectives.

Keywords: high degree modifier, permanent property, temporary property, adjective, semantics

1. INTRODUCTION

The modifiers *très* and *beaucoup* in French express the degree to which any noun phrase exhibits the property of the predicate of the sentence:

- (1) Paul est très grand.
“Paul is very tall.”
- (2) Jean l’ aime beaucoup.
“John loves him very much.”

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Thus in (1) *très* indicates that the height of Paul is such that it exceeds the average to be contextually defined. In (2) *beaucoup* indicates that John's love for the person in question is great. According to the hypothesis of the existence of a pragmatic scale by Gaatone (2007), *très* and *beaucoup* are used to calculate the degree of a quality. In the examples above, these terms place Paul's height and John's love at a point higher than a certain standard to be contextually defined on a scale of gradation.²

Following Gaatone (2007) and Marchello-Nizia (2000) *très* and *beaucoup* are degree modifiers (DM). Due to their nature, DMs combine with gradable predicates (Kennedy 1999; McNally 2008) such as *tall* and *love*.

This incorrectly predicts that *beaucoup* could combine with an adjective such as *grand*. The example in (3) shows that this MD does not combine with this adjective. However, it agrees with an adjective like *malade* "sick", as noticed by Doetjes (2008). As for *très*, this MD combines with both:

(3) *Paul est beaucoup grand.

"Paul is very tall."

(4) Après avoir été beaucoup malade ces derniers jours, j'ai repris la décoration aujourd'hui.

"After being a lot sick these last days, I restarted painting today."

(5) Très malade (Doetjes 2008)

"Very sick."

According to grammarians, *beaucoup* is combinable with verbs (2) while *très* with adjectives and adverbs. Given the wide acceptance of the combination of an adjective with the DM *très* and the differences in distribution between *beaucoup* and *très* the questions that arise are: what are the conditions of acceptability of *beaucoup* with an adjective? Why can *très* be constructed with an adjective like *malade* (4) and not with an adjective like *grand* (3)? What are the categories of adjectives with which *beaucoup* combines? Which types of adjectives *do not* combine with *beaucoup*? In what sense is the semantics of *beaucoup* different from that of *très*?

The answer to these questions becomes more interesting especially because in another language like Greek the MD *πολύ*, which seems to be the most natural Greek equivalent of the two French MDs, behaves like the French MD *très* (Vlachou 2020, 2021, 2022) but does not present the restrictions of the term *beaucoup* discussed above:

² On the notion of norm Corblin (2015, 2022) et Corblin and Vlachou (2016).

- (6a) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ ψηλός³.
“Paul is very tall.”
- (6b) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ άρρωστος.
“Paul is very sick.”

The data above raise the question of why there are DMs in the different languages that behave differently with respect to adjectives and, moreover, what is the semantics of the adjectives that justifies the different grammaticality conditions illustrated above.

Vlachou (2020, 2021) advances the hypothesis that the relevant difference between the two DMs *très* and *πολύ*, on the one hand, and *beaucoup*, on the other, is that *beaucoup* only combines with eventive adjectives while *très* combines with stative adjectives as well. According to the same hypothesis, *πολύ* appears as the most neutral of the three DMs being acceptable everywhere. Basically, *beaucoup* is grammatical with an adjective like *malade* in examples like (4) because this adjective can, depending on the context, denote the case(s), the event(s), the period(s), the moment(s) of life in which an individual has the property of “being sick”. The predicate *tall* (1), on the other hand, denotes exclusively the state in which Paul’s height exceeds that of the average, to be defined in context. According to Vlachou (2020, 2021), it is this difference that justifies the different combinability conditions of the DMs *très*, *beaucoup* and *πολύ* with the adjectives, illustrated by the examples in (1-6).

Vlachou (2020, 2021) has not covered the entire combinability paradigm of the DMs *beaucoup*, *très* and *πολύ*. As an example, *beaucoup* is grammatical in cases like (7) where the predicate (*intelligent*) is not interpreted as eventive.

