

7

Adjectives, adverbs and negation

7.1 Overview

The three main topics discussed in this chapter are related in the following ways. Adjectives and adverbs have similar functions – while adjectives are used to modify nouns, adverbs act as modifiers of other categories (principally verbs). The link with negation is provided by items like *pas* and *jamais* which behave like other adverbs in many respects, but which share other properties with non-adverbial items like *personne*, *rien* and *aucun*.

In 7.2 a semantic classification of adjectives is presented, and then applied in 7.3 to various problems concerning the position of adjectives: e.g. before or after the noun, order of adjectives, etc. In 7.4, we look at some adjectival constructions involving complements and the degree modifiers *trop* and *assez*.

The discussion of adverbs in 7.5 develops the ‘Verb-raising’ hypothesis outlined in 1.4.3, as a means of accounting for the various positions which different types of adverbs can occupy, highlighting differences between French and English and also drawing attention to syntactic similarities between adverbs and adjectives.

This approach is extended in 7.6 to the study of negation, particularly in 7.6.1–7.6.5 where we investigate the syntactic properties of *pas* and other negative adverbs (*jamais*, *plus*, etc.). In 7.6.6–7.6.8 our attention turns to negative pronouns and determiners (*personne*, *rien*, *aucun*, etc.), focusing particularly on the semantic and syntactic relations between these items and the particle *ne*. The remaining sections (7.6.9–7.6.13) deal with other constructions involving the use of *ne* and *non*.

7.7 deals with various issues concerning comparative and superlative constructions.

7.2 Types of adjectives

7.2.1 Adnominal and predicative uses

Adjectives can be used in two basic ways: as modifiers of a noun, as in (1), or as complements of copular verbs (see 2.5), as in (2):