

Is You're a tough man to love a tough construction? **Reassessing ANC constructions beyond raising**

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Abstract

This article re-examines the traditional classification of ANC constructions such as *You're a tough man to love*. Within generative accounts of deep structure, ANC constructions have been analysed as variants of raising constructions of the *You're tough to love* type which arise through syntactic movement and receive their interpretation from an underlying structure rather than from the surface linear order. However, the systematic conceptualisation of an underlying deep structure to account for ANC constructions has encouraged the view that the linear order of constituents is accidental and inert, that is, a by-product of transformational operations rather than a meaningful contributor to interpretation. Drawing on corpus evidence and a constructional and cognitive analysis, I provide evidence supporting the idea that ANC constructions may be more appropriately analysed as ordinary copular constructions in which the linear order of complex predicative NPs such as *a tough man to love* is meaningful. The syntactic and semantic interactions within the complex predicative NP suggest that the adjective has (partial) scope over the head noun and that the infinitival clause specifies its domain of application.

Keywords: *ANC constructions – Raising constructions – Cognitive grammar – Construction grammar – Adjectival complementation*

Résumé

Cet article réexamine la classification traditionnelle des constructions ANP du type *You're a tough man to love*. Selon les approches génératives, ces constructions sont analysées comme des dérivées de constructions à montée du type *You're tough to love* dont l'interprétation est fondée sur l'idée d'une structure sous-jacente telle que *To love you is tough*. Toutefois, le recours systématique à une structure profonde a encouragé l'idée selon laquelle l'ordre linéaire des constituants serait accidentel et sémantiquement inerte, c'est-à-dire qu'il serait le simple résultat d'opérations transformationnelles plutôt qu'un élément qui contribue pleinement à l'interprétation des constructions ANP. En m'appuyant sur des données de corpus ainsi que sur des analyses qualitatives qui s'appuient sur les cadres de la grammaire de construction et de la grammaire cognitive, cet article soutient l'hypothèse que les constructions ANP peuvent être analysées comme des constructions copulatives ordinaires au sein desquelles l'ordre linéaire des syntagmes nominaux attributs tels que *a tough man to love* est motivé. Les interactions

syntactiques et sémantiques au sein du syntagme nominal attribut suggèrent que l'adjectif porte au moins partiellement sur le nom tête et que la proposition infinitive spécifie le domaine d'application de l'adjectif.

Mots-clés : *Constructions ANP – Constructions à montée – Grammaire cognitive – Grammaire des constructions – Complémentation adjectivale*

Introduction

(1) I foolishly thought your life would be a quick fix. **You're a tough man to love**, Tommy. To get the job you want, you need to dress for the job you want [...] You have an interview tomorrow. (*American Dad*, season 15, episode 10). [ANC CONSTRUCTION]

(2a) Okay at least you're willing to concede that Conan is, over all, not a nice guy and not just a misogynist/rapist. That's a start. He kills people. He's a "reaver". He steals. He grabs women's butts. **He's tough to love**. (COCA) [RAISING CONSTRUCTION]

(b) *He is tough.

(c) To love him is tough.

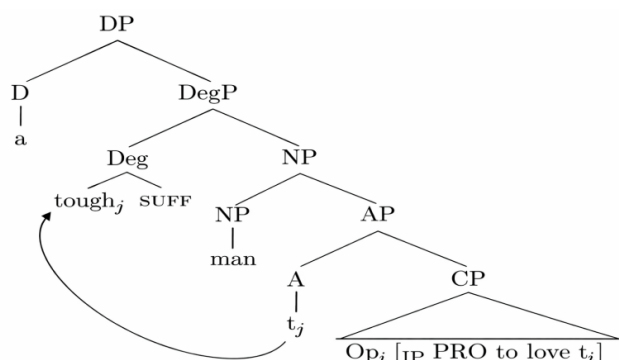
This work focuses on the interaction between the Adjective, the Noun, and the infinitival Clause and I therefore refer descriptively to the construction (1) in bold as an ANC construction. The latter features a noun phrase in subject position linked to a predicative NP via the copula BE. The NP that functions as predicative complement consists of an indefinite article, an evaluative adjective, a hypernymic noun that usually repeats basic information encoded in the subject of the matrix clause, and an infinitival clause. The predicative complement occurring in ANC constructions will be referred to as a complex noun phrase (NP).

Conversely, the predicative complement in construction (2a) is not a noun phrase but an adjectival phrase which consists of an adjective followed by an infinitival clause. This occurrence is the epitome of *tough* constructions as defined by Chomsky (1965 : 102), who sees the surface structure in (2a) as deriving from the deep structure illustrated in (2c). Consequently, the object of *love*, *him*, in the subordinate clause of (2c) is interpreted as having been raised as subject of BE in the matrix clause in (2a). This is why the predication of the adjective *tough* onto the raised subject in (2b) is infelicitous as a paraphrase of (2a): the adjective only pertains to the infinitival clause. I will therefore refer to the predicative complement as a syntactically reordered adjectival phrase (AP).

Comparatively, (1) and (2a) share formal resemblance. Yet the major difference is the nature of the predicative complement: a noun phrase in the former and an adjectival phrase in the latter. The traditional generative analysis focuses on their similarities and tends to consider the ANC construction in (1) to be a *tough* construction as illustrated in (2a). I give a more detailed account of this interpretation below. However, in this article, I provide evidence to treat

ANC constructions as ordinary copular constructions featuring complex NPs as predicative complements.