- (7) Il eût été beaucoup intelligent de ranger les cinq rubriques dans trois camemberts dans le même ordre [...]⁴.
“It would have been very intelligent to range the five columns in three camemberts in the same order.”

To address the problem of the combinability of DMs with adjectives, we will rely on a collection of constructed data (extracted or not from the literature on DMs) and natural data (found on the web). First, we will review the most relevant analyses on the terms *très*, *πολύ*, on the one hand, and *beaucoup* (Section 2). Secondly, we will support the hypothesis that their differences regarding their

³ For the combination of *πολύ* with the adjective *ψηλός* “tall” see also Gavriilidou and Giannakidou (2016).

⁴ <https://www.latribune.fr/bourse/20110906trib000647106/valeurs-financieres-les-nouveaux-indesirables-du-cac40-.html>.

combinability with adjectives can be explained through the difference between adjectives of permanent or temporary properties (Section 3). Finally, we will present the most important results of our article (Section 4).

2. THE DEGREE MODIFIERS *TRES*, *BEAUCOUP* AND *ΠΟΛΥ* IN THE LITERATURE

The literature on Greek and French MDs is rich. For our purposes, we focus only on the literature on the compatibility of the DMs in question with adjectives⁵. It should also be specified that the DM *πολύ* is not studied here as a prefix⁶.

2.1. Degree, quantity and norm

Gaetone (2007) discusses the distribution of the modifiers *beaucoup*, *bien* “well”, *très*, *aussi* “equally”, *autant* “equally”, *si* “so”, *tant* “so” and *tellement* “so”. As for our preferred pair, *très* and *beaucoup*, he asserts that *beaucoup* does not combine with an adjective such as *travailleur* “hardworking” but with past participles that behave like adjectives and illustrates this point with examples like (8-9):

- (8) Allain est (*très*/**beaucoup* *travailleur*). (Gaetone 2007, slightly changed)
“Allain is a very hardworking person.”
- (9) On a (*beaucoup*/*très*) *apprécié* ce discours. (Gaetone 2007)
“We very much appreciated this discourse.”

Marchello-Nizia (2000) and Carlier (2011) undertake a diachronic study of *beaucoup* and *très* and propose a parallelism between the classical Latin *multum* and *beaucoup*. Carlier (2011) also seeks to answer the question why it is difficult for them to combine with adjectives only by resorting to diachrony. Drawing on data in which *beaucoup* is problematic with an adjective, Carlier proposes that it is not good there because it is originally nominal (*beau* means “nice” and *coup* means “hit”). Having this status, it behaves like a noun that can modify nouns and verbs (10-11):

- (10) Et leur pel est moult bonne pour fere biau coup de choses quant elle est bien conreiee et prise en bonne sayson. (Gaston Phébus, *Le livre de chasse* [1387], mentioned by Carlier 2011)

⁵ For the Greek DMs the reader may consult Delveroudi and Vassilaki (1999), Ralli (2001), Ευθυμίου (2003), Gavriilidou and Efthymiou (2003), Γαβριηλίδου (2013), Corblin and Vlachou (2016), Giannakidou and Gavriilidou (2016), Efthymiou (2016); Βλάχου and Φραντζή (2017).

⁶ See Delveroudi and Vassilaki (1999); Gavriilidou and Efthymiou (2003) on the prefix *πολύ*-.

- (11) Et pour ce, chieres amies, veu que ce ne vous puet riens valoir et beaucoup nuire, ne vous vueilliez en tieulx fanfelues moult delicter.
(Chr. De Pisan [1405], mentioned by Carlier 2011)

Paying particular attention to the synchrony of the French language, Doetjes (2008) proposes that DMs form a continuum according to their compatibility with different grammatical categories. In this categorical hierarchy, adjectives are placed first, then verbs, then nouns. The proximity between two specific grammatical categories predicts the compatibility of an MD with words from these two categories. For example, if an MD is compatible with an adjective such as *grand* “tall” it is predicted that it agrees well with a verb such as *apprécier* “appreciate” but does not agree with a noun such as *eau* “water” (which is more far away on this continuum). *Très* is a good example for this.

