

# Noun ellipsis in French<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*It is proposed that in French noun ellipsis constructions, the empty noun, pro, is licensed by being operator-bound (Cinque 1990) by a numeral or an adjective with a partitive, that is quantificational, meaning. This explains why only part of the attributive adjectives, namely the ones with a quantificational meaning, allow the ellipsis of the noun. Furthermore, it is proposed that the  $\bar{A}$ -position in which the numerals and (part of) the adjectives bind the empty noun is the specifier of functional projections of NP (cf. Cinque 1993). This explains why (part of the) attributive adjectives, both prenominal and postnominal ones, which are all assumed to be generated in the specifier of functional projections of NP, do license the ellipsis of the noun, while DP-internal predicative adjectives, such as adjectives followed by a complement, do not: these are generated as right-adjunctions to NP.*

## Introduction

A curious difference between French on the one hand and, for example, Dutch on the other is that in Dutch (as well as in German [see Olsen 1987] and the Scandinavian languages [see Delsing 1992] all inflected adjectives seem to allow the ellipsis of the noun, whereas in French only part of the adjectives do so. So, while (1) is a correct Dutch sentence, its French translation (2) is not. With a superlative adjective, however, (2) becomes grammatical:

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