On some structural and derivational differences between CPs and DPs

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The parallelism between the CP and the DP (e.g. the enemy (probably/recently/violently) destroyed the city ⇔ the enemy’s (probable/recent/violent) destruction of the city ) has been observed since the beginning of the Generative Grammar with deverbal nouns, (Lees 1964, Chomsky 1970), a new light being shed on with the DP-hypothesis (Abney 1987, Siloni 1995).

This talk will investigate and question such a parallelism by putting forth the existence of three domains: (i) \( \theta \)-domain (=Nachfeld) corresponding to nP/vP-shell; (ii) \( \phi \)-domain (=Mittelfeld) and (iii) \( \omega \)-domain (=Vorfeld) involving split-DP/CP. Following the cartographic approach (Cinque 1999, 2005, 2010, Kayne 1994, 2005, Cinque & Rizzi 2008, Haegeman 2010, Laenzlinger 2011), I will present a structural and transformational analysis of these domains based on the distribution of adverbs within the clause and adjectives within the noun phrase focusing on Romance and Germanic languages. The low thematic domain is completely vacated by the arguments, whether DPs or PPs, which are probed out of the vP/nP and reach their Agreement, Case- or P-related positions inside the Mittelfeld (Kayne 2002, Cinque 2010). The Mittelfeld is also the hierarchized domain of modifiers, i.e. adverbs for the clause and adjectives for the noun phrase. The distribution of arguments among adverbs in the clause is dictated by the combination of the A-properties of the arguments and the Information Structure expressed.

As for DP/PP adjuncts (the so-called adverbials), they merge in a domain higher than that of the object arguments (Schweikert 2005). Given these assumptions I will show that Cinque’s (2010) left-right asymmetry holds for the derivational structure of the Mittelfeld when comparing V-final configurations (German) to V-initial configurations (French). Within the noun phrase, the domain of DP/PP-adjuncts is situated higher than that of Case- and P-related arguments/complements, which is located above the domain of adjectives. Finally, the CP/DP layer is assigned a split structure in the spirit of Rizzi (1997) for the clause and Aboh (2003), Ihsane & Puskas (2001) and Laenzlinger (2005) for the noun phrase and represents the interpretive domain of focalization, topicalization, quantification, force/deixis, finiteness/definiteness, etc. In conclusion, I will argue that the transformations that apply to the clause and the noun phrase are very similar, but not strictly parallel: (i) movement of the verb/noun as remnant vP/nP, (ii) obligatory movement of the arguments to Case/PPs and agreement positions, (iii) extended pied-piped movement involving the noun/verb plus other constituents and (iv) movement of arguments and modifiers to the left periphery.