- (12) Un homme très grand/ce président a été très apprécié/
“A man is very big / this president has been much appreciated/
*j’ai bu très eau.
I drank much water.”

Except for the exceptional the cases (Vlachou to appear) in which nouns are used predicatively (ex. *C’est une ville très sport* = people in this town are very sportive) the MD *très* is not compatible with nouns because this category is not close to the category of adjectives as proposed by Doetjes (2008). This theory correctly predicts that *beaucoup* is compatible with verbs, nouns but not with adjectives such as *grand* “tall”. Compare (2-3) to (13):

- (2) Jean l’aime beaucoup.
(3) *Paul est beaucoup grand.
(13) Beaucoup de soupe.
“Much soup”

Despite the fact that the continuum is an interesting concept that can predict the compatibility of MDs with certain types of grammatical categories, the system proposed by Doetjes (2008) does not aim to explain why *beaucoup* is grammatical with certain types of adjectives only (see *beaucoup malade* “very sick” vs. **beaucoup grand* “very tall”).

As for *πολύ*, the most natural equivalent of *très* and *beaucoup* in Greek, it has also been analyzed as a DM by Giannakidou et Gavriliidou (2016). More specifically, they study, among other things, its compatibility with adjectives in examples like (6) above, listed below:

(6a) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ ψηλός.

“Paul is very tall.”

(6b) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ άρρωστος.

“Paul is very sick.”

Adopting a comparative approach between Greek and French, Vlachou (2020, 2021) proposes a semantic typology of certain DMs in these two languages and emphasizes on two semantic parameters regulating their distribution: the parameter of quantity and the norm. For example, in a context where George is only 1 cm taller than John the following sentences are problematic: #*Georges est très grand par rapport à Jean* / *Ο Γιώργος είναι πολύ ψηλός σε σχέση με τον Γιάννη* “George is very tall compared to John”. According to the parameter of norm, *beaucoup* does not combine with *grand* because it is normative. As we saw in the introduction, adjectives such as *grand/ψηλός/tall* are normative in the sense that they imply some gradation with respect to a standard of comparison against which their content is compared. Consequently, the normative or non-normative dimension of the predicate does not suffice to explain the different compatibility conditions of DMs like *beaucoup*, *très* and *πολύ* with adjectives discussed in the previous section. Similarly, the dimension of the quantity in question does not seem decisive in differentiating in statements like (3-4) above.

2.2. State predicates vs. event predicates or property predicates

In the literature dealing with the distribution of DMs, the distinctions between state predicates (in other words stative predicates) and event predicates (also called eventive predicates), on the one hand, and state predicates and property predicates, on the other, have been suggested. According to Vlachou (2020, 2021), *très* combines with stative adjectives only (1, 5) while *beaucoup* with eventive adjectives (3-4). According to this hypothesis, in a sentence like (4), the adjective *malade* can refer to events in which the individual in question is sick. According to the same hypothesis, *beaucoup*, by itself, quantifies over these events and reports that their quantity is large. It is for these reasons that the sentence in (4) means that the subject has often been ill.

(1) Paul est très grand.

“Paul is very tall.”

(3) *Paul est beaucoup grand.

“Paul is very tall.”

(4) Après avoir été beaucoup malade ces derniers jours, j’ai repris la décoration aujourd’hui.

“After being a lot sick these last days, I restarted painting today.”

- (5) Très malade. (Doetjes 2008)
“Very sick.”

According to the same hypothesis, when *très* combines with predicates like *malade* it intensifies the state of illness of the subject of the sentence. Seen from this angle, statements like (5) mean that the intensity of the state of disease of the individual in question is large compared to a certain norm.

According to Vlachou’s hypothesis, *πολύ* is insensitive to the difference between state and event predicates and it is grammatical in statements given in (6), repeated below.

- (6a) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ ψηλός.
“Paul is very tall.”
(6b) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ άρρωστος.
“Paul is very sick.”

If this hypothesis were plausible, it would explain why *beaucoup* cannot combine with an adjective such as *grand* in (3). Since this predicate cannot denote events in which the subject verifies the property in question, it is not an event predicate which, according to Vlachou, is necessary for *beaucoup*.

