

In Search of the Adjective Complementation Identity in Jespersen

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1. Introductory remarks

Analysing adjectival complementation is not strictly bound to one single piece of the large linguistic work done by Jespersen. The Danish scholar does not display a paradigm of the adjectival complementation process throughout his work. However, an attentive reading will bring out a fluctuation between notional considerations and modern theoretical interpretations of that process. Within the boundaries of modern theoretical perspective we can point out the brilliant syntactic analysis —based on «self-interpreting syntactic formulas» (vid. Jespersen (1937: 4 and ff.)— of structural configurations prone to analytical ambiguities and misunderstandings as the following ¹:

«It is easy to deceive John VPS (IO).
John is easy to deceive S(O*) VP(2pI*).
This fruit is good to eat S(O*) (21) VP (2pI*).
I find this impossible to believe SVO(S₂(O*)PpI*)» ².

1 Poutsma (1923: 86-87) distinguishes between «logical» and «illogical» subjects in structures similar to Jespersen's. «This question is difficult to answer», «You were difficult to manage», which he calls «condensed constructions»:

«... the logical subject of *is difficult* is *to answer this question*. Indeed the case here described is an instance of a wide-spread tendency of many predicates to change their subjects.

In the condensed construction the predicate, of course, depends for person and number on the illogical subject. Thus *to manage you (these children) is difficult* becomes in its condensed form *you (these children, etc.) are difficult to manage.*»

2 Examples taken from Jespersen (1937: 52).

«John», in the second example, is subject, «S», at the level of discourse linearity —surface structure— though it is viewed as underlying object —deep structure object— connected with the nonfinite form «to deceive», «(O*)».

These formulations will be deeply considered and fully developed during the sixties and seventies within the generative approach to grammar. This perfect symbol system, however, does not carry out a parallel and clearcut systematization of the adjectival complementation process throughout Jespersen's vast work, as I will try to reveal in the present paper.

2. Adjectival complementation in Jespersen. Analytical survey

For the sake of presenting a certain range of data in a systematic fashion, I will start off by setting my analysis on the following theoretical premise registered in Jespersen (1933: 108). The syntactic label 'object' conveys the notion of a primary rank element ³

«... which is intimately connected with the verb of the sentence (or clause) though less intimately so than the subject» ⁴.

Furthermore, as Jespersen himself points out, he tries to avoid such a label with adjectives using instead the label 'recipient', «R», for everything depending on adjectives (Jespersen (1937-146):

«In conventional grammar the term object is further used for what is governed by an adjective. Here, too, I have avoided the term object in the present work and adopted instead the term *Recipient*, abbreviated R.».

The symbols used by Jespersen in these examples are equivalent to (vid. note (7)):

S=Subject

V=Finite verb

O=Object

P=Predicative adjective

I=Infinitive

p=Preposition

Numbers indicate rank:

1=Primary

2=Secondary

3=Tertiary

Subindexes indicate order/number of occurring subjects/objects () indicates preceding element.

** indicates connection between words syntagmatically kept apart.

3 For Jespersen's notion of «rank» vid. Jespersen (1933: 78 and ff.).

4 As regards this definition, Anderson (1984: 36) thinks that the kind of 'intimacy' defended by Jespersen relies on notional rather than syntactic reasons:

«In fact, the use of a notional criterion here, together with the claim that, although the object is «intimately connected with the verb», it is «less intimately so than the subject» (Jespersen (1933: 108)), which would be difficult to support on syntactic grounds, makes it doubtful that Jespersen himself has a syntactic (rather than a notional) «intimacy» in mind».

Bearing this in mind, it is not difficult to stipulate that the term 'object' is only based on verbal relations. This handy conclusion not only ruins the rough shape of the adjectival complementation process already seen, for example, by Curme (1931)⁵, but also creates a kind of functional asymmetry between two grammatical categories, adjective and verb, which may be considered even with regard to the complementation phenomenon⁶.