The generative literature of Berman (1974), Flickinger & Nerbonne (1992) and Dubinsky (1998) assumes that ANC constructions as exemplified in (1) are forms of raising constructions such as (2a) and that their predicative complements are syntactically reordered NPs. Building on Dubinsky's analysis (1998: 4), Fleisher (2008 : 99) would represent the predicative NP in (1) as follows:



The structure of *a tough man to love* shows two disjunctions between syntax and semantics, which essentially explain why this representation of ANC constructions is “analogous to a *tough* construction” (Dubinsky 1998 : 4) and why the predicative complements of those constructions are considered as syntactically reordered NPs. First, the attributive adjective *tough* is not a modifier of the noun *man* in its own right and does not have any semantic link with the noun. This is observable through the movement represented by the curved arrow, which indicates movement from the adjective's position in the adjectival phrase (AP) to its higher copy in Deg: the adjective originates in the A position within the AP and is then raised to the Deg head. In other words, the position of *tough* as head of Deg corresponds to the position of the adjective in the surface structure (*He is a **tough** man to love*), which is purely syntactic, while the position of *tough* represented by t_j represents what would be the adjective's original location (*He is a man **tough** to love*) where it receives its semantic interpretation as a difficulty relative to the process *to love* in the complementizer phrase (CP). The subsequent and second disjunction between syntax and semantics pertains to the head *man*, which appears in the surface structure as the head of the attributive adjective *tough* (*He is a **tough** man to love*), while it is the object of *love* represented as t_i in CP. This means that neither the noun in the predicative complement of ANC constructions nor the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN bears any significance relative to the description or the categorisation of the referent; it is likewise irrelevant to the understanding and classification of the construction. This is why Berman goes as far as claiming (1974 : 174) that the predicative complements of ANC constructions are actually APs.

This generative approach entails that constructions (1) and (2a) are interchangeable and that ANC constructions are indeed *tough* constructions. The main issue raised by this analysis is that it neglects the presence of an NP as predicative complement in ANC constructions and fails to account for it. I identify two causes that explain this gap. The first one has to do with the theoretical basis of generative theory: the systematic conceptualisation of an underlying deep structure to account for ANC constructions has encouraged the view that the linear order of constituents is accidental and inert, that is, a by-product of transformational operations rather than a meaningful contributor to interpretation. The second is rather a matter of methodology: as noted by Fleisher (2008 : 181), ANC constructions have been “understudied” and “typically mentioned only as an afterthought by investigators of their famously difficult cousin, the *tough* construction”. This means that the lack of systematic and in-depth investigation into ANC constructions may have led to the quick dismissal of their idiosyncratic properties.

In this article, I provide evidence that ANC constructions are not *tough* constructions. To account for the syntax of ANC constructions, I rely on Word Grammar, which claims that even if a deep structure can be posited, “syntactic structure [in its linear form] consists of dependencies between words” (Hudson 2008 : 2). This will help prove that the predicative complements of ANC constructions are complex NPs rather than syntactically reordered NPs. This syntactic account will be embedded in cognitive grammar according to which “grammatical structures do not constitute an autonomous formal system” (Langacker 1990 : 1) : this means that syntax of the ANC predicative complements reflects semantic patterns and cognitive operations and that the adjective might be argued to be a modifier of the noun in its own right. Finally, the relationship between form and meaning can be framed within Construction Grammar, where grammatical patterns are treated as form–meaning pairings. As Hudson notes, these three theoretical approaches are compatible, since they all reject the idea of autonomous syntax to different degrees: the linear syntax of ANC constructions is not semantically irrelevant but closely related to the meaning of the construction.

This study is based on forty occurrences taken from the COCA and eight occurrences taken directly from TV shows. This research is qualitative since the aim is essentially to prove that some defining properties of ANC constructions cast ambiguous light on their traditional classification as *tough* constructions.

1. The convertibility of complex NPs into syntactically reordered APs

A useful starting point is to test whether complex NPs found in ANC constructions can be converted into the syntactically reordered APs typical of *tough* constructions. By attempting conversion, we can determine whether ANC constructions truly instantiate the same configuration as *tough* constructions. As will become clear, this conversion is not generally possible, revealing an asymmetry within the paradigm.

(3a) I foolishly thought your life would be a quick fix. You're **a tough man to love**, Tommy. To get the job you want, you need to dress for the job you want [...] You have an interview tomorrow. (*American Dad*, season 15, episode 10).

(b) You're **tough to love**, Tommy.

The ANC construction in (3a) can be converted felicitously into the *tough* construction in (3b), which seems to indicate that the two types of construction share more than a formal resemblance. This is why many authors such as Quirk et al (1985 : 1394), Jang (2009 : 144), Mair (1987 : 68) and Fleisher (2008 : 181) tend to consider the former to be a variant of the latter. The equivalence between (3a) and (3b) can be explained by the fact that *tough* constructions typically feature adjectives that denote easiness and difficulty. The adjective *tough* in the ANC construction in (3a) is therefore compatible with the adjectival phrase in (3b). However, most of the ANC constructions I have gathered cannot be felicitously converted into *tough* constructions.

(4a) Ha! You know, in some fucked-up countries, they'll chop a bloke's hand off for stealing another bloke's gear. Ah! (MOTORREVS) That's **a silly place to park**. I wouldn't do that if I was you, you fuckin' hippie.

(b) *That [place] is **silly to park**.

(5a) Why are you telling me this? Because **faith is a terrible thing to take away from a man**, Theodore. It's like taking away his future.

(b) *Because faith is **terrible to take away from a man**, Theodore.

(6a) What brings you to Alicante? I need you to escort me to the Cemetery of the Disgraced. That's **an odd place to go at this hour**. Why? I'd like the opportunity to properly mourn my parents.

(b) *That [place] is **odd to go at this hour**.

Occurrences (4a), (5a) and (6a) respectively feature the adjectives *silly*, *terrible* and *odd*. The adjectives can all be understood as having scope over the infinitival clauses rather than over the head nouns: for example, in (4a), the inanimate referent *place* cannot be considered to be the target of the adjective *silly* which denotes a cognitive state, and in (5a), the adjective *terrible* cannot apply to *faith* because the speaker considers *faith* to be a human virtue for mankind, hence the fact that it is *terrible* “to take [it] away from a man”. The fact that the adjectives have scope over the infinitival clauses would suggest that the occurrences in which they appear could be converted into *tough* constructions, just like in (3). However, (4b), (5b) and (6b) show that ANC constructions cannot be converted into *tough* constructions: the adjective does not fit in that syntactic and semantic configuration.