Similarly, the statement in (6a) would mean that Paul is in a state of tallness that exceeds the average and that of (6b) would mean that Paul is often sick. The intuition of native speakers is that *πολύ άρρωστος* can also refer to the intensity of Paul’s disease state, which proves that the difference between state and event predicates is not clear in these data. Moreover, there are data as in (7) in which *beaucoup* combines with an adjective such as *intelligent* which is not eventive at all. We return to this point in the next section.

- (7) Il eut été beaucoup intelligent de ranger les cinq rubriques dans trois camemberts dans le même ordre [...].
“It would have been very intelligent to range the five columns in three camembert in the same order.”

Aiming at the comparison of the pair *très-beaucoup* to the Dutch pair *veel-erg* “many-very” Doetjes (2008) proposes the hypothesis that *veel* is semantically equivalent to *beaucoup* and *erg* to *très*. Also dealing with the *veel-erg* pair, Broekhuis et den Dikken (2012) introduce another distinction for the distribution of DMs. They propose that these modifiers are sensitive to the difference between stage predicate (Stage Level (SL) predicates) and property predicates (Individual Level (IL) predicates), respectively:

- (14) Jan is veel afwezig.
 "John is often absent." (Broekhuis & den Dikken 2012)
- (15) Jan is erg afwezig.
 "John is often absent minded." (Broekhuis & den Dikken 2012)

The most adequate tests to detect if a predicate is of property or state predicate is to place it in a sentence that completes a verb of perception or in a defining expression of the type *c'est quelqu'un de* "it is someone who". Only predicates like *saoul* "drunk" would be likely to appear in a complement of a verb of perception. Predicates like *intelligent* cannot. Similarly, state predicates are combined with the phrase *c'est quelqu'un de*. Adjectives like *saoul* cannot ^{7,8}.

- (16) Hier, j'ai vu (que) Jean (était) saoul.
 "Yesterday, I saw that John was drunk."
- (17) ?? Hier, j'ai vu (que) Jean (était) intelligent.
 "??Yesterday, I saw that John was intelligent."
- (18) C'est quelqu'un de ?? saoul.
 "He is a ?? drunk person."
- (19) C'est quelqu'un d'intelligent.
 "He is an intelligent person."

According to Broekhuis and den Dikken (2012), *afwezig* denotes physical absence in examples like (14) and mental state in examples as in (15): this semantic difference is due to the fact that *veel* is a degree modifier compatible with a state predicate while the *erg* modifier requires a property predicate.

Following the same path of reasoning, other linguists have already sought to explain the incompatibility of *beaucoup* with certain types of verbs. For example, Obenauer (1983, 1984, 1994) has explained along these terms the incompatibility of *beaucoup* with property verbs like *know* and *equal*:

- (20) *Cet élève sait beaucoup la réponse.
 "*This student knows the answer a lot."
- (21) *Son jeu égale beaucoup celui de Lendl.
 "*His game equals a lot the game of Lendl."

⁷ Except for cases in which *saoul* "drunk" is followed by an expression that signals a permanent property:

C'est quelqu'un de saoul en permanence.
 "He is constantly drunk."

⁸ See also Tellier (1992) for other tests of this type with the verb *avoir* "have".

Vlachou (2020, 2021) considers the possibility of analysing MDs in constructions of the type MD+Adj as elements signaling the nature of the adjective in question: *beaucoup* signaling an adjective of state and *très* indicating an adjective of property. If this hypothesis were on the right track, it would help us explain the difference between the French DMs regarding their combinatorics with adjectives, discussed in this paper.

The distinction between state predicate and property predicate appears anyway problematic because it presupposes that property predicates are not stative (see also discussion in Martin 2008). If this were the case, how would we analyze an adjective like *grand*? Doesn't it denote a state while being an adjective of property?

Similarly, to argue that *beaucoup* appears only with adjectives of state and *très* with adjectives of property would lead us to assume that *très* cannot combine with state predicates and that *beaucoup* cannot combine with property predicates. As demonstrated at the beginning of this section, the adjective *saoul* "drunk" is indeed adjective of state. Examples as in (22) show that it combines well with *très*.