We may argue, on the other hand, that there is only a denominative change, although the inherent syntactic values are kept unaltered. That is not such an obvious way out, though. Let us pay close attention to the following quotation from Jespersen (1937: 139):

«Infinitives and clauses are sometimes placed without a preposition, where a preposition would be required before a substantive. A notation with p⁰ would be cumbersome. I would use the symbol O in cases like the following

His plan to go to France S²XO(Ip1); cf. he planned
 I shall be careful what I do SVPO(O₂SV).
 I shall be careful not to say this SVPO(3⁰IO₂).
 A gentleman anxious to avoid a scandal 12(YO(IO₂))⁷.

In the last three examples from the quotation there is no formulation of 'recipient', «R», although a kind of dependency relation could have been stated:

- 1) I shall be careful what I do.
- 2) I shall be careful not to say this.
- 3) A gentleman anxious to avoid a scandal.

5 Curme (1931: 239 and ff.) studies the capacity of adjectives to take «object clauses».

6 According to Anderson (1969: 309) several theoretical attitudes towards the relationship between these two categories have been adopted through the linguistic literature. Anderson thinks that, at least, three theoretical points of view are traceable:

(i) Adjectives and verbs are categorically different. Chomsky (1965); Halliday (1967-8).

(ii) Adjectives and verbs are categorically identical with only some differences at deep structure level. Lakoff (1965).

(iii) The distinction between verbs and adjectives comes in terms of inflection and position features. Lyons (1966).

Hendrick (1978) holds the opinion that there is not a symmetric syntax with respect the different grammatical categories in terms of complementation.

7 Apart from the symbolic equivalences already distinguished (vid. note (2)) the following are added:

Y=Agent-substantive or participle.

n=substantive «nexus»; °=raised samll n indicates negative Raised ciphers indicate change of rank.

⁰=Latency.

(Note: the direction of the arrow points towards the controlling adjective⁸):

The criterion followed by Jespersen I cannot work out, although I may be led to think that the Danish scholar shifts from a correct analysis of the intrinsic completive values of those adjectives (prepositional phrases whose preposition is operative neither before infinitive clauses nor before *that*-clauses which, in their turn, at another level of analysis⁹, are elements which belong in those prepositional phrases), towards an analysis of discourse linearity with the syntactic label «O» ('Object'), elbowing aside the 'Recipient' distinction despite what he tries to establish afterwards in page 146, his unwillingness to use the term/label «O» for adjectives.

However, this has all the earmarks of an evident fluctuation of syntactic analysis which come to be a fact when our scholar formulates the following (Jespersen (1937)):

«Infinitive of reaction, etc.

I am glad to see you here SVP p1(IO3).

You were lucky to get a job SVP p1(IO)».

Strange as it may seem, Jespersen does not consequently apply the former analytical criterion, say, the syntactic consideration of «O»/«R» ('Object'/ 'Recipient') for everything postponed to and dependent on the adjective. The syntactic relationship between the infinitival construction and the preceding adjective is null, since only the formative elements of that construction are displayed, «p1(IO)». In other words, the particle «to», «p» —characteristic feature of full infinitives— and a primary rank element, «1», further developed, «()», by infinitive, «I», which has an 'Object', «O». Therefore, syntactically speaking, as far as Jespersen's analysis is concerned, the infinitival structure is independent, because there is no symbol «* ... *» (vid. note (2)) which conveys any kind of syntactic togetherness. On the other hand, semantically Jespersen does establish a certain relation between the infinitive and the preceding adjective. The state of being denoted by the adjective is the psychological byproduct of the infinitival fact, this being considered an «infinitive of reaction». Jespersen (1909-1949: 209) ratifies his point of view:

8 Vid. Matthews (1981) with respect to the notion of «dependency».

9 An accurate way of approaching the issue of the real syntactic values of adjectives from the point of view of complementation is the adoption of a level of analysis void of any kind of interference with discourse linearity, transformations, situational context, etc. Huddleston (1971: 61 and ff.) proposed a level of analysis, «prepassive», in order to grasp the 'pure' relations between grammatical constituents. The adoption of this level will consequently disclose the fact that adjectives —like any other grammatical category— have neither commutable nor changeable functional features. However, several evidences may induce us to think that we are handling different and, paradoxically, inherent syntactic behaviours of the same adjectival lexical item. Those apparent erratic behaviours obey to several causes in a deeper analysis (cf. note (17)).

