Accounting for variation in pre- and post-nominal universal quantifiers in Germanic and Romance

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The disparity between English and German demonstrated in (1) and (2) can easily be explained on the basis of verb movement:

(1) The students all love the teacher.         (2) *Die Studenten alle lieben die Lehrerin.
the students all love the teacher

It is well known that main verbs in English do not move to I (AgrS or T), which is why do-insertion is necessary in the case of negation and subject-auxiliary inversion. In (1), the DP the students is in [SPEC, IP] and the verb is in the head position of vP. Following the Stranding Analysis of floating quantifiers, the quantifier all has been stranded in [SPEC, vP]. In German, however, verbs in main clauses move to C and subjects move to [SPEC, CP]. Example (2) is ungrammatical because the DP die Studenten and its selecting quantifier alle are both in [SPEC, CP], which means that stranding has not taken place. DP and Q have simply exchanged positions, which is an illicit operation.

Given the straightforward explanation for the disparity between English and German shown in (1) and (2), the question is how one would explain a very similar disparity found in the Romance languages, illustrated in (3) and (4):

(3) a. *Gli studenti tutti hanno visto il film.     (Italian)
   the students all have seen the film

   b. *Los alumnos todos han visto la pelicula.   (Spanish)
   the students all have seen the film

(4) a. Os alunos todos têm visto o filme.        (Portuguese)
   the students all have seen the film

   b. Studenții toți au văzut filmul.           (Romanian)
   students the all have seen film the

There is no great difference in the movement of subjects and verbs in these four languages, and they all allow quantifier stranding. One would normally presume that in the sentences in (3) and (4) the subjects are in [SPEC, IP] and the perfect auxiliaries are in I. The quantifiers in (4) could therefore not have been stranded, at least not in the usual manner, and so there must be another explanation for why a post-nominal quantifier is acceptable in Portuguese and Romanian but not in Italian and Spanish.
In the Romance languages adjectives are post-nominal. One possible explanation for the disparity between (3) and (4) is that in Portuguese and Romanian the universal quantifier is simply more adjectival than it is in Italian and Spanish. There are issues with this approach, not the least of which is the fact that in the Romance languages a plural universal quantifier, regardless of whether it is pre- or post-nominal, must co-occur with a definite DP, which strongly suggests that even post-nominal quantifiers select and take scope over definite DPs.

A second theoretically possible explanation for the post-nominal quantifiers in (4) is that the phrase headed by the universal quantifier is head-final while the other phrases in the complex are head-initial. The problem with this approach is that it violates the Final Over Final Constraint (FOFC), according to which a head-initial phrase cannot be immediately dominated by a head-final phrase in the same projection. The FOFC has been convincingly argued in the literature to be a universal, for example in Biberauer et alii (2010).

The only remaining explanation for the post-nominal position of the quantifiers in (4) is that some kind of optional raising takes place in Portuguese and Romanian that is absent in Italian and Spanish. It cannot be simple N-raising, since an entire DP is involved. One must also consider the fact that the sentences in (4) become ungrammatical if the quantifier is negated:

(5) a. *Os alunos não todos têm visto o filme. (Portuguese)  
the students not all have seen the film  

b. *Studenţii nu toţi au văzut filmul. (Romanian)  
students the not all have seen film the

In my talk I will introduce additional data and compare and evaluate the possible explanations for the discrepancies between (3) and (4) and between (4) and (5).

References:

Biberauer, Theresa, Anders Holmberg and Ian Roberts. 2010. A syntactic universal and its consequences (ms).
The adjective-adverb interface in Romance and English

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The topic of the paper is a striking parallel between Germanic and Romance: All appertaining languages share direct conversion from adjective to adverb, that is, the use of the unmarked form of the adjective for adverbial functions. In the case of German and Dutch, direct conversion is canonical for speaking and writing:

(1a) Ger. Die schnelle Frau läuft. inflected adnominal adjective
(1b) Ger. Die Frau läuft schnell. invariable adverb of manner
(2a) Dut. Een snelle vrouw. inflected adnominal adjective
(2b) Dut. De vrouw loopt snel. invariable adverb of manner

In English and Romance, however, direct conversion is tied to informal speaking:

(3) Engl. The men work hard.
(4a) Sp. Los hombres trabajan duro. [< Lat. durus, dura, durum]
(4b) Pg. Os homens trabalham duro.
(4c) Fr. Les hommes travaillent dur.
(4d) It. Gli uomini lavorano duro.
(4e) Cat. Els homes treballen dur.
(4f) Rum. Oamenii lucreaza greu [< Lat. gravis, grave].
(4g) Sard. Sos omine trabagliana meda/folte.

In formal speaking and writing, morphologically marked adverbs are preferred, that is, adverbs ending in –ly for English and adverbs ending in –ment(e) for Romance:

(5) Engl. The men work hardly
(6a) Sp. Los hombres trabajan duramente.
(6b) Pg. Os homens trabalham duramente.
(6c) Fr. Les hommes travaillent durement.
(6d) It. Gli uomini lavorano duramente.
(6f) Cat. (?) Els homes treballen durament.

Sometimes, the oral practice of direct conversion is so well established that indirect conversion appears to be affected or hypercorrect. This is the case for (5) and (6f).

Importantly, the use of directly converted adjectives is not restricted to the verb phrase. Their belonging to informal spoken language, and even slang, is particularly evident in the case of tertiary adverbs (modifiers of adjectives or adverbs). Really good is canonical, but real good is used in substandard, especially in America and Australia. I found examples like: it is coming right back to me; you feel real good; real rich; real high; crazy quick; perfect blue; wide open. From a diachronic point of view, we might add:

(7a) Engl. A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
(Canterbury Tales, The Yeoman, Vs. 105)
(7b) Engl. And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly
(Canterbury Tales, The Prioress, Vs. 124)

In Romance, directly converted tertiary adverbs are typical for rural language and slang. They were also more common in old and elder Romance. Examples from Spanish are: Esa película es terrible mala; típico sureño; vertical total; Ehte es terreno pobre completo; fuerte encendidos. In standard French, underived attributive quantifiers are used as well: C’était grave bon (Quebec), Elle était grave belle (suburban slang in Paris). Moreover, the following forms were found in literature: ras tondu, fin(e) bonne, fin droit, frais levé, fraîche cueillie, toute bonne, grandes ouvertes, clair-voignant, menu serré, large baillant, étroit cousu, doux coulant, nouveau venu, nouveaux mariés, clair voyant, clair-semé, bon creux, raide amoureux, raide mort. In Italian, we retrieve examples like: pazzo furioso; essere innamorato (geloso) pazzo, cotto.
An analogous situation can be found in the domain of sentential adverbs and discourse markers: Engl. sure / surely, Sp. seguro / seguramente, Pg. seguro / seguramente, Fr. sûr / surement, It. sicuro / sicuramente, Rom. sigur / ---- (In Romanian direct conversion is canonical). In English, however, sentential adverbs and discourse markers tend to be marked with –ly or to be chosen from other word classes and groups (of course, well, I mean, etc.).

