Meaningless movements? NP reversal in Old Italian as a window into the DP phase

In this talk we investigate the internal structure of the DP and argue for the existence of a DP-internal left peripheral edge hosting moved XPs via a remnant analysis á la Cinque, who argues that the only possible meaningless movements giving origin to the basic word order are those containing the head noun. We will also show that there exist cases where this restriction is not respected, i.e. it is possible to move only an adjective stranding the head noun and the modifier of the adjective. The empirical field we analyze is a peculiar set of DP-internal scrambling phenomena found in Old Italian (OI) from the XIII to the XIV century. In OI it is possible to reverse the order of a quantifier and the N paired to it:

(1) ma   insieme   raunate   e   congiunte   non   è   ***cosa   neuna***
    but   together   gathered   and   joined   not   is   **thing   none**
    che   da   loro   si   difendesse.
    that   from   them   proRefl.3sg   defend.subjPast.3sg
    'but gathered and joined together, there is nothing that could defend itself against them'
                              Bono Giamboni, *Vizi e Virtudi*, a. 1292 (fior.), 48A.49.84.

NP reversal is only possible with quantifiers agreeing with the N like *tutto/tutti* 'all', *neuno* 'no X'. *alcuno* 'some/any X', but not with *ogni* 'every', which lacks agreement. The NP can raise without postnominal adjectival modifiers, which are stranded below after the quantifier or with a prenominal adjective, but not with postnominal adjectives, so that the order N-AdJ Q is never found:

(2) sì   ll'   apella   principe   dell'   altre   parti   tutte
    this.way   cl.3sg.m   names   prince   of.the   other   parts   all
    'this way it names him prince of all the other parts'
                                                      Brunetto Latini, Rettorica, c.1260-61 (fior.), 158.18
(3) tutti   concordano   in   questo, che   in   noi   sia   parte
    all   agree   on   this,   that   in   us   be.subjPres.3sg   part
    alcuna perpetuale.
    some   perpetual
    'all agree on this, that there is some perpetual part in us'
                                                      Dante, Convivio, 1304-1307 248) II, cap. 8 - pag. 103, riga 6

This type of phenomenon clearly shows that Cinque's restriction on moving elements which only contain the head is respected. We argue that this is to be analyzed as raising of an FP including only the NP and direct modifiers, which can be prenominal. The FP raises to the edge of the nominal expression bypassing the quantificational determiner. Restrictive adjectives, which are located higher in the nominal spine, cannot be dragged along by the NP in these cases and must be left stranded in their merge position.

(4)   [QP [SpecQ [direct FP cosa]] [Q° alcuna] [restrict FP [direct FP… [NP ~~cosa~~]]]

Contrary to what observed by Martins (2014, 2015) for Modern European Portuguese, NP reversal in OI is not restricted to negative contexts:

(5) e   chi   allora   m'   avesse   domandato   di   *cosa   alcuna*
    and   who   then   to me   have.auxSubjPast.3sg asked   of   thing   any
    'and who then would have asked me about anything'
                                                      Dante, Vita nuova, c. 1292-93, 11/1-3.40

However, the phenomenon is indeed limited to weak negative contexts (i.e. non-veridical contexts in Giannakidou's 1999 terminology). So, we cannot assume it to be meaningless. The fact that NP-reversal is limited to non-veridical contexts can be captured by arguing that the NP is checking a semantic feature at the edge of the QP precisely related to the non-veridical context, in a configuration which resembles the wh-criterion with the NP being in the SpecQ and the quantifier in Q°, which also explains why this is only possible when visible agreement is instantiated. This type of configuration has already been argued for by Déprez (2011) for negative concord items in French Creole. However, if this is the case, then Cinque's restriction should also be applied to meaningful movement. Furthermore, the progressive rise of NP-reversal in the XIV century attests that the phenomenon cannot be related to the V2 phenomenology in terms of parallelism of phases as proposed in Poletto (2014) for other cases of N to D movement but must be peculiar to nominal expressions.

Reversal phenomena are actually expected to exist in OI, since the DP left periphery can also contain scrambled complement PPs:

(6)   Di   dolor   madre   antica
           of   sorrow   mother   ancient
           'The ancient mother of sorrow' (VN 30)

(7)   Ma   molte   genti   di   religione   mettono   a'   buoi   innanzi
           but   many   people   of   religion   put.3pl   to.the   oxen   before
           il   carro…
           the   cart
           'Many priests put the cart before the oxen…' (Paternostro 101)

However, scrambling can also target restrictive adjectives only:

(8)   e   di   gentile   aspetto   molto
                   and   of   noble   appearance   very
                   'and of very noble appearance' (VN 25)

Since it is also possible to have a restrictive adjective in prenominal position with stranding of its modifier, this must be a case of movement, so the position of *gentile* in (8) cannot be the merge position, since its modifier occurs postnominally. Cases like (8) show that there are scrambling phenomena that do not obey Cinque's restriction, and that the distinction between meaningful and meaningless movement is not the relevant one to set apart movements that must include the head and movements that do not. In the talk, we will deal with this problem and try to provide a first typology of DP-internal movements in this respect.

References

Déprez, V. (2011), *Atoms of Negation*', in D.Ingham / P. Larrivée (eds), *The Evolution of Negation: Beyond the Jespersen Cycle*, Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter: 221-272.

Giannakidou, A. (1997), *The landscape of polarity items*, PhD thesis, University of Groningen.

Martins, A. M. (2014), *Syntactic change in Portuguese and Spanish: Divergent and parallel patterns of linguistic splitting*, in P. Amaral / A. M. Carvalho (eds.), *Portuguese-Spanish Interfaces: Diachrony, synchrony, and contact*, Amsterdam / Philadelphia, John Benjamins: 35-64.

Martins, A. M. (2015), *Ordem de palavras e polaridade: inversão nominal negativa com algum/alguno e nenhum*, "Diacrítica", 29: 401-428.

Poletto, C. (2014), *Word order in old Italian*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.