«I am not inclined to call the infinitive the object of glad: glad to see you, cf. infinitive of Reaction.»

Undoubtedly, both sentences —«I am glad to see you» and «You were lucky to get a job»— sheltered under the «reaction» label may be envisaged as sharing less syntactico-semantic features than expected. One such case like the infinitive structure after 'glad' can be reinterpreted as not having any causative or «reaction» feature, but only a basic meaning of 'goal' and syntactically analysable as the complement of its preceding adjective, similar to other adjectival and verbal structures having complements ('objects' following Jespersen's terminology):

4)a 'I am eager to do it'

b 'I want to do it'.

'glad' being synonymous with 'eager' or 'willing':

5)a 'I am glad to see you here'

'I am eager/willing to see you here'.

Thus, there are no relevant semantic grounds for saying that the post-adjectival infinitive causes any gladness, eagerness, or willing-post-adjectival infinitive causes any gladness, eagerness, or willingness. It is the subject who is keen on seeing him there. This new consideration makes it possible for 'glad' to obviously take on the «R»/«O» label of Jespersen's. Whereas in the second example with 'lucky' the infinitive is the 'causer', the contingency which provoked that state of being asserted in the main clause. Consequently, the infinitive is not likely to be viewed as the complement of 'lucky' (in clear analogy with other contingent structures treated as mere modifiers): 'your getting a job makes me think you were lucky', 'if you got a job I must affirm that you were lucky'. This may support not only the label of «reaction» applied to infinitives after adjectives like 'lucky', but also the exclusion of any «O»/«R» label.

This new semantic approach also conveys an important syntactic issue. The post-adjectival infinitival structure is Janus-faced:

a) It is not deletable with 'glad'. It is needed for the semantic completion of the adjective (and like verbs):

6)a '*I am glad Ø'

b '*I am eager Ø'

c '*I am willing Ø'

d '*I want Ø'.

b) It is deletable with 'lucky', reinforcing the semantic fact that the infinitive reflects only a contingency; hence not necessary for the semantic completion of the adjective:

7) 'You were lucky Ø'.

The whole argument can be soundly supported in terms of the cohesive relationship between the adjectives and the subsequent *to*-infinitive. Bolinger (1977: 146), by means of his attentive distinction of the gradient between

completing and non-completing structures, reveals that an «anaphoric» *to*» can disclose the ambiguous syntactic behaviour of post-adjectival *to*-infinitives and, simultaneously, the inherent syntactic values of their respective preceding adjectives. Bolinger postulates that only completing infinitives admit the 'anaphoric-*to*' construction:

«The complement (goal) extreme of the gradient has the tendency to produce auxiliaries —the bond between the main verb and the infinitive is so tight that the two amalgamate syntactically and semantically. This of course is the history of the *to*-less infinitive, giving such things as *will go*, *does go*, *need go*, *make (him) go*, *let (him) go*, etc. But it is gradually true of the other combinations. *I'm happy to do it* expresses more than satisfaction: it is a willingness to proceed to the doing. This is the basis of inceptives —*start to*, *plan to*, *try to*— but also to some degree of adjective combinations like *be ready (likely) to* (compare *tend to*), *be quick to*, and at a farther remove, *be sorry to* (compare *regret to*), *be afraid to* (*fear to*), and *be thankful to*. An important measure of tightness is the possibility of 'anaphoric *to*', that is, of deleting the verb proper:

- (120) Was he glad to hear about it? —No, he wasn't glad to, he was sorry to.
 (121) No he wasn't glad to hear about it, he was mad to hear about it.
 (122) No, he wasn't glad to, *he was mad to.»