Hummel (2000) provided evidence for the fact that direct conversion is an oral tradition that already prevailed in spoken Latin, whereas the periphrases on Lat. mente were preferred by Christian authors in written texts. The main reason for the latter was the importance of the animus and corpus (body and mind) topic in the religious discourse (devota mente facere). In the discourse of Law, the intentions played an important role as well (bona mente facere ‘to have good intentions’). The written tradition of Romance continued this written Latin tradition (s. Queirazza 1970, Company Company (in press)). The steadily increasing importance of written standard submerged and marginalized the oral tradition of direct conversion. In the New World, schooling has had less impact on the population than in Europe. This explains the gap that can be observed between Romance in the New World, where direct conversion is the overall standard in informal oral communication, and the Old World, where mente-adverbs are more important in oral communication. However, in both geographic domains, the latter are canonical for writing.

Interestingly, this New World – Old World gap seems to hold, at least up to a certain degree, also for English. Obviously, the historical reasons to use the Germanic suffix –ly cannot be attributed to a morphosemantic motivation similar to mente. Possibly, we have to look for normative and grammaticographical traditions. In Old Greek and in Old Latin, linguistic norm marginalized direct conversion to the advantage of suffixed adverbs. In Modern Greek, only direct conversion has survived (based on the neuter plural form of the adjective). Suffixadveds are restricted to the domain of erudite forms. Löfstedt (1967) pointed out that direct conversion prevailed in Sanskrit, and was transmitted to Greek and Romance, but also to Germanic. The suffixed forms of the adverb were a feature of writing and linguistic norm in Classical Greek and Latin, and they still are in modern Romance and English. The grammars of modern Germanic and Romance have also accepted this tradition. In German and Dutch, for instance, it would be better to say that one word class is used for both, adjective and (manner) adverb, with the adverb being the unmarked form of the adjective. However, standard grammars divide adjective and adverb into two chapters. This is correct for time or space adverbs, but not for manner adverbs and adjectives. This shows that the separation of adjective and adverb is a major issue in schooling and grammaticography (that follows the model of Latin). This might explain the preference for –ly in written English.

The author of the present paper is a specialist for Romance linguistics. The goal of the paper is to parallel the findings in Romance with English in order to stimulate a discussion on this topic. An overview on the state of the art in Romance can be found at (http://sites.google.com/site/rsgadjadv/; see also Hummel 2011a for the diachrony of Romance, and Hummel 2011b for contrastive data). As far as English is concerned, the paper shall make a report on the existing bibliography (e.g. Bolinger 1967 and 1972, Bartsch 1976: 141-164, Marchand 1964, 1960, Valera Hernández 1996, Štekauer 1996, Cinque 2010), but it does not pretend to present to provide exhaustive empirical data on the topic. The outlines of comparative empirical research on Germanic and Romance are rather considered to be an outcome of the discussion. However, a sample of comparative linguistic data for English and Romance shall be presented. As far as I can see, the interface of orality and literacy has not been investigated systematically, at least as far as diachrony is concerned.

As for General Linguistics, the approach matches with Hengeveld’s (1992: 68; Hengeveld et al. 2004, cf. Salazar García 2007, 2008) hierarchy of word classes that considers the adjective-adverb distinction as an option that is subcategorized typologically to systems that are based on adjectives only. In this sense, literacy in Romance and English has adopted
the adjective-adverb distinction, whereas the popular oral tradition tends to use a single word class. Hengeveld calls this word class “adjectives”, whereas I use “attribute”. The data further match with research on adjectives and adverbs in oral and written English (Biber 1988, Biber et al. 1999).

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Constructions off the beaten track: revisiting the inflections on attributive adjectives in German and Norwegian

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Intro.: Definite articles take a weak adjective, (1); indefinite articles take a strong one, (2):
(1a. das große Auto (German) b. den store bil-en (Norwegian)
the big(WK) car the big(WK) car-def
(2a. ein großes Auto b. en stor bil
a big(ST) car a big(ST) car
At first glance, it is tempting to relate the weak ending to definiteness and the strong ending to indefiniteness in both German and Norwegian. However, discussing cases like mit einem alten Wein 'with an old(WK) wine', Harbert (2007: 135) states that German “has lost all association with definiteness” but that continental Scandinavian has brought the weak/strong contrast “fully into line with the definiteness/indefiniteness opposition.” Despite frequent claims to the contrary, we completely concur with Harbert. Considering constructions that are less commonly discussed in this regard, we will demonstrate that the two types of languages are quite different. Providing a formal account, we conclude that weak endings are of two types.

Data #1: The following five sets of data involve definite contexts where German has consistently strong adjectives but Norwegian has weak ones. We begin with Saxon Genitives:
(3a. Peters großes Auto b. Pers store bil
Peter's big(ST) car Per's big(WK) car
In pronominal DPs, the pronominal determiner may morphologically agree with the adjective and noun, (4), or it may “disagree”, (5), where a morphologically plural pronominal co-occurs with a singular adjective and noun (note that Norwegian de is nowadays very rarely used):
(4a. Du dummer Idiot!
you stupid(ST) idiot
(5a. Sie dummer Idiot!
you stupid(ST) idiot
Appositives are similar to pronominal DPs but involve comma intonation:
(6a. du, begeisteter Linguist b. du, entusiastiske lingvist
you, enthusiastic(ST) linguist you, enthusiastic(WK) linguist
Proper names involving an adjective can be embedded in a definite DP:
(7a. der Indianer Großer Bär b. indianer-en Store Bjorn
the Indian big(ST) bear Indian-def big(WK) bear
Finally, under certain conditions, two determiner-like elements can co-occur:
(8a. dieses mein großes Glück this my great(ST) happiness
b. demne min store lykke
this my great(WK) happiness

Generalization: The endings in German are a function of the immediate syntactic context but the endings in Norwegian are dependent on the general semantic context.