This asymmetry within the paradigm of ANC constructions reveals that the latter accept a wider range of adjectives than *tough* constructions. This ties in with Huddleston & Pullum's

(2002 : 1248) statement that adjectives such as *surprising* and *stupid* cannot occur as predicative complements when followed by an infinitival clause: they have to occur attributively in ANC constructions. I have found other adjectives that behave that way, such as *nice*, *good*, *bad* and *decent* as illustrated below. These adjectives can occur in the ANC construction in (7a) but not in the *tough* construction in (7c). This constitutes proof that ANC constructions exhibit looser adjectival restrictions and therefore cannot be considered as simple variants of *tough* constructions.

(7a) The Lower East Side is known for its alternative music scene and Living Room is one of the pillars of that reputation. [...] If there is a new band you want to see, this is **a decent place to catch them**, but I wouldn't make it my default destination

(b) *To catch them [in this place] is decent.

(c) *This [place] is **decent to catch them**.

Finally, the unacceptability of (7c) reveals the impossibility of resorting to the syntactic configuration of *tough* constructions in which the adjective is understood as having semantic scope over the infinitival clause. This reveals that ANC constructions and *tough* constructions license different adjectival scopes. Unlike the (a)-readings in (4), (5) and (6), the adjective *decent* in (7a) can be interpreted as having scope over the head noun *place*, not the infinitival clause, hence the fact that it is impossible to predicate the adjective onto the infinitival clause in (7b). Consequently, it is likewise impossible to resort to a *tough* construction in (7c).

The impossibility of converting the ANC constructions (4)-(7) into *tough* constructions that resort to raising suggests that in ANC constructions, the linear order of constituents cannot easily be dismissed, hence the fact that the attributive adjective *decent* in (7a) can be interpreted as an attributive adjective of *place* in its own right. In other words, the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN is not necessarily syntactically reordered since it is meaningful and conveys the adjectival modification of the noun by the attributive adjective. This contradicts the aforementioned generative assumption that the noun is insignificant because it does not interact with the adjective. I elaborate on this idea in the next section.

2. Apparent constituents and linear order

There are ANC constructions that suggest that the linear order of constituents cannot be dismissed as a mere accident of deep structure. I here provide further evidence that the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN is meaningful, insofar as the two elements participate in a semantic interaction. In such cases, the adjective can be construed as directly characterizing the nominal referent, which indicates that the ADJECTIVE + NOUN sequence forms a coherent descriptive unit. In this sense, the sequence can be considered syntactically motivated, since its linear arrangement reflects the underlying semantic relation between the two constituents rather than being a purely formal by-product of syntactic derivation. This interpretation relies on the more

general principle of iconic proximity (Givón 2001: 202), according to which elements that are conceptually, functionally, or cognitively related tend to occur in close syntactic proximity.

(8) I was born two miles from here. I own a house in Studio City. This is **a nice place to live**. I would like to keep it that way.

In (8), the adjective *nice* could be interpreted as applying both to the head noun and to the infinitival clause: the entity referred to by *place* and the experience of living in it are *nice*, understood as pleasing and agreeable. In other words, the sequence *a nice place to live* implies the truth of the sequence *a nice place* and vice versa. This idea is also to be found in Huddleston & Pullum (2002 : 1248), who consider that occurrences such as *This is **a difficult book to read*** implies that the book is partially construed as *difficult* in itself. However, determining which sequence logically precedes the other appears to be a chicken-and-egg issue. On the one hand, the fact that reading the book is not an easy task may be considered to cause the interpretation that the book is intrinsically difficult, which would mean that the description of the inherent function of the referent (a book has the function of being read) entails the description of the referent in itself. On the other hand, the fact that the book is considered to be intrinsically difficult on the basis of inherent properties (its language, structure, plot...) may be considered to cause the fact that it is difficult to read it. For the purpose of this work, I will stick to the conclusion that the two sequences can be characterized by a notion of reciprocal implication. This reciprocal implication paves the way for the idea that the adjective in ANC constructions is a prenominal attributive adjective in its own right that applies to the head noun and by extension to the subject in the matrix. This is at odds with the raising mechanism in *tough* constructions as illustrated in (2a), which implies that the adjective cannot be thought of as having scope over the subject in the matrix clause. Ultimately, this constitutes evidence that ANC constructions are not *tough* constructions.

Since the adjective can also be interpreted as applying to the infinitival clause, the scope of the adjective in ANC constructions seems to be dual, and this is reminiscent of the notion of “apparent constituent” found in the work of Mair (1987 : 65) and Bolinger (1967 : 47). The latter writes:

[...] it has come to be generally accepted that transformations do not add meaning (though they may affect something vaguely thought of as "style") and that consequently whatever semantic interpreting is done must be done before transformations apply. [...] I think it can be shown, however, that [...] room has to be made for some interpretation at the surface. This is because of restrictions that take effect only after the transformations have applied and the surface sentence has been arrived at. A collocation results that forms an apparent constituent.

In other words, an apparent constituent is an association of words which may originate from a deep structure but whose post-transformational structure can be thought of as motivated and yielding meaning. This theoretical stance differs from generative theory since the linear order of constituents is not to be dismissed as an unmotivated consequence of the deep structure.

In his article about *tough* constructions, Mair (1987 : 65) discusses the notion of apparent constituent:

[...] there are circumstances in which it is quite profitable for speakers to prefer the “apparent” analysis to the “real” one and treat expressions such as *difficult to see* or *pleasant to listen to* as complex adjectival phrases in their own right. At a very elementary level this is routinely done when a Tough-Movement structure is co-ordinated with one or more plain adjectives - a fact also noted by Hietaranta (1984 : 23).