As we can foresee, «anaphoric *to*», is not viable with 'lucky':

- (8) 'Was he lucky to get the job? —*No, he wasn't lucky to'.

However the syntactic idiosyncrasy of 'glad' —synonymous with 'eager'/'willing'— to accept the label «O» (or, alternatively, «R») when followed by a *to*-infinitive has been consolidated, I would like to add one further point on 'lucky' and its relation with the subsequent *to*-infinitive. First, consider the following examples:

- (9)a 'You were lucky to get a job'
 b 'You were lucky in getting a job'.

Apart from the fact that the semantic label of «reaction» can be attached to both subordinate structures in (9)a/b, it is noticeable that two possibilities of distribution are in disjunction with respect to the same semantic fact. The adjective under discussion virtually admits two different dependent constructions: a non-finite clause (*to*-infinitive) and a prepositional phrase which embraces another non-finite clause (*-ing*-clause)¹⁰. This allegedly peculiar behaviour of 'lucky' is strengthened when a noun phrase appears, as the complement of the preposition:

¹⁰ This is not an isolated prepositional fact with 'lucky' since Jespersen (1909-1949: 259) also recognizes a prepositional alternative to the so-called «infinitive of reaction»:

'Very often we may use *at* + a gerund instead of the *to*-infinitive, in other cases of + a gerund (ashamed of doing)'.

(9)c 'You were lucky in foolish games'.

In (9)c there is no semantic reading of «reaction» (*'foolish games make you lucky'). Since the presence (or absence) of 'in' is not limited to the semantic feature of «reaction», it may be concluded that the preposition (and its complement) stands as the real complement of 'lucky' in (9)c. No mobility around the clause structure is accomplished by it. This is exactly one of the distributional features of complements

(9)ci '*In foolish games you were lucky'.

It has to be judged from this that we are handling the same relation in (9)b:

(9)bi '*In getting a job you were lucky'.

We may intuitively infer that (9)a holds the same:

(9)ai '*To get a job you were lucky'.

On the contrary, typical modifiers admit being positioned at the beginning of the clause structure:

(10)a 'He must be French to speak that way'
 ai 'To speak that way he must be French'. →

It is reasonable to conclude that the *to*-infinitive after 'lucky' has virtually gained the status complement; thence the label «O»/«R» may be justified. Paradoxically, not only the infinitival structure, but also the prepositional phrase has been recognised as such. How can they be paralleled? The plausible answer is one based on the distinction of level of analysis. The *to*-infinitive is the syntagmatic complement of 'lucky'; 'in' (and its complement) is the complement of 'lucky' at a deeper level (vid. note (9)) comprising the syntagmatic complement infinitival structure. But one ultimate detail has been left pending. How do we account, then, for the non-occurrence of the preposition with the infinitive in (9)a if it is accepted that the prepositional phrase is the 'deeper' complement of 'lucky'? As will be seen later —vid. note (17)— preposition-deletion rule before infinitives is a general rule in English¹¹. The preposition is still observable and recoverable when the sentence is exposed to a 'pseudo-cleft' construction (vid. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1.387 and ff.)):

(9)aii 'What you were lucky *in* was to get a job'

bii 'What you were lucky *in* was getting a job'

11 Norrick (1978: 77), following Bowers (1968), Wagner (1968) and Stockwell *et al.* (1969) and supporting their 'criticism' on Rosembaum (1967)'s pseudo-cleft constructions and noun phrase/verb phrase complements, pointed out that acceptable pseudo-cleft constructions with adjectives are only possible when the sentence is formed with the adjective and the governed (inherent, I should say) preposition:

«Rosembaum claimed that sentences like (27) did not pseudo-cleft, since (28) is unacceptable.

(27) Joe is happy that Jean left him.

(28) *What Joe is happy is that Jean left him.