Preliminaries: To capture this difference, we start with an empirical observation. While the endings on the definite determiners in German are (basically) identical to the strong adjective endings, (9a), the endings on the definite determiners in Norwegian are, with one (perhaps two) exception, identical to the weak adjective endings, (9b):
(9a. der, dieser, jener b. def[de], dette, denne, disse (perhaps also de[di], but den)
We conclude that the strong adjective endings in German cannot be a reflex of definiteness and we propose that adjective endings in this language are unmarked for definiteness, (10a). In contrast, we take the Norwegian endings to have a feature for definiteness, (10b):
(10a. [Gender, Number, Case] b. [Gender, Number, Def]
Also, we assume that German has composite ein-words (e.g., m+ein ‘my’) but Norwegian has non-composite forms. Among others, this explains why in contrast to Norwegian, possessive pronouns can occur with a strong adjective in German, (8a), and why these pronouns cannot follow the head noun. Thus, whatever explains the properties of ein, explains the ein-words.
German: We propose that the weak/strong opposition is a morpho-syntactic phenomenon. Adopting Distributed Morphology, inflections involve abstract feature bundles in syntax. The weak endings are due to Impoverishment triggered by a determiner in an ordinal DP (Roehrs 2009). The reduced feature bundles are spelled out as the weak endings. If the appropriate lexical and/or structural conditions do not hold, the abstract feature bundles are not reduced and spelled out as the strong endings. If so, the strong endings in German are the “elsewhere” case. Since the trigger of Impoverishment is a certain type of element (determiner), we may expect specific exceptions (e.g., certain forms of ein, certain pronominal determiners).

Norwegian: We claim that the weak/strong opposition is a semantico-syntactic phenomenon. We will discuss two versions of this general claim. In version A of the proposal, we assume that the Def-feature of the inflection is [-interpretable]. For the derivation not to crash, a [+interpretable] Def-feature must be present. We propose that definite elements value/check the Def-feature on the inflection. Assuming c-command, the definite element can value/check the weak endings in a variety of different structural constellations. For (6) and (7), we assume that the adjective and noun are right-adjointed below the determiner; that is, du in (6) involves a null noun, cf. (4). Before we extend the proposal to more data, let us take stock.

We arrive at two types of weak endings: feature-reduced weak endings in German and definite weak endings in Norwegian. Independent confirmation for this dichotomy comes from the number opposition, which is identical in both languages. Specifically, German weak endings form a proper subset of the strong endings in both the singular and plural (SGL: -n, -e vs. -n, -e, -r, -s, -m; PL: -n vs. -n, -e, -r). In contrast, the weak endings in Norwegian are either complementary or identical to the strong endings (SGL: -e vs. -Ø, -ø; PL: -e vs. -e).

Data #2: Three cases do not immediately follow from the system. Here, a definite element (i.e., valuer) is not present. This concerns noun phrases involving “definite” adjectives, (11), certain proper names, (12) ((12a) can be used as a subtitle in books), and vocatives, (13):

(11)a. folgenden Beispiel
    b. følgende artikkel
    following(ST) example
    following(WK) article

(12)a. Deutscher Ritterorden
    b. Norske Skog
    German(ST) knight.order
    Norwegian(WK) forest
    ‘the Order of the Teutonic Knights’
    ‘the Norwegian forest (company name)’

(13)a. Dummer Idiot!
    b. Dumme idiot(-en)!
    stupid(ST) idiot
    stupid(WK) idiot-def

The German facts follow from above assumptions: there is no determiner and Impoverishment is not triggered. As for Norwegian, note first that (11b) can also surface as den følgende artikkel-en. To maintain version A of the proposal, we could propose that the two determiners are only optionally spelled out. However, one problem with this is that the proper name in (12b) cannot involve this option without (12b) losing its status of a proper name for this particular company. Unlike (11b), here the spell-out of the determiner(s) must not occur. The question arises why this spell-out of determiners is optional in (11b) but impossible in (12b).

Version B of the proposal avoids these potential issues. We propose that the Def-feature on the inflection is [+interpretable]; that is, it carries some semantics of its own (cf. Lohrmann’s 2011 [identity]). Being [+interpretable], we assume that this feature does not have to be valued/checked; that is, this inflection can occur without a definite element (although it is only compatible with definite elements). While we cannot show this in the abstract, our proposal can be extended to data in both languages where a direct comparison is not straightforward (e.g., split DPs, vocatives with and without suffixed determiners).

Diagnosing adjectival participles in Dutch

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1. Introduction

This paper puts forward the following two novel claims: (a) in some varieties of Dutch, including the standard language (Sta Dutch), only target state participles are adjectival, resultant state participles behaving as verbs, and (b) in other, Southeastern varieties (SE Dutch), active participles, and not just passive ones, can be adjectival. Our evidence comes from the so-called perfect doubling construction in (1).

(1) a. ... dat de vaas gebroken is geweest.
that the vase broken is been
‘... that the vase has been in a broken state.’

b. ...dat de man hard gevallen geweest is
that the man hard fallen been is
‘...that the man has fallen hard.’

c. ... dat de man de fiets gestolen gehad heeft.
that the man the bicycle stolen had
‘that the man has stolen the bicycle’

The data in (1) pose at least two questions: how is doubling to be analyzed and what does the attested variation reduce to. Although it may appear as though (1) contains two auxiliaries, we show that non-finite HAVE/BE is lexical, as the participle that it selects behaves as an adjectival and not a verbal one. Hence, (1) does not involve doubling in an analytical sense. It is, rather, the perfect tense of lexical HAVE/BE taking a small clause complement. Variation across Dutch resides in what can appear as the predicate of this small clause, in other words, in the inventory of adjectival participles across different varieties. There is, thus, a systematic correlation between the participles that are adjectival in a particular variety and the possibility for these participles to appear in the doubling construction.

2. Standard Dutch

Only target state participles are adjectival in Standard Dutch. Target state participles differ from resultant state participles in that only the former are modifiable by ‘still’ (cf. Kratzer 1994, 2000). As (2) shows, gebroken encodes a target state and gevalen a resultant state.

(2) a. Ik denk dat de vaas nog steeds gebroken is.
I think that the vase still broken is
‘I think that the vase is still broken.’

b. *Ik denk dat de vaas nog steeds gevallen is.
I think that the vase still fallen is

A known property of all Dutch varieties is that adjectival complements necessarily precede all verbal heads in the clause (cf. (3a)), in contrast to verbal complements, which can re-order (cf. (3c)). If ‘still’ is present in the clause, the participle has to precede the selecting head (cf. 3b)). Hence, (3b) confirms that gebroken is an adjective in (2a), whereas it is verbal in (3c).