In other words, the adjectival phrase *pleasant to listen to*, which pertains to the type of adjectival phrases that occur in *tough* constructions such as *She’s pleasant to listen to*, does not necessarily imply syntactic reordering and may be considered as an ordinary adjectival construction in which the adjective and the infinitival clause form a complex adjectival entity directly predicated onto the subject in the matrix clause via the copula BE. The notion of apparent constituent is therefore relevant because the underlying deep-structure interpretation – *to listen to her is pleasant* – is as acceptable as the linear-order interpretation in which the adjective *pleasant* is modified by the infinitival clause and applies directly to the subject in the matrix clause. Beyond the idea that *tough* constructions may not involve any form of raising and therefore should perhaps not be considered as such, this double-layered approach applies to the complex NP in ANC constructions.

In (8), *This is a nice place to live*, the underlying structure may be *to live in that place is pleasant*, which indicates that the scope of the adjective pertains to the infinitival clause. Simultaneously, the linear order of constituents yields meaning, and the adjective *nice* equally applies to the head noun *place* and, by referential extension, to the subject in the matrix clause *this* and *Studio City*.

The noun phrase in ANC constructions may therefore be interpreted as an apparent constituent, which supports analysing the pattern as an independent copular construction rather than as a *tough* construction derived from an underlying structure. This use of the term *construction* follows construction-grammar approaches, where constructions are conventional form–meaning pairings, and contrasts with generative accounts that treat surface order as epiphenomenal.

As seen above, Mair (1987 : 65) and Hietaranta (1984 : 23) argue that the adjectival phrases of some constructions traditionally analysed as *tough* constructions might be better interpreted as complex adjectival entities that therefore directly apply to the subject in the matrix clause. For instance, Mair provides the example of *pleasant to listen to* such as in *The song is poetic and pleasant to listen to*. The possibility of coordinating the adjectival phrase *pleasant to listen to* with the prototypical adjectival phrase *poetic* suggests that the former contains likewise a “real” (Mair’s words) a real attributive adjective, *pleasant*. And the whole adjectival phrase *pleasant to listen to* is therefore not the unmotivated consequence of some syntactic reordering. This may be applicable to ANC constructions such as (9) below.

(9) Austin has the double whammy of being the State Capitol with lots of civil "service" types and a Big College with plenty of faculty. It's Liberal Loon Central South. # The rest of TX is pretty free and **a great place to live**. I'm aggressively looking for job opportunities so I can get back there, hopefully around San Antonio.

Here, the noun phrase *a great place to live* is coordinated with the adjectival phrase *pretty free*. This coordination, building on Mair and Hietaranta's work, suggests that two phrases are both ordinary predicative complements of BE that directly apply to the subject *The rest of TX*. At the level of the complex NP in bold, this implies that *great* is an attributive adjective that has scope over the head noun *place* and by referential extension, over the subject *The rest of TX*. The semantic viability of the linear order indicates that ANC constructions should be interpreted as copular constructions rather than *tough* constructions.

3. Complex phrases in ordinary copular constructions

In line with the preceding discussion, Mair (1987 : 65) and Hietaranta (1984 : 23) treat expressions such as *pleasant to listen to* and *difficult to see* as complex adjectival units rather than products of syntactic movement. Complex phrases found in ANC constructions likewise behave as predicative complements in ordinary copular structures. In (8), we have seen that the adjective *nice* in *a nice place to live* may be interpreted as applying directly to the head noun *place* and, by referential extension, to anaphoric *this*. This interpretation is compatible with the view that ANC constructions are copular constructions and not *tough* constructions. However, this interpretation is less intuitive in ANC constructions such as (11) in which the adjective seems to have scope only over the infinitival clause and therefore requires further analysis.

(10) I was born two miles from here. I own a house in Studio City. This is **a nice place to live**. I would like to keep it that way.

(11) I foolishly thought your life would be a quick fix. You're **a tough man to love**, Tommy. To get the job you want, you need to dress for the job you want [...] You have an interview tomorrow. (*American Dad*, season 15, episode 10).

The ANC construction in (11) features the adjective *tough*. Semantically, it seems logical to consider that the adjective has scope over the infinitival clause rather than over the head noun and, by referential extension, over the subject in the matrix clause. Indeed, the speaker, Stan Smith, finds Tommy indolent and apathetic, which is consistent with the fact that Tommy is not considered to be *tough*, understood as applying to someone "characterized by severity or an uncompromising determination", "very hard to influence", or "marked by absence of softness or sentimentality" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Consequently, if Tommy were to be qualified by an adjective, it would be by means of an antonym of *tough*, such as *soft*, defined as "lacking firmness or strength of character" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Despite the fact that (11) is an ANC construction, this ties in with the *tough* construction reading, which consists in

interpreting the adjective as applying solely to the infinitival clause: it is the fact of loving Tommy that is *tough*, understood as “difficult to accomplish” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

However, the semantic incompatibility between *tough* and *man* does not necessarily constitute proof that ANC constructions are *tough* constructions. Building on Mair and Hietaranta’s statement that adjectival phrases such as *pleasant to listen to* may be considered as complex adjectival phrases in their own right, I likewise hypothesize that noun phrases such as *a tough man to love* in (11) are complex predicative NPs which express complex qualities directly applicable to the subject in the matrix clause. In other words, the infinitival clause *to love* defines the relevant semantic domain in which the adjective *tough* applies to the head noun *man* and, by referential extension, to the subject *He* in the matrix clause. Therefore, just like in (10), there is no need to consider that the ANC construction in (11) is a *tough* construction whose conceptualisation must necessarily resort to a deep-structure analysis.

Complex phrases allowing a viable interpretation of the linear order as opposed to syntactically reordered phrases resulting from a raising mechanism constitute proof that ANC constructions could be interpreted as distinct constructions. I list below the points established so far.