It has been objected since (Bowers 1968; Wagner 1968; Stockwell *et al.* 1969) that the pseudo-clefted form of (27) is not the ill-formed (28), but rather (29), where the preposition *about* has been inserted.

(29) What Joe is happy about is that Jean left him».

cii 'What you were lucky *in* was foolish games'.

In this is so, as I think it is, unless at the level of analysis purported by Jespersen (syntagmatic linearity), we are just asserting the completive status of an infinitive structure which was previously negated as such (cf. our former analysis on its deletability and the 'anaphoric-*to*' test). This seems to be counterintuitive! However, if the distinction drawn by Matthews (1981: 125) as regards the two «senses» of verbal complementation («weak» vs. «strong» complementation) is taken into account and directly applied to adjectives, we will realise that 'lucky' can be engrossed in the group of adjectives which have «weak complementation»; on the other hand, 'glad'/'eager'/'willing' would take part of the set of adjectives «strongly complemented». Echoing Matthews' own words:

«In the stronger sense it means 'obligatory even in incomplete sentences'; in those terms the direct object is an obligatory element with GET (or with the sense of GET in *Bill got the prize*), but an optional element which WATCH. In the weaker sense it means 'obligatory only in complete sentences'; in these terms the direct object is obligatory with both GET and WATCH, but optional with the basic sense of READ».

In other words: 'lucky', like many other adjectives in English, does admit ellision of its complement, provided that it is recoverable by means of anaphoric/cataphoric references and/or the situational context¹² itself:

- (10)a 'I'll hold you accountable Ø'
 b 'He's angry Ø'
 c 'On hearing the terrible news he went berserk Ø'
 (11)a **He is averse Ø'*
 b **He is avid Ø'*
 c **He was adept Ø'*.

Lastly, it may be argued, however, that the 'anaphoric-*to*' test proves quite the contrary (i.e. there is no completive status for the infinitive after 'lucky'). It is precisely its inviability (**He wasn't lucky to*) which reinforces the relevant distinction of an underlying level which preserves the 'real' complement of the adjective, a prepositional phrase where the infinitive exercises its function as a complement of the preposition ('*in*')—vid. note (11)—: hence the completive disconnection of the infinitive from the adjective.

Therefore, it has to be concluded that both 'glad' and 'lucky' should have been analysed paying attention not only to semantic coordinates—«reaction» reading—but also to homogeneous syntactic terms, heading towards a distinct separation of levels of analysis. Then, according to the level of analysis intended by Jespersen—the syntagmatic contiguity—, and despite that se-

¹² Vid. Lyons (1968: 413) for a definition of 'situational context'.

semantic reading, the infinitives dependent on the adjectives under discussion should have adopted the symbol «O» (or, alternatively «R»); on the other hand, at deeper level of analysis, only 'glad' would maintain objective considerations¹³, because 'lucky' would have as dependent category a prepositional phrase.

Going back to the seemingly analytical fluctuation registered in the work done by our Danish scholar, it has to be said that the range of fluctuation becomes wider when Jespersen introduces some other variables, such as morphological derivation and semantic affinity. He is aware that his analysis will not be unanimously backed up (Jespersen (1909-1949: 209)):

«Just as the substantive *desire* can have an infinitive as object, so can the adjective *desirous* as in

Macaulay H. 1.115 they were desirous to erect a commonwealth on the ruins of the Old English policy/Di P 27 though he is not desirous to have it generally known (...). Also desirous of holding.

This leads to the recognition of the infinitive as object after synonymous adjectives:

Anxious (eager) to get back (...).

But this analysis will not be recognized by all grammarians.»