(3) a. Ik denk dat de vaas nog steeds stuk is/*is stuk.
I think that the vase still broken is
‘I think that the vase is still broken.’

b. *Ik denk dat de vaas nog steeds gebroken is/*is gebroken.
I think that the vase still broken is
‘I think that the vase is still broken.’

c. Ik denk dat de vaas is gebroken/gebroken is.
I think that the vase is broken/broken is
‘I think that the vase has broken.’

Since gebroken is an adjective in (2a), finite BE can only be a copula. Nothing now prohibits forming the present perfect of this structure by adding an auxiliary. In (2b), however, gevalen is verbal. Consequently, is can only be an auxiliary. Under the assumption that genuine
doubling (i.e. two identical auxiliaries in one clause) is excluded by compositionality (Frege 1892) and economy (Chomsky 1995), the co-occurrence of two BE’s is expected to be ungrammatical. These predictions are correct:

(4)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ik denk dat de vaas stuk/gebroken is geweest.</th>
<th>Sta Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>I think that the vase broken.ADJ/broken.PART is been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>*Ik denk dat de vaas gevallen is geweest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that the vase fallen is been</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, in Standard Dutch target state predicates can be input to adjective formation. The consequences are that these adjectival participles (i) behave like adjectives with respect to existing tests and (ii) can legitimately occur in a doubling construction.

3. Southeastern dialects In Southeastern dialects, the formation of adjectival participles is freer, and also delivers resultant state participles. The evidence for this is that gevallen behaves like an adjective in the doubling construction: it obligatorily precedes the verbal heads in the clause:

(5)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>... dat de vaas... a. gevallen is geweest/b. gevallen geweest is</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. *is geweest gevallen/d. is gevallen geweest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impossible orders (5c, d) do not reflect a general property of the grammars of these dialects: even dialects that in principle allow the participle to follow the selecting verb, as in (6), disallow the orders in (5c, d). In other words, gevallen behaves like an adjective only in the doubling construction.

(6)  
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>dat mijn oma  is gevallen.</th>
<th>Sta &amp; SE Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that my  grandma is fallen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In (7) (HAVE-‘doubling’), the only possible interpretation is that de man is the bicycle thief. This indicates that here gestolen is an active participle. At the same time, gestolen has to precede all verbal heads in the clause, but only has to do so in the doubling construction. Speakers reject (7c,d) but can at the same time accept (8), because gestolen only has to be part of an adjectival constituent in the doubling construction but can of course be verbal in (8).

(7)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dat de man de fiets…</th>
<th>SE Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>gestolen gehad heeft/b. gestolen heeft gehad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>*heeft gestolen gehad/d. *heeft gehad gestolen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8)  
|   | …dat de man de fiets heeft gestolen. | Sta & SE Dutch |

4. Analysis Recent theories of adjectival participles (for instance Embick 2004) argue that different types of adjectives fall out from a functional head (dubbed here $A^0$) selecting different kinds of complements. A way to distinguish core adjectives from adjectival participles, say open versus opened, would be to take the first to involve merger of $A^0$ and the root √open, and the second one merger of $A^0$ and a verb(al projection) containing that root (see also Kratzer 2000, Anagnostopoulou 2003). There is nothing in these theories other than brute force that excludes $A^0$ from merging with bigger verbal complements. Adopting an articulated, decomposed VP analysis (à la Ramchand 2008 and Taraldsen 2010), we obtain the following options:

(9)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$A^0 + \sqrt{ }$</th>
<th>→ run-of-the-mill adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>$A^0 + [ResP \sqrt{ }]$</td>
<td>→ adjective of a target state participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>$A^0 + [ProcP [ResP \sqrt{ }]]$</td>
<td>→ adjective of a resultant state participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>$A^0 + [Voice [ProcP [ResP \sqrt{ }]]]$</td>
<td>→ adjective of an active participle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas Standard Dutch only realizes (9a) and (9b), the Southeastern dialects also allow (9c) and (9d). In constructions with predicates of the types in (9a, b, c), the adjectival head selects a complement with an undischarged internal theta role: after all, this is what enables these adjectival constituents to function as predicates and select a subject. Since nothing excludes $A^0$ from selecting a bigger verbal constituent, it should in principle be possible to create an adjectival predicate by merging $A^0$ with a verbal projection with an undischarged external theta-role, as in (9d). This gives examples of HAVE-doubling like in (1c)/(7).
From descriptive genitive to adjective: Swedish slags
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Swedish has two approximative constructions involving a descriptive genitive: [ett slags NP] and [en sorts NP] both meaning ‘a kind of NP’. Adopting a constructional approach to language change (Booij 2010), we will present a corpus-based analysis of the development of slags from noun to adjective. Some relevant constructions are given in (1): in (1a) and (1b) the noun slags is preceded by an indefinite article or pronoun respectively and in (1c) the noun is modified by an adjective. In all three examples, the article, pronoun and adjective agree in gender and number with the neuter noun slags.

(1) a. ett slags skådespelare
   a-NEUT kind-NEUT GEN actor-COMM
   ‘a kind of actor’
   GP09

b. något slags profet
   some-NEUT kind-NEUT GEN prophet-COMM
   ‘some kind of prophet’
   GP09

c. ett annat slags ledarskap
   a-NEUT other-NEUT kind-NEUT GEN leadership-COMM
   ‘a different kind of leadership’
   GP09

Interestingly however, both slags and sorts have developed into adjectives which are atypical for two reasons: they are indeclinable, and they only occur in attributive position (Teleman et al. 1999: 84f.). This is illustrated by examples with slags in (2), in which the article or pronoun does not agree with (neuter) slags, but with (non-neuter) the head noun of the NP.

(2) a. en slags livstil
   a-COMM kind(-NEUT GEN) life-style-COMM
   ‘a kind of life style’
   GP09

b. vilken slags makt
   which-COMM kind(-NEUT GEN) power-COMM
   ‘which kind of power’
   GP09

Using data from the online Swedish corpus Språkbanken, covering the period from the mid-nineteenth century until today, we will analyse the formal changes in approximative slags from a constructional perspective. We will argue that this type of “non-determiner genitive” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003) has become an isolated pattern which comes to be increasingly aligned with ADJECTIVE-NOUN constructions, with similar indeclinable adjectives (e.g. allsköns ‘of all sorts’) functioning as attractor sets. There is, however, no semantic change in slags nor do we find context expansion in any of Himmelmann’s (2004) three senses. To use Langacker’s (2005: 139) terms, there is no change in generality, productivity or compositionality. This means that these are constructional changes, but they cannot be classified as either grammatical or lexical constructionalization (see Trousdale 2008 for discussion of these terms).