- Complex noun phrases in ANC constructions may not be interchangeable with adjectival phrases as they occur in *tough* constructions (section 1).
- Complex noun phrases in ANC constructions allow a wider range of adjectives than the adjectival phrases of *tough* constructions. (section 1)
- Complex noun phrases in ANC constructions allow a viable semantic interpretation of the linear order, hence the validity of the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN called an “apparent constituent”. (section 2)
- Complex noun phrases occur in ordinary copular constructions, hence the aforementioned validity of the linear order and the possibility to coordinate complex NPs and bare adjectival phrases. (section 3)
- Mair and Hietaranta consider that *tough* constructions do not necessarily involve raising (a point that will be further developed), which invalidates the initial classification of ANC constructions as *tough* constructions involving movement. (sections 2 and 3)

Taken together, these observations mostly bear on how ANC constructions compare to *tough* constructions. They suggest that the NP in ANC constructions should be treated as a complex constituent whose linear order contributes to interpretation and which behaves syntactically and semantically as a predicative complement which includes an attributive adjective in its own right. In the remainder of this study, I therefore turn from typological comparison to the internal organisation of complex NPs themselves and examine how their

syntax-semantics interface can be modelled in a way that accounts for their idiosyncratic behaviour.

4. The syntax/semantics interface

4.1. Phrasal discontinuity

One of the reasons why complex NPs have been interpreted as syntactically reordered NPs is the fact that in some ANC constructions – not all, as we have seen in sections 1, 2 and 3 – the adjective semantically pertains to the infinitival clause despite being the attributive adjective of the head noun, and the infinitival clause is semantically related to the adjective despite being a syntactic dependent of the head noun.

(12) Ha! You know, in some fucked-up countries, they'll chop a bloke's hand off for stealing another bloke's gear. Ah! (MOTORREVS). That's **a silly place to park**. I wouldn't do that if I was you, you fuckin' hippie.

This is observable in (12), where *silly* has semantic scope over *to park [in that place]* despite being the attributive adjective of *place* and the infinitival clause *to park [in that place]* semantically interacts with the adjective *silly* despite being a dependent of the head noun *place*. There are therefore two forms of disjunction between syntax and semantics, and this very idea relies on the perceived violation of the rule that a phrase “forms a syntactic and semantic unit without interruptions from outside the phrase” (Hudson 2008: 12): the adjective *silly* and the infinitival clause *to park [in this place]* seem to form a semantic unit despite being syntactically separated by the head noun *place*. The violation of that phrasal rule echoes the violation of the more general principle of iconic proximity (Givón 2001: 202) according to which “the closer together two concepts are semantically or functionally, the more likely they are to be put adjacent to each other lexically or syntactically.” When the semantic and syntactic requirements of the proximity fail to apply to some occurrences, the solution has sometimes been to construe the linear order as “a surface structure, in which the words and morphemes appear in the order in which they are pronounced, grouped in a way that corresponds to ways in which the sentence can be pronounced” (McCawley 1998: 16). The surface structure is then perceived as unreliable and its meaning is essentially determined by “various underlying structures that involve units and ways of combining them that do not appear as such in surface structure” (McCawley 1998: 16), just like in *tough* constructions where the relationship between the subject in the matrix, the adjective and the infinitival clause is considered irregular according to the proximity rules and therefore accounted for at the level of the deep structure.

However, the proximity rules have sometimes been considered absolute rules rather than general tendencies, an observation found for instance in Bolinger (1967 : 47) and Langacker (1995 : 21), and this may have led some scholars resort to a deep-structure analysis too quickly for linguistic phenomena interpreted as being at odds with the proximity rules. For instance,

Forest (1994 : 2) has criticized the influence of transformational theory on the interpretation of negative raising. I briefly illustrate the notion below in (13).

(13) William: don't try and change the subject. You lied to me about a patient's identity. You falsified records! Betty: What else was I supposed to do?! If Helen and I came in for fertility treatments, what would you have done... Gone ahead with it? William: This is the single worst breach of professionalism. Betty: Professionalism? I do not think that you are the best spokesman on the subject.

Negative raising implies that (13) is interpreted within the theoretical frame of a deep structure which could be illustrated as follows: *I think that you are **not** the best spokesman on the subject*. The negation has therefore been raised from the subordinate clause to the matrix clause. This testifies to the pervasive assumption that the linear order may be fallacious, thereby highlighting the need to resort to a deep-structure analysis. However, dismissing the linear order may obscure the fact that the verb *think* is often used as a near-synonym of *believe*. In sentences such as *I do not think/believe she'll come*, the linear configuration is semantically coherent, since the negation targets the speaker's degree of commitment to the truth of the subordinate proposition. Polysemy should therefore not be overlooked.

This provides insight into the analysis of ANC constructions, whose linear order has been puzzling since it often does not meet the requirements of the proximity rules. Their linear order being considered unreliable, the traditional solution has been to resort to a deep-structure analysis and to subsume ANC constructions into the paradigm of *tough* constructions. However, this might not be a satisfactory reason to dismiss the linear order of ANC constructions such as (1) (*You're a tough man to love*) as a mere accident of the deep structure. On the contrary, I argue that the linear relationship between the adjective, the head noun and the infinitival clause is yet to be accounted for. This issue can be addressed by drawing first on Hudson's concept of discontinuous phrases and then on Huddleston & Pullum's notion of indirect complementation.

Hudson (2008 : 12) distinguishes two types of phrases relative to their linear placement: continuous and discontinuous phrases. Most phrases are continuous in that they consist in "a group of words which form a syntactic and semantic unit [...] without interruptions from outside the phrase". That is, they consist in words that semantically and syntactically belong together and are consequently placed next to each other. The notion of continuity therefore refers to the alignment between syntax and semantics, and to conformity with the proximity rules. This is the case in (14a), where *green peas* form a continuous phrase. Phrasal discontinuity is unacceptable in (14b).