As can be seen, for Jespersen the process of adjectival complementation by means of an infinitival construction is provided, on the one hand, by a morphological derivation of a particular adjective from a substantive «nexus»¹⁴ which, in its turn, derives from a verb. We can obtain the following derivative schema:

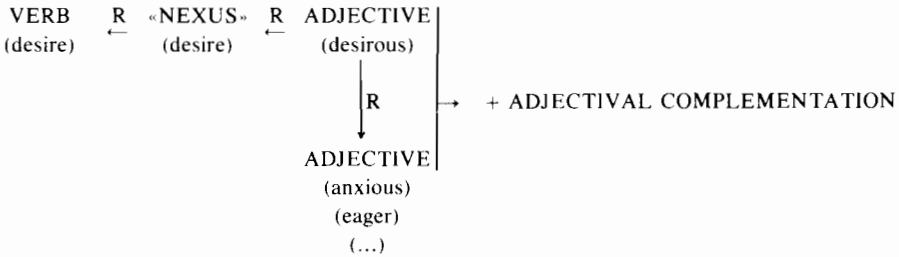
VERB R «NEXUS» R ADJECTIVE → + ADJECTIVAL COMPLEMENTATION
 (desire) ← (desire) ← (desirous)

('R' is indicative of the derivative relation).

On the other hand, Jespersen expands the capacity of complementation of the adjectival category in terms of the semantic affinity, forming a threefold relational system. In such a way that adjectives semantically similar to adjectives morphologically related to verbs, via substantive «nexus», have the same syntactic capacity of complementation as these:

13 Note that under a transformationalist framework a morphosyntactic category like 'Non Phrase' is preferred to a relational one like 'Object', «O».

14 For a whole description of the concept of «nexus» vid. Jespersen (1933: 91 and ff.).



Following Jespersen's theoretical principles, it can be asserted, then, that the possibility of complementation with an infinitival structure that an adjective has is due to the morpho-semantic connection with a verb from which it derives¹⁵.

In Jespersen (1924: 163), however, the spectrum of possibilities of adjectival complementation has already become wider in terms of a larger array of complete structures depending on a preceding adjective:

(A) Non-clausal complementation with completive marker \emptyset ¹⁶:

(120a) 'He is not *worth* \emptyset *his salt*'

b 'He is not *like* \emptyset *his father*'

(B)i Finite clausal complementation with 'that':

(13) '*Conscious that something had happened*'

(B)ii Non-finite clausal complementation with *to*-infinitive:

(14) '*Anxious to avoid a scandal*'

(C) Prepositional complementation:

(15)a '*Conscious of evil*'

b '*Anxious for our safety*'.

Quoting his own words:

«Verbs are not the only words that can take an object. In English there are a few adjectives which can do the same: he is not worth his salt/he is like his father (...). We have also combinations like *conscious that something had happened/anxious to avoid a scandal*, where the clause and the infinitive are objects. These adjectives,

¹⁵ This morpho-semantic constraint has led some linguists to use the term 'transitive' with adjectives complemented by prepositional phrases if and only if they are morphologically and semantically related to verbs. Vid. König (1971: 42):

«Im Englischen gibt es eine Reihe von abgeleiteten Adjektiven, die wie ihnen zu grunde liegenden Verben 'transitiv' sind d.h. in dem syntaktischen Rahmen NP—NP vorkommen. Anders als bei den Verben folgt jedoch die zweite Nominalphrase nicht direkt auf das Adjektiv. Zwischen Adjektiv und 'Objekt' steht die Präposition *of*... Es handelt sich um Konstruktionen der folgenden art

(a) This fact is indicative of our limitations.

(b) This fact indicates our limitations».

¹⁶ This display can also be seen in Jespersen (1933: 118-9).

however, cannot take a substantive as their object except with a preposition: *conscious of evil* *anxious for our safety*, where we may say that the whole groups of *evil, for our safety* are *notional objects* even if we do not acknowledge them as grammatical objects. The same remark applies to *of*-groups after such adjectives as *suggestive, indicative*.»