- (22) Hier Paul était très saoul.
"Yesterday, Paul was very drunk."

Idem, as we will see in detail in the next section, the adjective *égoïste* "selfish" can designate a property of the individual in question in statements like (23) below. Despite this fact, *beaucoup* combines with this adjective (24):

- (23) Paul est égoïste (de caractère).
"Paul is selfish."
(24) Dans le monde ouvrier, on est beaucoup égoïste, moi, je crois⁹.
"The working class is a lot selfish, I think."

It follows that the difference between adjectives of property and of state is not relevant for the DMs we study here.

3. ADJECTIVES OF TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT PROPERTY

As the reader recalls, the differences in the distribution of *beaucoup*, *très* and *πολύ* raise the following questions: why isn't *beaucoup* acceptable with an adjective like *grand* but it combines with an adjective like *malade*? What are the categories of adjectives with which *beaucoup* combines? What are the categories

⁹ <https://www.cairn.info/classe-religion-et-comportement-politique--9782724603873-page-51.htm>.

of adjectives with which *beaucoup* is problematic? In what sense do *très* and *πολύ* differ from *beaucoup*?

In what follows we advance the hypothesis that *beaucoup* is a DM which can only be combined with an adjective if this adjective is ambiguous expressing permanence and temporality, depending on the context. Adjectives that are specialized in either of these two meanings are excluded. On the other hand, the DMs *très* and *πολύ* are insensitive regarding this criterion.

3.1. Beaucoup

Even though the combination *beaucoup*+adjective is the most discussed in grammars, we have shown so far that the MD *beaucoup* is not problematic with all types of adjectives. For example, it combines with an adjective like *malade*:

- (4) Après avoir été beaucoup malade ces derniers jours, j'ai repris la décoration aujourd'hui.
 "After being a lot sick these last days, I restarted painting today."

From the beginning, the question was raised of what type are the adjectives with which *beaucoup* combines. The data below demonstrate that it combines with adjectives such as *intelligent*, *égoïste* "selfish" and *arrogant*:

- (7) Il eût été beaucoup intelligent de ranger les cinq rubriques dans trois camemberts dans le même ordre [...] ¹⁰.
 "It would have been very intelligent to range the five columns in three camemberts in the same order."
 (24) Dans le monde ouvrier, on est beaucoup égoïste, moi, je crois.
 "The working class is a lot selfish, I think."
 (25) Le petit renard enfumé a été beaucoup arrogant depuis qu'il a obtenu l'artefact [...].
 "The smoky little fox has been a lot cocky since he got the artifact."

What do these adjectives have in common? They all denote states. The IL predicates only designate permanent features of an entity, while the SL predicates refer to its temporary and accidental properties. This distinction seems relevant in sentences with a depictive secondary predicate (Rapoport 1991; McNally 1994; Geuder 2004).

¹⁰ <https://www.latribune.fr/bourse/20110906trib000647106/valeurs-financieres-les-nouveaux-indesirables-du-cac40-.html>

- (26) *Pierre a répondu intelligent.
 **Peter answered intelligent."
(27) Pierre a répondu saoul.
 "Peter answered drunk."

For years, the distinction between IL and SL predicates was considered to be very closely related to the distinction between permanent predicates (for instance, if one is tall, he is tall forever) and occasional predicates (see *drunk*). Martin (2008) invites us to reconsider this hypothesis because an SL does not necessarily denote a state that occurs only at certain times in life, as is the case of *drunk*. The state denoted by an SL may very well correspond to a temporary slice of a permanent state. And it is this characteristic of certain predicates, that makes certain adjectives compatible with *beaucoup*, in our opinion.

The adjective *égoïste* "selfish" is ambiguous. It can very well characterize an individual permanently in a statement like (23), taken up below, but it can also denote a temporary slice of a permanent state. In (23) the adjective describes a permanent feature of Paul's character. In (28), however, selfishness is seen as a characteristic that Esther had at some point in her life, when she decided to play Fauré the day before (28) was uttered.