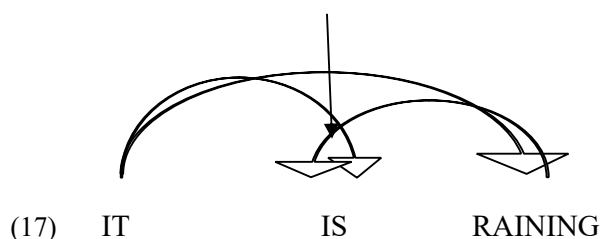
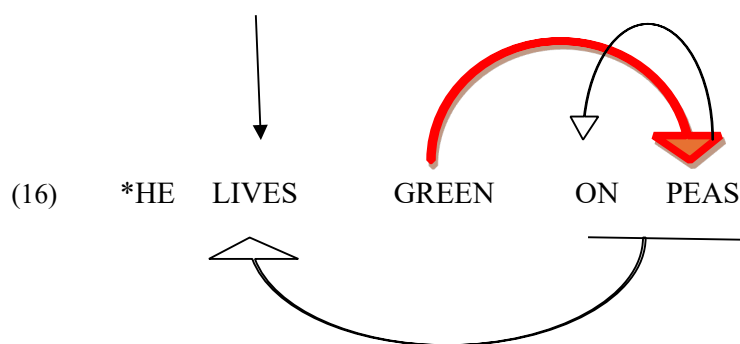
(14a) He lives on **green peas**. [continuous phrase]

(b) *He lives **green on peas**. [discontinuous phrase]

(15) **It** is **raining**. [discontinuous phrase]

However, there are cases such as (15) where discontinuous phrases are acceptable. Here, according to Hudson, the pronoun *it* appears to be the subject of *raining* despite being a

dependent of the auxiliary verb *is*, hence the subject-verb agreement: the discontinuity therefore lies in the fact that *it* and *raining* are not adjacent to each other. Dependency is here conceptualised as a loose form of connectedness that takes into account the linear order of constituents. As such, there are here three relations of dependency that have to be accounted for: *it* depends on *is*, *raining* depends on *is*, and *it* depends on *raining*. Hudson proposes that the pronoun *it* depends on two constituents that are heads in their own right: the auxiliary verb BE is its head in what we might call syntactic terms and the lexical verb *raining* is its head in what we might call semantic terms. Hudson proposes to represent this “grammatical tangling” with arrows that show the direction of dependency, as in (16) and (17) below. The arrows could therefore be paraphrased by *X is a dependent of the constituent towards which the arrow points*; the vertical arrow points at a constituent that Hudson calls the “root”: this is the constituent which governs the whole phrase and which therefore has no head. According to this frame, let’s compare (16) and (17) to determine why some discontinuous phrases are allowed while others are not.



In (16), the noun phrase is discontinuous and ungrammatical: the red arrow shows the missing link: that is, *green* is not “connected” – Hudson’s term – to its head noun *peas* in linear

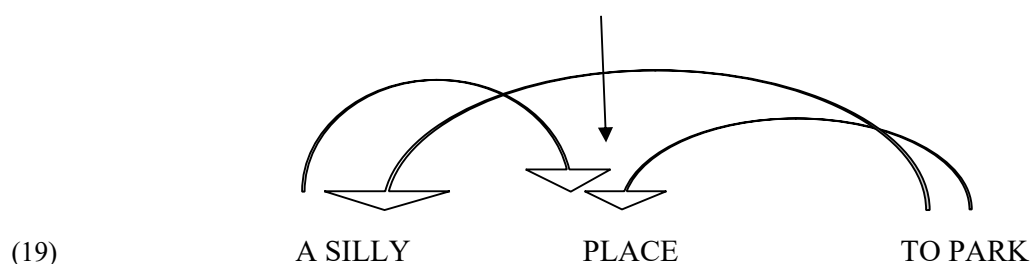
terms, and there is no intermediary word that connects the adjective and the noun. Therefore, *green* is not connected to the nominal phrase which is itself connected to the prepositional phrase headed by the preposition *on* and which is itself connected to the core element of the clause, the verb *live*. This notion of “connectedness” is essential, and without it, *green* is disconnected from its phrase and, ultimately, from the root.

By contrast, (17) exhibits a different pattern. Since the pronoun *It* is not directly adjacent to the verb *raining* despite being its semantic dependent, the unit is discontinuous and, based on (16), it could have been expected to be ungrammatical. Yet, unlike the adjective *green* in (16), the pronoun *it* is connected to *raining* via the intermediary of the auxiliary verb *is* which is itself connected to the pronoun *it*. This means that the phrase can be discontinuous and yet grammatical. In Hudson’s frame, the pronoun *it* has two heads, as evidenced by the two arrows.

This suggests that what matters the most at the level of the linear order is not necessarily the proximity rules but the fact that there is a chain of dependency by which an intermediary constituent – *is* in (17) – connects two constituents – *it* and *raining* – while itself being connected to them. The phrase is therefore felicitously discontinuous because its constituents are still connected. This notion of connectedness provides us with a looser way to conceptualise the complex predicative NPs in ANC constructions.

(18) That’s a **silly** place **to park**.

(18) represents the type of ANC construction in which the adjective can be considered to have scope only over the infinitival clause, and it is therefore particularly compatible with the notion of discontinuous phrase since *silly* and *to park* interact as a potential unit but are not adjacent to each other.



(20) *This is a Ø place to park.