Despite the obvious and 'risky' exposition of the collection of the adjectival completing structures, Jespersen's approach seems to be under a state of analytical flux: the same adjectival entry, say, 'conscious' or 'anxious' is likely to participate of two different functional remarks. It accepts both «grammatical» and «notional objects». Adjectives like 'conscious' or 'anxious' are considered by Jespersen as having a «notional object», because those adjectives do not admit a noun phrase directly linked to them. They need a linking device, the preposition:

- (15)ai '*He is conscious Ø evil'
 bi '*He is anxious Ø our safety'.

The problem arises, then, when Jespersen analyses that double syntactic behaviour, which makes the adjective have two apparently different functional features. As a consequence, not only those adjectives morpho-semantically derived from verbs, but also those not derived from verbs but semantically connected with deverbal adjectives are going to be considered as having «grammatical objects» whenever they have a clausal complementation; in case there is a nominal complementation the «grammatical» consideration changes into a notional one: hence those adjectives have «notional objects». In order to properly assign the label 'object' no prepositional link should be present¹⁷.

17 The great majority of adjectives with complementation have as their inherent completing syntactic feature a prepositional phrase. The constituting elements subordinated to the preposition nucleus of that prepositional phrase (nouns, *that/wh*-clauses, *to*-infinitive/*ing* clauses) will trigger positively or negatively the occurrence of that preposition. Thus, at discourse linearity level in:

- (i) 'He was *conscious that something had happened*'
 (ii) 'He was *anxious to avoid a scandal*',

both the *that*-clause of (i) and the infinitival structure of (ii) are considered by Jespersen as being 'clausal objects' in relation to their respective preceding adjective, 'conscious' and 'anxious'. However, this direct syntactic relation generally applied to both clausal structures is due to the fact that, at that level of analysis, the deletion by means of transformations of the preposition sub-categorized by the adjective, is not patent, since we only get the results of those transformations; on the other hand, placed at the level suggested above (vid. note (9)), if these examples are exposed to a process of pseudo-cleft the preposition with which the adjective typically functions is manifest (vid. note (11)):

- (i)a 'What he was *conscious of* was that something had happened'
 (ii)a 'What he was *anxious for/about* was to avoid a scandal'.

As we saw with the pseudo-clefted constructions of 'lucky' (vid. page 8), that kind of deletion

This type of denominative, say, 'versatility' is only the direct consequence of Jespersen's attempts to disentangle one and the same linguistic reality: adjectival complementation. Jespersen intuitively blends notional and grammatical concepts in order to explain two different syntactic behaviours hinting, simultaneously, at the distinction of more levels of analysis than the one being used by the so-called traditional current of linguistics: «immediate combination»¹⁸.

3. Final remarks

We may sum up by saying that Jespersen shifts from a strict consideration about the dominating element of the «object», the verb, towards a broadening of the range of that dominance by means of the adjective. This enlargement, however, turns out to be partly notional.

These considerations traced back through Jespersen's work lead us to the following issues: (i) Jespersen uses analytical criteria which intuitively he recognizes as slippery tools to determine the real identity of adjectival complementation, in other words, the so-called strict-subcategorization features of adjectives (vid. Chomsky (1965: 90 and ff.)). Furthermore, this kind of idio-

is due to the non-occurrence of prepositions before *that*-clauses and infinitival structures, which is just a general device in English. Prepositional verbs have the same constraint:

- (iii) *I thought *of/about that you were wrong*'
- (iv) *He warned us *of not to go*'.

This consideration on pseudo-cleft construction holds also for lexical entries not requiring any prepositional complement, bringing up their completive idiosyncrasy. Compare:

- (v)a 'He is able to go there'
- b 'He is glad to go there'
- c 'He is willing to go there'
- ai 'What he is able *to do* is to go there'
- bi 'What he is glad *to do* is to go there'
- ci 'What he is willing *to do* is to go there'

(for the discussion on 'glad' and the meaning of the infinitive intended by Jespersen and the alternative semantic reading proposed by me vid. pp. 4-5: in (v)b/bi, 'glad' acquires the latter).

