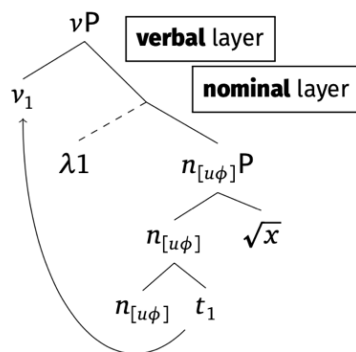


Adjectives: from bicategoriality to relationality

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Mitrović and Panagiotidis (2020) argue that the adjective category involves dual categorisation: adjectives obtain when a root or an already categorised element merges with a complex categorial structure, one that ‘simultaneously’ involves both a verbaliser and a nominaliser. This proposal arguably derives at least two facts: one, that in Indo-European style languages the external modification of adjectives is done by adverbs while their internal structure remains nominal in character; two, that, typologically speaking, in some languages (with Korean figuring as a typical example) the *reverse* holds, with the internal structure of adjectives being distinctly verbal. The following diagram from Mitrović and Panagiotidis (2020, 11) illustrates this hypothesis:

(9) Deriving an Indo-European adjective



According to Fábregas (2007), and others, Relational Adjectives (RAs) like *medical*, *corporate*, etc., are characterised by a series of properties that sets them apart from Qualitative Adjectives (QAs) like *fast*, *hot*, and *serious*: RAs are non-qualitative, non-scalable, cannot function as predicates or comparatives, and they cannot be nominalised or yield adverbs. Examining Modern Greek evidence, I will attempt to refine these insights following Fábregas in attributing the differences between RAs and QAs to structural differentiations between the ‘relational’ and the ‘qualitative’ categorisation of adjectives. More precisely, I will try showing that this distinction has to do with the nature of v involved in the dual categorisation of all adjectives.

Modern Greek relational adjectives are standardly marked by specialised morphology like *-ik-* or *-in-*, which is found inside the agreeing nominal morphology.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| irin-ik-es | xtes-in-es | piit-ik-es | thalas-in-es |
| peace- <i>ik</i> -PL.FEM | yesterday- <i>in</i> -PL.FEM | poet- <i>ik</i> -PL.FEM | sea- <i>in</i> -PL.FEM |

This additional morphological marking could indicate that a specialised layer of structure of some sort is present in RAs. Given that RAs have a more restricted distribution than QAs and that they display a narrower range of functions, this difference would suggest that the extra structure (realised by *-ik-* or *-in-*) actually restricts the possible interpretations of the relational adjective.

This structural difference can be thought of involving a different ‘flavour’ of *v* than that used in deriving QAs (Mitrović 2022 for some discussion). To wit, the *v* involved in QAs encodes *scalarity / gradability*, a property that can readily yield the ability for comparison. At the same time, the *v* involved in RAs would be an otherwise underspecified *relational* operator. The above picture would ideally involve RAs and QAs standing in complementary distribution. Alas, in Modern Greek (a synthetic language) a number of adjectives seem to be able to serve either as RAs or as QAs. Hence, although Greek adjectives marked by specialised morphology like *-ik-* or *-in-* typically receive relational readings, the very same adjectives can also be used predicatively, coerced to take up qualitative interpretations, to become scalable and amenable to nominalisation and comparatives, and even yield adverbs.

| | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| thalas-in-o | nero | | | <i>Relational adjective</i> | |
| sea- <i>in</i> -SG.NEUT | water | | | | |
| ‘sea water’ | | | | | |
| Afti | i | xelona | ine | thalasini | <i>Predication</i> |
| this. SG.FEM | the | turtle | is | sea- <i>in</i> - SG.FEM | |
| ‘This turtle is a sea turtle.’ | | | | | |
| Mia | pio | thalas-in-i | | diathesi | <i>Degree / Comparison</i> |
| a | more | sea- <i>in</i> - SG.FEM | | mood | |
| ‘A mood more fit for the sea.’ | | | | | |
| Dithikame | | thalas-in-a | | | <i>Adverb</i> |
| dressed.1 ST .PL | | sea- <i>in</i> -ADV | | | |
| ‘We are dressed in a marine style.’ | | | | | |
| # thalas-in-o-tit-a | | | | | <i>Nominalisation</i> |
| sea- <i>in</i> -o-NOM-FEM.SG | | | | | |
| ‘The property of belonging to the sea’ | | | | | |

The talk concludes with a discussion on whether this sort of coercion involves additional structure superimposed on the adjective or the choice of a different, underspecified, categorising *v* – perhaps in the vein of Marantz (2013).

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