(19) is a representation of Hudson’s logic applied to the ANC construction in (18). The noun *place* is the head of the NP; it is therefore the “root” and has no head in the above representation. Three elementary dependency relationships can be established: the adjective *silly* depends on the noun *place*, the infinitival clause *to park* [in this *place*] also depends both on the noun *place* and on the adjective *silly*. The adjective and the infinitival clause therefore form a discontinuous adjectival phrase since they are not adjacent to each other despite the fact that

they also form a unit. This unit is semantic since the adjective *silly* has semantic scope over the infinitival clause *to park [in this place]*, and the infinitival clause defines a semantic domain of application for the adjective. Yet the unit also seems to be syntactic, hence the ungrammaticality of (20): if the adjective *silly* is removed, there is a sense of incompleteness symbolised by $\emptyset$ and the infinitival clause appears irrelevant to the construction, which means that to a certain degree, the adjective syntactically licenses the infinitival clause.

We may now wonder why the discontinuity of the phrase is acceptable in (19) but unacceptable in (16)? Once again, the notion of linear connectedness is key to explaining phrasal discontinuity: two non-adjacent constituents – in (19), *silly* and *to park [in this place]* – can maintain a dependency relationship and therefore form a discontinuous adjectival phrase if they are simultaneously dependents of an intermediary head – the “root” *place* – that connects them in linear terms.

4.2. Indirect complementation

The idea that, in some ANC constructions, the infinitival clause depends simultaneously on the noun and on the adjective can be captured in Hudson’s dependency-based account. However, the notion of indirect complementation proposed by Huddleston & Pullum offers a complementary perspective by clarifying the licensing relationship involved: the infinitival clause can be analysed as an indirect complement licensed not only by the head noun but also by the adjective. Together, these approaches help account for both the structural connectedness and the grammatical status of the infinitival clause within the complex predicative NP.

(21) Direct complements

- (a) his fear **of the dark**
- (b) the claim that it was a hoax

(22) Indirect complements

- (a) a better result **than we’d expected**
- (b) enough time **to complete the work**

(23) ANC constructions

This is a silly place **to park**.

In (21a) and (21b), the complements *of the dark* and *that it was a hoax* are respectively licensed by the heads of the NPs, *fear* and *claim*. They are direct complements because they are licensed by the head of the phrase in which they are inserted. By contrast, (22a) and (22b) exhibit a different pattern: the complements *than we’d expected* and *to complete the work* are not licensed by the heads *result* and *time*, but by the dependents *better* and *enough*. As such, they

are indirect complements because they depend on a dependent of the phrase in which they are inserted, not on its head. The ANC construction (23) exhibits a similar behavior. On the one hand, the infinitival clause *to park* [*in this place*] is inserted into the noun phrase *a silly place to park*, thereby depending on the head *place* and elaborating on it as an antecedent, *to park in [this place]*. On the other hand, the infinitival clause is also licensed by the adjective *silly*, which it complements by semantically providing a restrictive domain of application for its scope: therefore, the infinitival clause might be considered a form of indirect complement of the adjective, which ties in with Hudson’s model of a constituent governed by two heads.

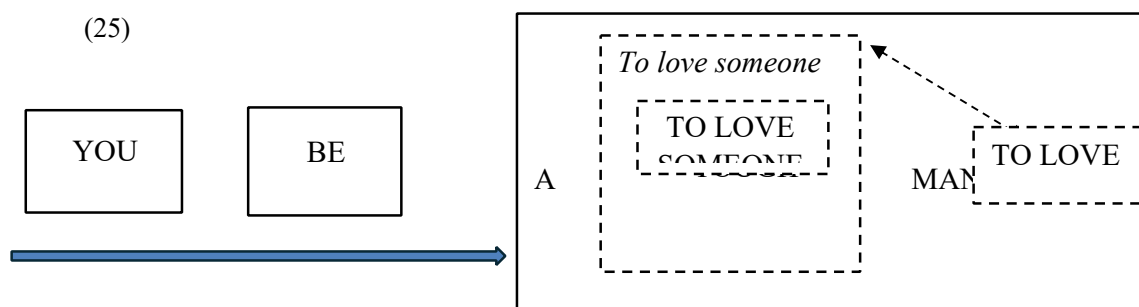
In this section, we have established that, at the level of the linear order of constituents, the notion of connectedness can provide us with an alternative way to account for phrasal discontinuity: the fact that the infinitival clause interacts with the adjective does not necessarily indicate a syntactic reordering. In such constructions, the predicative NPs feature three dependency relationships: the adjective depends on the noun, and the infinitival clause depends on both the noun and the adjective. We shall now focus on the relationship between the infinitival clause and the adjective in a cognitive framework to prove that ANC constructions can be considered as copular constructions rather than *tough* constructions involving raising.

4.3. The adjective’s domain of application

According to Langacker (1995 : 21), the so-called *tough* construction (*John is tough to please*, *The book is easy to read*) can be reassessed in ways that recall the interpretations proposed for ANC constructions above. The author states that the canonical generative account according to which the subject NP must originate inside the infinitival clause and undergo some form of raising rests on the assumption that the surface order is semantically inert and that only the deep structure reveals the “true” grammatical relations. In traditional analyses of tough constructions, such as *He’s tough to love*, the adjective is assumed to target the event expressed by the infinitival clause rather than the matrix subject. Under this view, *tough* characterizes the difficulty of the act of loving him, not a property of the individual himself. This interpretation is reflected in the paraphrase *To love him is tough*, where the adjective clearly applies to the event. Consequently, the surface subject *he* is not taken to fall within the semantic scope of the adjective but is instead analysed as originating within the infinitival clause and undergoing raising to subject position in the matrix clause. Yet, according to Langacker, this reasoning presupposes three fallacious elements: first, that the adjective has a single invariant argument structure irrespective of the constructional context; second, that grammar must transparently encode these “logical” relations; and third, that structurally licensed polysemy is merely a superficial phenomenon masking an underlying uniform representation. Instead, Langacker views *tough* constructions as ordinary copular constructions whose infinitival clauses specify a domain of application for the adjective.