References


GP = Göteborgs Posten (subcorpus of Språkbanken)


Språkbanken: http://sprakbanken.gu.se/


Adjectivation as a gradual process: evidence from the Romanian present participle
Dana Niculescu (University of Amsterdam)

The well-known distinction between verbal participles (derived in syntax) and adjectival ones (which are lexical in nature) has been fine-grained in the last decades, leading to the identification of intermediate stages in the adjectivation process. Kratzer (1994, 2000) and Embick (2004) distinguish between lexical adjectival participles, which do not implicate an event, and phrasal adjectival participles, which denote states resulting from events. Recently, Sleeman (2011) argued that, in Germanic, two types of verbal participles in modifier position should be distinguished, depending on their prenominal or postnominal position in relation to the head noun; she argues that the postnominal verbal participle in Dutch and English is fully eventive, while the prenominal one is to a lesser extent eventive, while it still allows by-phrases (only in Dutch) and typical verbal modifiers, such as recently.

The question that arises is whether Romance languages also display the four stages in the adjectivation process; more specifically, it is the less eventive verbal participle whose existence is put under scrutiny. In Romance languages word order cannot be invoked as an argument for the degree of eventivity of the verbal participle in modifier position, as this type of participle occurs (almost) always in postposition to the noun. We shall argue in this paper that, not only in Germanic, but also in Romance, the less fully eventive verbal participle does exist, on the basis of an analysis of the Romanian present participle in modifier position.

The Romanian present participle can occur in four distinct uses. The (uninflected) verbal participle in (1) is the predicate of a reduced relative clause (fully eventive), requiring its internal arguments to be realized and taking prepositional and adverbal adjuncts; the postnominal, inflected, adjectival participle (2) is resultative, allowing both an individual and a stage-level reading, as well as temporal, causal etc. adjuncts; the lexical adjectival participle placed in prenominal position only allows an individual-level interpretation (3); the verbal participle in (4), preceded by the determiner cel, is a rarely attested structure. In the normal case, cel occurs with adjectives, and it can also occur with resultative or stative adjectival participles (2.b). It has been argued in the literature that it introduces an appositive specificational clause, in the form of a reduced relative clause (Marchis & Alexiadou 2009, Cornilescu & Nicolae 2011). In (4) the uninflected participle is not adjectival. It minimally differs from the construction in (1), the only difference being the presence or absence of cel. We argue that the presence of cel makes the participle less fully eventive than the one in (1).

1. a. fata aducând apă
   girl.DEF bringing water
   b. oamenii având mai mult de doi copii
      people.DEF having more than two children
2. a. persoane (încă) suferinde în urma accidentului
       person.F.PL still suffering.F.PL as a result of the accident
   b. persoanele (cele) mereu suferinde
      person.F.PL.DEF CEL always suffering. F.PL
3. (*acum) suferindele persoane
   now suffering.F.PL.DEF persons.F.PL
4. a. camera cea strălucind de curăţenie a fratelui meu
       room.F.SG.DEF CEA sparkling of cleanliness of my brother
   b. *fata mea cea fotografiiind acum un copil săran
      daughter.DEF my CEA photographing now a child poor
We support this analysis by showing that there are restrictions on the aspectual verb classes which are licit in the configuration in (4). We show that this structure misses both the highly eventive verbs of accomplishment (4.b) and the K-states (4.c) (Maienborn 2008), which typically form participial adjectives.

To conclude, we put forth that the restrictions on the aspectual verb classes displayed by the cel-participle configuration are proof that this structure occupies an intermediate place in the adjectivation hierarchy, being less eventive than the verbal participle, but not yet an agreeing, adjectival participle.

References:
Adjectives and the definite article
Harry Perridon (ACLC, University of Amsterdam)

When analyzing a noun phrase like the black cat one would probably say that the determines (= makes definite) the phrase black cat, instead of assuming that the just determines black, and the phrase the black, in its turn, determines the noun cat. In the older phases of the Germanic languages, however, things seem to have been different. In Gothic, for instance, there is not yet a definite article of the noun or noun phrase, but there is an “adjective-article”, as in (1):

(1) ik im hairdeis gods. hairdeis sa goda saiwala seina lagiþ faur lamba.  
I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The article sa only determines the weak adjective goda, the noun hairdeis is not made definite by an article, in contrast to ποιμὴν in the Greek text. In the Old Germanic dialects the construction ‘definite article + weak adjective’ is not only used as an apposition to a bare noun, but also in combination with a possessive pronoun or a demonstrative, as in (2) through (4):

(2) þu is sunus meins sa liuba,                      Gothic Wulfila  
Thou art my beloved Son;
σό ἐ ὁ γοῦν μου ὁ ἀγαπητός
(3) Ure se Ælmihtiga Scyppend                     Old English Ælfric  
Our the Almighty Creator
(4) hafit þat it djúpa                           Old Norse Gylfaginning 45
 [sea-DEF that the deep-WEAK  
“that deep sea”

This definite article of the adjective seems to be older than the ‘ordinary’ definite article used with nouns. In the Mainland Scandinavian languages the articles have developed separately, the adjective article deriving from the demonstrative saR/þæn ‘that’, but the noun suffixes from the demonstrative inn ‘that.’ It seems quite reasonable to assume that the prenominal definite article in Swedish and Norwegian still is an adjective article, and as such is part of the adjective phrase: [[den svarta]AP katten]NP ‘the black cat’. In the West-Germanic languages the adjective article merged with the noun article, but some traces of the old situation are still to be found, e.g. in post-nominal position: Charles the Bald; Karel de Kale (Dutch); Karl der Kahle (German), and in superlatives: she is the best; zij is de beste; sie is die beste. In the Romance languages, too, superlatives require the definite article, when used predicatively, and in French even in post-nominal position: la ville la plus belle du monde ‘the most beautiful city on earth.’ In none of these cases it is necessary, or even possible, to assume that a noun has been deleted.
Pre- and postnominal adjectives from an Icelandic perspective

Alexander Pfaff (CASTL/University of Tromsø)

In this paper, novel data from Icelandic is presented; cf. the following ARTICLE – ADJECTIVE – NOUN patterns (DEF = suffixed article; ART = free/preadjectival article):

(1) a. rauði bíll-inn  
   red car-DEF  ~ the red car

b. hinn fullkomni glæpur  
   ART perfect crime  ~ the perfect crime

c. stríð-ið mikla  
   war-DEF great  ~ the great war

Patterns I and II have been discussed in the literature, and certain differences between the two have been noted: a.) Pattern I is the standard mode of adjectival modification, while pattern II is stylistically marked (sometimes designated ‘Literary Icelandic’) (cf. Julien 2002, 2005; Magnússon 1984; Pfaff 2009; Roehrs 2006; Sigurðsson 1993, 2006; Vangsnes 1999; Bráinsson 2007); b.) in pattern I, the adjective is typically interpreted restrictively, whereas the adjective in pattern II can only have a non-restrictive interpretation (cf. Pfaff 2007, 2009; Roehrs 2006; Vangsnes 1999; Bráinsson 2007).