- (23) Paul est égoïste (de caractère).
 "Paul is selfish."
(28) Esther n'a joué que du Fauré hier. Elle a été égoïste. (Martin 2008)
 "Esther played only Fauré yesterday. She was selfish."

The same capacity to generate a permanent and/or temporary interpretation characterizes the adjectives *intelligent* and *arrogant* too. Being intelligent and being arrogant are presented as permanent properties in (29) and (31) and as temporary properties in data like (30) and (32).

- (29) Jenny est une femme intelligente.
 "Jenny is an intelligent woman."
(30) Jenny a joué de la musique klezmer hier. Elle a été intelligente. (Martin 2008)
 "Jenny played music klezmer yesterday. She was smart."
(31) Paul est arrogant de caractère.
 "Paul is arrogant by character."
(32) Ce qu'il a fait, c'est être arrogant¹¹.
 "What he does is to be arrogant."

¹¹ From Dowty (1979), found in Martin (2008). The example has been slightly changed.

When they express a temporary state, adjectives denote the state in which individuals are found at a certain moment in their lives. The use of the past tense in examples (30) and (32) reinforces the validity of this hypothesis: these data concern a temporary (and not permanent) state of the individuals in question. More precisely, as proposed by Dowty (1979) and Martin (2008), statements like (32) mean that the subject *il* behaved in an arrogant manner. In the same way, the adjective *intelligent* in (30) characterizes Jenny at a certain moment in her life, when she was playing klezmer music. This does not exclude the possibility that Jenny is an intelligent person nor does intelligence characterize Jenny as a person. Here, we highlight the fact that she played intelligently. We can say that it is the temporality of the predicate that actualizes the interval within which the property “to be intelligent” is verified.

On this point, the adjectives *égoïste*, *intelligent* and *arrogant* differ from adjectives that can only have one of the two facets. *Egoïste*, for instance, is different from *égocentrique* “egocentric” which shows itself to be unsuitable for cutting the temporary portion of a permanent state, «verifying the maximum state whose borders coincide with those of one’s life, or of the less with those of a significant slice of it» (Martin 2008: 113). Because of this difference, *égocentrique* is grammatical only in sentences that emphasize a permanent state of egocentricity (33). This correctly predicts that (30) becomes impossible if we replace *égoïste* with *égocentrique* (34).

(33) Esther est égoïste (de caractère).

“Esther is egocentric in her character.”

(34) Esther n’a joué que du Fauré hier. *Elle a été égoïste.

“Jenny played music klezmer yesterday. *She was egocentric.”

The adjective *malade* with which *beaucoup* combines is, itself, an adjective that expresses either the permanence or the occurrential nature of a property.

(35) Esther est malade (de caractère).

“Esther is sick in her character.”

(36) Hier, Esther a été malade.

“Yesterday, Esther was sick.”

It follows that the adjectives with which *beaucoup* combines are adjectives that can emphasize either the permanence or the temporality of the property they denote. What is the role of *beaucoup* then? It selects the temporary interpretation of adjectives that can have both values.

Consider example (37) below. The speaker in question asks her addressee if she has been sick on several occasions during her pregnancy (if she has had recurrent nausea over a long period) or else if she was seriously ill during her pregnancy. *Beaucoup* behaves as a quantifier in the first interpretation and as an intensifier in the second. Either way, the property in question is not permanent. Far from it, it characterizes a certain period of the life of the woman in question, that of her pregnancy. Similarly, *beaucoup malade* refers to a certain period to a woman's life in (38). The use of the adverb *parfois* and *aujourd'hui* indicates that the disease in question is not permanent.

- (37) Tu as été beaucoup malade ? Tu as de la chance t'as pas pris beaucoup de poids¹²!

"Have you been very sick? You are lucky, you didn't gain a lot of weight."

- (38) Je suis quand même beaucoup malade, surtout les nerfs, et parfois il m'arrive à détester si fort mon mari comme aujourd'hui quand je l'ai mis à la porte¹³.