As a consequence of this test not only synonymous but also homonymous forms will be differentiated. So, 'capable' although synonymous with 'able' requires not similar syntactic subcategorization features. In other words, it has as a completive structure a prepositional phrase rather than an infinitive structure like 'able':

- (vi)a 'She is capable of any crime'
- ai 'What she is capable *of* is any crime'
- aii *'What she is capable *to do* is any crime'.

On the other hand, 'gl'd' with the meaning intended by Jespersen (resulting mental state from a former infinitival action) will admit a prepositional pseudo-cleft construction:

- (vii)a 'I am glad that you came'
- ai 'What I am glad *about* is that you came'.

18 Vid. Maetzner (1874: 37).

syncratic information which each individual lexical item entails, regardless of its connection with some other lexical item either semantically or categorically considered, would provide a suitable and correct analysis to handle situations where adjectives are apt to be seen as deviating from their 'normal' syntactic distribution. (ii) There is no explicit distinction of the inclusive relation between 'complement' and 'object' in the adjective sphere¹⁹. Adjectives not fitting in the morpho-semantic relational schemata sketched above (vid. page 11) are described not in terms of their potentiality of complementation, but alternatively according to notional parameters (just remember the discussion on «infinitive of reaction»). For the sake of clarity a final example registered in Jespersen (1909-1949: 262) where the description of «infinitives of specification» seems to be a tug of war between notional considerations and syntactic criteria:

«The infinitive often serves to specify or give a supplementary determination to a word which in itself has a somewhat vague signification. The use of *to* here may be compared to its use as a preposition in combinations like 'blind to his own faults, attentive to one's business, impervious to light', etc.; it may be interpreted as meaning in 'in regard to, in reference to', as in the combination *as to* (which, however, requires the gerund, not the infinitive). It has not been easy to draw a line between this and some other applications of the infinitive, thus as the object of certain adjectives (...) or as adjunct (...)».

Such being the case even the infinitives classified by Jespersen as clear 'objects' after some specific adjectives ('desirous'/'anxious') are (disguised) infinitives of specification as well. As can be seen from the quotation, our Danish scholar establishes, albeit not consciously as it seems, the grammatical concept of complementation at syntactic level:

«We reserve the term complementation (...) for the function of a part of a phrase or clause which follows a word, and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies» (Quirk *et al.* (1985: 65)).

(iii) As a straight consequence of (i) and (ii) there is a lack of levels of analysis which conveys the mixture of grammaticality and cognitive parsing.

In conclusion, this paper has not been intended to underestimate or belittle by any means the magnificent work realized by Jespersen. However, I have tried to make it clear that for an intensive and extensive study of adjectives in terms of their inherent syntactic features, as far as complementation is concerned, something more than mere identification with verbs, semantic

¹⁹ But vid. Jespersen (1924: 88).

affinity, linear contiguity and cognitive props should be searched for. On the contrary, I am simply proposing an adjectival description based on distinguishable inherent and individual syntactic features despite the clumsiness of the structural configuration in which the adjectives are. Consequently, this analytical perspective would predict which adjectival lexical item —homonymous items would be differentiated, of course— admits which type of completing elements. This goes hand in hand with a perfect distinction of levels of analysis: 1) a level —syntactic structure— which can be influenced by all sorts of, variables —especially²⁰, raising to subject; extraposition, homonymy, contextual references, etc.—. A level prone to taxonomies and patterns (vid. Hornby (1954) or Mackin & Seidl (1979)), very useful as regards pedagogy and language learning; not very reliable, however, when we are trying to find out the systematic behaviour of adjectival complementation. Lees (1960) distinguished eight different types disguised under one single pattern: ADJ + *to*-INFINITIVE; 2) a level —pre-syntactic structure (vid. note (9))— which would solve, for instance, problems stated by Jespersen's fluctuation: «grammatical or notional objects?». A level where the inherent values of adjectives are preserved. A level where prepositions accompanying their respective adjectives are still visible, though not operative before infinitive or *that*-clauses.

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20 Vid. Comesaña (forthcoming).

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