(24) This is an easy book to read. (Langacker)

Thus, in the *tough* construction in (24), the adjective does not extrinsically impose an eventive structure (*to read the book is easy*); instead, it attributes to the book a property of *ease*, the interpretation of which is associated with an event (*to read*) involving the book. The book is therefore *easy*, and the predication of the adjective onto the subject is perfectly viable. The infinitival clause only specifies a semantic domain that is often left implicit in ordinary copular constructions. For instance, in *You're clever*, the implicit domain of application can be specified in many ways (*at school*, *when it comes to human relationships*, *street-smart*) and this does not prevent us from considering the adjective to be a legitimate property of the referent. This ties in with my claim that ANC constructions are not syntactically reordered constructions since the infinitival clause specifies the adjectival domain of application and the attributive adjective can be construed as applying to the head noun and, by extension, to the subject in the matrix clause.



In (25), the horizontal arrows show the linear predication by which the subject referent denoted by the pronoun *you* is related to a predicative complement via the copula *BE*. The predicative complement is instantiated by a noun phrase which elaborates a property that applies as a whole to the subject referent, hence the idea that this is a copular construction. At the level of the noun phrase, the property *tough* is understood as “difficult to accomplish” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary) and is conceptualised relative to the semantic domain denoted by the infinitival clause *to love*. The relation between the subject and the property *tough* understood as “difficult to accomplish” may further be explained in terms of responsibility (*You make it tough to love you*), which ties in with the context in which Tommy’s behaviour is considered as the cause of the speaker’s inability to love him. The subject being responsible for the experience denoted in the predicative complement suggests that the subject function itself is semantically motivated, which is at odds with the interpretation of a syntactic reordering.

At the level of the adjectival phrase, *tough* applies to *man* as an attributive adjective in its own right, but the property is beforehand internally elaborated with reference to the semantic domain represented by the dashed squares and denoted by the infinitival clause. This suggests that the infinitival clause interacts with the adjective in the manner of a modifier, and then the

semantic output of the combination ADJECTIVE + INFINITIVAL CLAUSE, that is, PROPERTY + DOMAIN OF APPLICATION, applies as a whole to the head noun, and by referential extension to the subject of the matrix clause. Occurrence (26a) below constitutes evidence of that mechanism.

(26a) How much money and time did Novartis flush down the toilet with discodermolide, and in god's name, why? There's a **tough to build** molecule!

(b) There's a **tough** molecule **to build**.

(27) Top 100 Latest Country Songs Nonstop Country Radio is **an easy to use application** that not only lets you play top 100 Latest Country songs in a single, constantly updated list but also lets you enjoy nonstop high quality COUNTRY radio from some of the most known radio channels and DJs.

If we compare (26a) to the ANC construction in (26b), the infinitival clause *to build* has been “brought back” within the adjectival phrase where it semantically elaborates the domain via which the property is then predicated onto the head noun *molecule*. Moreover, this confirms the conceptualisation of the complex NP in ANC constructions as illustrated in (25) where the infinitival clause is construed as defining a domain of application that is active at the level of the adjectival phrase.

Examples (26a) and (27) are unusual because prenominal adjectives do not normally take complements. Nevertheless, they indicate that the infinitival clause may be construed as directly complementing the adjective. This interpretation arises because the clause specifies the semantic domain in which the property holds; the adjective and the infinitival clause together form a complex property that is subsequently applied to the head noun, much like a conventional adjectival modifier.

5. Conclusion

The arguments presented throughout this study converge toward a unified claim: ANC constructions cannot systematically be assimilated to *tough* constructions if the latter are defined as involving a raising mechanism. Each argument contributes to the same conclusion from a different angle: syntactic, semantic, constructional, and cognitive. They are listed below.

1. Complex NPs in ANC constructions are not interchangeable with syntactically reordered APs as they occur in *tough* constructions, which means that ANC constructions are not necessarily convertible into *tough* constructions. (section 1)
2. Complex NPs in ANC constructions allow a wider range of adjectives than the syntactically reordered APs of *tough* constructions. (section 1)
3. Complex NPs in ANC constructions allow a viable semantic interpretation of the linear order, hence the validity of the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN called an “apparent constituent”. (section 2)

4. Complex NPs occur in ordinary copular constructions, hence the validity of the linear order and the possibility to coordinate complex NPs and bare adjectival phrases. (section 3)
5. The notions of phrasal discontinuity, connectedness and indirect complementation can account for the linear order of constituents in the complex NPs. (sections 4.1 and 4.2)
6. A cognitive approach provides a viable model for considering that ANC constructions are copular constructions. The infinitival clause specifies the domain of application of the adjective which then legitimately applies to the entity denoted by the head noun of both the predicative NP and the NP in subject function. (section 4.3)
7. The subject function in *You're a tough man to love* implies the notion of responsibility (*You make it tough to love you*): it is therefore semantically motivated and not a dummy subject.
8. According to Mair, Hietaranta and Langacker, *tough* constructions may not involve any movement at all, which therefore invalidates the initial assumption that ANC constructions result from movement by virtue of an analogy with the so-called *tough* constructions. (sections 2, 3, 4)

The lack of syntactic and semantic equivalence between ANC constructions and *tough* constructions undermines the idea of a derivational relationship. Complex NPs cannot reliably be converted into syntactically reordered APs, which would be expected if both constructions were related through movement. Complex NPs as they appear in ANC constructions display a wider range of adjectives than the syntactically reordered APs found in *tough* constructions. A second important result is that ANC constructions are interpretable in their linear form. The sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN in some ANC constructions is meaningful as it assigns a property to the referent (*This is a **nice place** to live*). In other ANC constructions, the sequence ADJECTIVE + NOUN + INFINITIVAL CLAUSE has been interpreted as assigning a complex property to the referent (*You're a **tough man to love***). This makes the construction semantically transparent and cancels the systematic need to resort to transformational principles: rather than being the result of an underlying structure, the construction encodes either a double predication (*This is a nice place to live* = *This place is nice* and *To live in this place is nice*) or the expression of a complex ad hoc property that is assigned to the referent (*You're a [tough to love] man*).

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