"I am still very sick, especially my nerves, and sometimes I hate my husband so much like today when I kicked him out."

In examples (24) and (39) the working class appears to be selfish on several occasions. But selfishness is not described as a permanent property of this class. On the contrary, the statement means that in the working class there are people who sometimes behave selfishly.

- (24) Dans le monde ouvrier, on est beaucoup égoïste, moi, je crois.

"The working class is a lot selfish, I think."

- (39) Des fois, dans le monde ouvrier, on est beaucoup égoïste, je crois.

"The working class is a lot selfish, I think."

Similarly, the property "be arrogant" is temporary in (25) repeated below. The time phrase *depuis qu'il a obtenu* l'artefact reveals this facet. The adjective does not characterize the animal in question from birth. The phrase means that the animal has shown arrogance either repeatedly or with great intensity.

Finally, in (7) *beaucoup intelligent* characterizes an action that could take place and shows the intensity of intelligence in this case. Again, *beaucoup* emphasizes the non-permanent facet of the adjective with which it combines.

¹² <https://www.enceinte.com/forum/envie-de-bebe-presentez-vous/envie-de-bebe-3-comme-moi-nous-c-est-par-ici-t18487-14390.html>

¹³ Example from Vlachou (2020), found in *SketchEngine*.

The data discussed so far could indicate that *beaucoup* is a degree modifier that combines only with non-permanent predicates. This hypothesis is not valid as it predicts that this DM is grammatical with temporary property predicates such as *nu* and *saoul*. This property is not validated here:

- (40) Hier, *Georges a été beaucoup nu.
 “Yesterday, *George has been many naked.”
- (41) Hier, *Georges a été beaucoup saoul.
 “Yesterday, *George has been many drunk.”

In view of this result, one wonders what is the difference between these two adjectives and adjectives like *intelligent*, *malade*, *arrogant* and *égoïste*. As we have seen, these are adjectives that appear either with a temporary facet or with a permanent facet. Under the temporary facet, these adjectives are opposed to adjectives of the *nu* and *saoul* type in that they denote a state *s* generated by an action *a*, such that *s* and *a* have the same spatio-temporal boundaries. In data like (28), for example, having played Fauré and being selfish temporally coincide. In fact, the state of being selfish was generated by the fact that Esther played only Fauré the day before. In other words, selfishness was shown in an activity of hers.

The occurrential side of adjectives like *égoïste*, *arrogant* and *intelligent* led Martin (2008) to propose that it is a subcategory of the SL predicate category. More precisely, she argued that in data like (7), (24-25) they constitute endo-actional state predicates that describe properties generated by the action described by another predicate. In (30), for example, the state of being intelligent was generated by Jenny’s playing klezmer music the day before.

For our cases here, it is important to note that adjectives such as *saoul* and *nu* are not endo-actional predicates because the state they denote does not present itself as being generated by another action:

- (42) Jenny a joué de la musique klezmer hier. Elle était saoule. (Martin 2008)
 “Jenny played klezmer music yesterday. She was drunk.”

The DM *beaucoup* only combines with adjectives whose property may be either temporary or permanent, depending on the context, and is problematic with adjectives that specialize in one of these two values. In doing so, *beaucoup* assumes the role of disambiguator and points out that an adjective of permanent or temporary property is used under the second value, only.

This way of approaching *beaucoup* explains several interesting phenomena. First, it explains why it does not combine with adjectives like *grand*: these adjectives express a permanent property only.

- (2) *Paul est beaucoup grand.
“Paul is very tall.”

Secondly, this hypothesis also explains a rather widespread phenomenon in today’s spoken language, that of the systematic use of the DM *très* only in phrases in which the noun is used predicatively (Vlachou to appear). These phrases express permanent properties. This correctly predicts that *beaucoup* is bad here while *très* is not:

- (43) C’est une ville (très) sport.
“This city is very sportive.”
(44) *C’est une ville beaucoup sport.