While traditional grammar and, for instance, Magnússon (1984) and Sigurðsson (1993) assume that there is only one article, and DEF is derived from ART, more recent analyses (e.g. Vangsnes 1999; Julien 2002, 2005) assume that ART and DEF are two genuinely distinct elements. The hitherto neglected pattern III sheds new light on this issue, cf.:

(2) a. hinn svokallaða DP-greining  
   ART so-called DP-analysis

b. DP-greining-in svokallaða  
   DP-analysis-DEF so-called

c. #svokallaða DP-greining-in  
   so-called DP-analysis-DEF

An adjective like so-called is not capable of a restrictive reading which is why it is bad in pattern I, but it is fine in pattern III. Therefore it cannot be DEF as such that forces a restrictive reading; rather it is the position of the adjective relative to the article. As the underlining in (2) indicates, whenever the adjective directly follows the article – whether free or suffixed – it is interpreted non-restrictively.

Apart from the fact that this observation can serve as the basis for a novel argument in favour of a one-article-analysis, it moreover serves to demonstrate that adjectives do occur postnominally in Icelandic, and that those are relevant in various ways, for even though patterns II and III are next to synonymous (and different from pattern I, cf. (2)), there are subtle interpretive differences wrt the adjective between all three patterns.

Moreover, postnominal adjectives allow for a close comparison between Germanic and Romance; Cinque (2010) elaborates on a range of differences between the two
language families – with English being the representative for Germanic. Data from Icelandic suggest otherwise: according to Cinque, postnominal adjectives in Germanic (English) are restrictive and stage level (“the stars visible”), but postnominal adjectives in Icelandic are non-restrictive and not stage level.

The purpose of this talk is
- to characterize patterns I – III,
- to highlight interpretive differences between pre- and postnominal adjectives, and
- to contrast these findings from Icelandic with both English and Romance.

References:
The direction of derivation between nouns and adjectives, with special reference to Germanic vs Romance
Frans Plank (Universität Konstanz)

For different semantic relationships, the directions of morphological derivation between the same word classes can differ in one and the same language. For example, in English, adjectives are derived from nouns to express notions such as comparison, manner, possession, consistency, or provenance (A child-ish from N child, A friend-ly from N friend, A talent-ed from N talent, A wooll-en from N wool, A Japan-ese from N Japan), while nouns are derived from adjectives to express notions such as abstract quality or person designations in terms of properties (N wid-th from A wide, N tru-th from A true, N young-ster from A young).

For one and the same semantic relationship, the direction of derivation can also differ for different lexemes in the same language. For example, while the abstract propensity noun brave-ness is derived from the adjective brave in English, it is the other way round for courage-ous and courage, although the semantic relationship and the actual meanings are the same.

This paper seeks to contribute to the typological exploration of how languages differ – randomly, systematically, not at all – with respect to what is expressed through basic vocabulary and what through morphological derivation. Also, taking a diachronic and areal perspective, we will be asking whether directions of derivation are historically stable or unstable and prone or resistant to borrowing. We will be focusing on property-concept adjectives and abstract nouns, and the languages we will be comparing in some detail are English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Maltese, and Basque.

What we find is that languages differ, and that not all adjectives and nouns behave the same in their respective languages. Yet there are generalisations about preferred directions and also non-directedness of derivation, and these make reference to semantic subclasses, such as human propensities and subjective evaluation (where directions tend to vary) and physical condition, size and dimension, age, sensory perception (where direction tends to be uniform, with adjectives basic and nouns derived).

Within the subdomains that show crosslinguistic variation, especially that of human propensities, the two Germanic languages in our small sample, English and German, are found to differ considerably. Arguably this is due to English following the Romance preference, having substantially borrowed both basic vocabulary and means of derivation.

Overall our results fit in with typological findings which associate classes of meanings with word classes, with "adjectival" meanings, if given distinctive formal recognition, eking out their precarious territory between "verby" and "nouny" meanings.
Adjective Inflection: Information and Informativeness
Amanda Pounder (University of Calgary)

This paper uses cases of variable agreement morphology to explore the nature of agreement, focusing more particularly on the question of to what extent agreement on attributive adjectives in the noun phrase is informative, or information-bearing. It will suggest that at least under certain circumstances, agreement morphology can be more informative than is often accepted to be the case. "Canonical agreement" in Corbett's sense (2006) provides redundant information, meaning that the relevant properties of the noun phrase are expressed principally by the noun, secondarily by the adjective. Presumably, the main purpose of agreement of this type is to provide cohesion of the NP (cf. e.g. Baker 2003:211, fn15) and, in the case of languages such as Latin in which the attributive adjective may be dislocated from its noun, identification of the modificatory relationship of adjective to noun. In Minimalist approaches to morphosyntax, agreement features, including those on attributive adjectives, count as "uninterpretable"; while this corresponds to the traditional notion of "agreement" as opposed to inherent values, if the term is taken literally, it should mean that agreement morphology is uninformative, thus not information-bearing (for such approaches applied to German, see e.g. Sigurðsson 2004, Roehrs 2009). However, challenges to the notion that adjective agreement is redundant and non-informative can be brought on both theoretical grounds (cf. e.g. Bouchard 2002) and on the empirical grounds provided by "non-canonical" agreement.