3.2. Πολύ and très

Now let’s move to the DMs *πολύ* and *très*. As the Greek data below and their English translations show, these two modifiers are not sensitive to the difference between permanent and temporary property. This is why they are compatible with all kinds of adjectives without any problem:

Temporary property adjectives

- (45) Πολύ γυμνός είσαι βρε παιδάκι μου.
‘You are very naked my child.’
(46) Χθες ο Παύλος ήταν πολύ μεθυσμένος.
‘Yesterday, Paul was very drunk.’

Adjectives of purely permanent property

- (6a) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ ψηλός.
“Paul is very tall.”

Permanent or temporary property adjectives

- (47a) Ο Παύλος είναι πολύ εγωιστής.
litt. Le Paul est MD égoïste
“Paul is very selfish.”
(47b) Η Εστερ έπαιξε μόνο Φορέ χθες. Ήταν πολύ εγωίστρια.
“Esther played only Fauré yesterday. She was selfish.”
(48a) Η Γιάννα είναι πολύ έξυπνη γυναίκα.
“Joanna is a very intelligent woman.”

- (48b) Η Εστερ έπαιξε κλεζμέρ χθες. Φαινόταν πολύ έξυπνη.
 “Esther played klezmer yesterday. She seemed very intelligent.”
- (49a) Η Γιάννα είναι πάντα πολύ άρρωστη.
 “Joanna is always very sick.”
- (49b) Η Εστερ έπαιξε κλεζμέρ χθες. Φαινόταν πολύ άρρωστη.
 “Esther played klezmer yesterday. She seemed very sick.”

Concluding, the combinations of *très* and *πολύ* with adjectives seem to be the most acceptable and transparent forms. It is also possible to combine *beaucoup* with an adjective provided that the adjective is double-faceted.

4. CONCLUSION

The differences in distribution between the modifiers *beaucoup*, *très* and *πολύ* have prompted the question of why the former is suitable with an adjective like *malade* and ungrammatical with an adjective like *grand* while *très* is not. The comparison between the two French modifiers with the Greek modifier *πολύ* showed that the latter behaves like *très* vis à vis its combinability with adjectives. To answer the question of the different condition of DM grammaticality of Greek and French, we sought to find the categories of adjectives with which these three modifiers of degree are suitable.

We supported the hypothesis that the difference between permanent and temporary property is the relevant difference for their different acceptability with adjectives. *Beaucoup* combines with adjectives that are ambiguous expressing either permanent or temporary property. It assumes the role of disambiguator which always selects the temporary facet of the adjectives with which it combines. On the other hand, the modifiers *très* and *πολύ* are not sensitive to the difference between temporary and permanent property.

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Ευαγγελία Βλάχου

Τμήμα Γαλλικής Φιλολογίας, Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών

ΤΡΟΠΟΠΟΙΗΣΗ ΒΑΘΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΘΕΤΑ ΠΡΟΣΩΡΙΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ/Η ΜΟΝΙΜΗΣ ΙΔΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

Περίληψη

Οι τροποποιητές υψηλού βαθμού (TYB) *πολύ* της ελληνικής και *très* και *beaucoup* της γαλλικής παρουσιάζουν διαφορετικό βαθμό συνδυαστικότητας με επίθετα. Υποστηρίζεται η υπόθεση ότι η σημασιολογική διαφορά μεταξύ μόνιμης και προσωρινής ιδιότητας όπως εκφράζεται από τα επίθετα καθορίζει αυτόν τον βαθμό. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, ο TYB *beaucoup* συνδυάζεται με αμφίσημα επίθετα που συνδέονται και με τα δύο είδη ιδιότητας. Ο συγκεκριμένος TYB κάνει άρση της αμφισημίας επιλέγοντας πάντα την ερμηνεία της μη μόνιμης ιδιότητας. Οι TYB *πολύ* και *très*, από την άλλη, δεν είναι ευαίσθητα στη διαφοροποίηση μεταξύ μόνιμης και μη μόνιμης ιδιότητας από την πλευρά του επιθέτου.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: τροποποιητής υψηλού βαθμού, μόνιμη ιδιότητα, προσωρινή ιδιότητα, επίθετο, σημασιολογία