Agreement in the German noun phrase is "non-canonical", in that values for case, number, and gender are often not visible via morphology on the head noun; thus, it may be that case and number values can only be identified through interpretation of the agreement morphology. Traditional German grammar distinguishes between "weak", or non-informative, and ("strong"), or informative, inflection on attributive adjectives: in the absence of an inflected determiner, these adjectives are inflected in the same way in Modern Standard German that determiners are, as in (1):

(1) a. das schön-e warm-e Wetter
   the-NOM/ACC.SG nice-NOM/ACC.SG warm-NOM/ACC.SG weather-NOM/ACC.SG
   'the nice warm weather'

b. schön-es warm-es Wetter
   nice-NOM/ACC.SG warm-NOM/ACC.SG
   'nice warm weather'

The inflectional marking on the adjectives in (1a) is non-informative, in the sense that the determiner das has already provided complete information identifying the values of gender, number, and case; here, the adjective agreement does no more than satisfy the requirement of Modern Standard German that all attributive adjectives be inflected and that their marking should match. The inflectional marking on the adjectives in (1b) on the other hand expresses to the hearer that the noun is of neuter gender, singular number, and in the nominative or accusative case before he hears the noun itself. In principle, for the purposes of conveying information, it would suffice for these properties of the noun or the noun phrase on to be provided on the first adjective, while the second could be either uninflected or provide less information (cf. e.g. Bouchard 2002 here, who states that only the first in a series of inflected attributive adjectives is grammatically informative, the morphology on the remainder being redundant). Under the strict conventions of Modern Standard German, however, this is not what happens. One could suggest that the conventionality, or obligatoriness, of adjective agreement in this case diminishes the potential for informativeness. It is therefore
enlightening to consider data from an earlier stage of German, when there was a much higher degree of optionality and thus variability in the application of agreement morphology on attributive adjectives.

Early and Earlier Modern German texts contain examples such as (1a) and (1b). However, speakers could choose to omit agreement suffixes in identifiable contexts, as in (2), so that when an agreement suffix does appear, we must conclude that its selection is purposeful, and the purpose is to convey or reiterate information about properties of the noun or the phrase it heads.

(2) ein-0 alt-0 hohl-en Zahn
    a-  old-  hollow-MASC.SG.ACC. tooth

    'an old hollow tooth'

(Goethe 1777, diary)

In (2), grammatical information appears just once (which is sufficient) and the lone suffix -en is the only morphological reflex of the three category values at issue (the absence of affixation on ein does lead by inference to the conclusion that the noun to follow will not be feminine or plural). Here, we might suggest that the focus is on lexical semantic content to begin with, and the grammatical information will be provided on the final position before the modified noun, to hold for all. This is a very common strategy in earlier modern texts, but others may be observed likewise. Consider (3), which takes the opposite approach:

(3) ein-0 alt-es und unanschnlich-0 Werk
    a-NEUT.SG.NOM/ACC old-NEUT.SG.NOM/ACC and unappealing-
    work-SG.NOM/ACC

    'an old and unappealing building'

(Haller 1723)

Here, full information is provided on the first adjective, no more is necessary, and accordingly, the second adjective remains uninflected.

If it is true as Corbett has it that canonical agreement is redundant, then the adjective inflection system of Modern Standard German is already a little less than canonical due to the fact that information as to the values of nominal categories (the lexical category of gender and the grammatical categories of number and case) is not necessarily expressed directly on the noun. This makes adjective inflection potentially informative, although it is suggested in this paper that informativeness is somewhat decreased and redundancy increased through the convention of requiring the same information to be repeated on all adjectives of the same status within a noun phrase. However, the system of earlier German was even less canonical according to Corbett’s definition due to the fact that adjective inflection was optional to some degree, meaning that the amount of information was controlled by the speaker and can be motivated by a set of logical considerations, supported by the system. Adjective agreement can indeed be informative, as argued for by e.g. Bouchard (2002), and that an analysis of agreement information as being redundant, displaced, or uninterpretable in a meaningful sense does not do justice to the intricacy of the facts.

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Germanic and Romance predicative adjectives: variation in agreement

Erik Schoorlemmer (MIT)

Introduction: Predicative adjectives in Dutch and German differ from their Romance counterparts with respect to agreement. Predicative Adjectives (As) in the Romance languages agree with their subject in gender and number, cf. the French example in (1). Their Dutch and German counterparts do not, cf. the German example in (2).

(1) a. La maison est belle. b. Le tableau est beau. [French]
   the house is beautiful.
   ‘The house is beautiful.’
(2) a. Das Haus ist alt. b. Der Mann ist alt. [German]
   the house is old
   ‘The house is old’
   the man is tall
   ‘The man is old.’

Under the Agree-approach (Chomsky 2000, 2001), agreement is triggered by unvalued probing features. Under this approach, the difference between (1) and (2) could be accounted for by proposing that As in German lack probing features, while their French counterparts do not. As in German, however, do not generally lack probing features. In case they are used attributively, they do display agreement, as shown in (3).

(3) a. ein alt-es Haus b. ein alt-er Mann [German]
   a big-SG.NTR.NOM house
   ‘an old house’
   a old-SG.MASC.NOM man
   ‘an old man’

One could propose that attributive and predicative As differ with respect to the presence of probing features. However, I claim that there is a more principled account that derives the absence of agreement on Dutch/German predicative As from independent properties of the grammar.

Agreement on A: In Romance, predicative As agree with their subject (cf. 1). I assume that adjectival agreement is licensed via Agree just like that on verbs (cf. Carstens 2000; Baker 2008; among others). Agree is subject to a c-command requirement: the Probe must c-command the Goal (Chomsky 2000, 2001). The head that functions as the Probe for adjectival agreement (AgrA) must therefore c-command the base-position of the subject of A in Spec aP, as in (4a). This enables Agree between AgrA and the subject, cf. (4b).

(4) a. ...[AgrA AgrAProbe ...[Ap subjectGoal [a [Ap A]]]]
   b. ...[AgrA AgrAProbe ...[Ap subjectGoal [a [Ap A]]]]

Later on in the derivation, the subject moves to Spec TP to check T’s EPP-feature. In the post-syntactic morphological component (Halle & Marantz 1993), AgrA will be spelled out as an agreement suffix. It will then combine with A through a post-syntactic morphological movement operation (e.g. head movement, lowering or local dislocation).

Word order: The Romance languages are all VO, while Dutch and German are underlying OV. This difference in word order also holds for the copula and the adjectival predicate. In Dutch and German, predicative As precede the copula in embedded sentences, while they follow the copula in Romance, (5).

(5) a. ... daß das Haus groß ist. b. ... que la maison est grande
   that the house big is
   ‘...that the house is big’ [German]
   that the house is big
   ‘...that the house is big’ [French]

Like Romance, the Northern Germanic languages (Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Faroese, Icelandic) are VO and their predicative As agree. Vikner (2001, 2002, 2006) therefore connects the OV-VO word order difference to the agreement facts described above. Vikner assumes that the OV-VO difference is caused by a difference in the order complements are generated with respect to the head: to the left of the head in OV-languages and to the right in VO-languages.

Without independent support, he then proposes that the relevant syntactic configuration for agreement licensing does not arise in the context of predicative As in OV-languages (either
because specifiers do not agree in head final projections (Vikner 2006) or because subjects are introduced higher in OV than in VO languages (Vikner 2001, 2005). Although I share Vikner’s intuition that the agreement and word order facts are related, I argue that Vikner’s unmotivated assumptions are unnecessary and propose a different account.

**Non-agreement on A**: First, I claim that Dutch and German do not differ from Romance with respect to the adjectival Probe. AgrA c-commands the subject in Spec aP in German and Dutch, just as in French. As a result, Agree is established as in (6).

\[
(6) \quad \ldots[\text{[AgrA}_{\text{AP}} \ldots[\text{AP subject}_{\text{Goal}} [a \text{ [AP A]]}]]]
\]

Dutch and German are different, however, in that predicative As precede the copula (cf. (5)). Adopting Zwart’s (1993) account of OV word order, I propose that this is due to movement of the predicative AP over the copula. The adjectival constituent that moves over the copula cannot contain the subject. The subject has to move to Spec TP in order to check T’s EPP-feature. If it moves along with A over the copula, the subject must move out of the moved constituent in order to reach Spec TP. This would constitute a violation on the ban of movement out of moved constituents (Wexler & Culicover 1981; Takahashi 1994; Stepanov 2007). The subject can therefore not be part of the constituent that moves. This, however, means that AgrA is also not part of that constituent, since it is merged higher than the subject. Put differently, movement of the adjectival constituent strands the subject and the adjectival probe AgrA, as in (7).

\[
(7) \quad \ldots[\text{[AgrA}_{\text{AP}} \ldots[\text{VP V}_{\text{COP}} \ldots[\text{[AgrA}_{\text{AP}} \ldots[\text{AP subject}_{\text{Goal}} [a \text{ [AP A]]}]]]
\]

Later in the derivation, the subject moves to Spec TP in order to check T’s EPP-feature. When the syntactic derivation is handed over to the morphological component, AgrA is spelled out by an agreement suffix. Unfortunately, there is no morphological movement operation that can combine this suffix with A. Head movement, lowering and local dislocation are all blocked through intervention of the copula, (8).

\[
(8) \quad \ldots[\text{[AgrA}_{\text{AP}} \ldots[\text{VP V}_{\text{COP}} \ldots[\text{[AgrA}_{\text{AP}} \text{ Agr-suffix } \ldots]]]
\]

This leaves the agreement suffix without an adjectival host, violating morphological well-formedness. In order to rescue the morphological structure, this suffix is then deleted. As a result, predicative As in Dutch and German do not carry any agreement ending.

**Support**: The current account predicts that, they are moved away from their agreement suffix, attributive As should occur without agreement, just like German/Dutch predicative As. German solch ‘such’ shows that this prediction is borne out. If Solch occurs after the indefinite article, it displays adjectival agreement: ein solch-er Mann ‘a such-AGR man’. If it is moved to a position preceding the article, it, however, no longer displays agreement: solch ein Mann ‘such a man’.

**Conclusion**: The current account attributes the absence of agreement on predicatively used adjectives in German and Dutch to a specific interplay of syntactic and morphological factors. Its success therefore shows that both morphological and syntactic factors must be taken into account in the analysis of agreement.

Weak definites & modification:
The individual vs. kind-level distinction in Dutch
Maartje Schulpen & Ana Aguilar-Guevara (Utrecht University)

Introduction. So-called weak definites (1) differ from regular definites (2) in that they do not refer to uniquely identifiable individuals (Carlson and Sussman, 2005). Consequently, these constructions allow sloppy readings in VP-ellipsis sentences:

(1) Lola went to the hospital/ the doctor/ the store and Alice did too.
   (Lola and Alice could have gone to different hospitals/ doctors/ stores)
(2) Lola went to the restaurant/ the judge/ the farm/ and Alice did too.
   (Lola and Alice must have gone to the same restaurant/ judge/ farm)

In addition, weak definites display other special properties. One of them is that the weak reading is typically blocked when the nouns are modiﬁed (3). Only adjectives that establish subclasses of objects seem to be acceptable (4). We refer to these adjectives as subtyping adjectives (SAs), as opposed to the non-subtyping adjectives (NonSAs).

(3) Lola went to the old hospital/ the young doctor/ the small store and Alice did too.
   (Lola and Alice must have gone to the same hospital/ doctor/ store)
(4) Lola went to the psychiatric hospital/ the alternative doctor/ the organic store and Alice did too. (Lola and Alice could have gone to different hospitals/ doctors/ stores)

In this presentation we characterize and provide a semantics for SAs. First, we present data from two experiments that were carried out in Dutch in order to conﬁrm the validity of the observations in (3) and (4). Second, we characterize SAs by means of a set of diagnostics originally used by McNally and Boleda (2004) (henceforth M&B) to describe relational adjectives (RAs) in Catalan. We show that SAs and RAs in Dutch and in Catalan/Spanish exhibit similar behavior. Therefore, we propose an analysis for SAs based on the semantics that M&B attribute to RAs. Finally, we discuss the implications of this analysis and formulate predictions regarding the effects of SAs in another domain, namely definite generics and bare predication.

The experiments. Experiment 1 tested the acceptability of sloppy readings in VP-ellipsis sentences like (1). Two variables were manipulated: i) the type of deﬁnite that was used (either a weak or a regular deﬁnite), and ii) whether or not the deﬁnite was modiﬁed by a NonSA. Experiment 2, was similar to Experiment 1 except that here (only) the eﬀect of SAs was tested, again on both weak and regular deﬁnites. The results of both experiments were compared using a linear mixed eﬀects regression analysis. The analysis revealed that, as predicted, for weak deﬁnites the sloppy reading was accepted signiﬁcantly more often in the non-modified condition than in the NonSA-modification condition ($\beta = -.6187$, SE = .0316, p(MCMC)<.0001), and that, crucially, the sloppy reading was accepted signiﬁcantly more often in the SA-modification condition than in the NonSA-modification condition ($\beta = -.3815$, SE = .0474, p(MCMC)<.0001). However, unexpectedly, the acceptability of the sloppy reading in the SA-modification condition turned out to be signiﬁcantly lower than in the non-modified condition ($\beta = -.2372$, SE = .0471, p(MCMC)<.0001). We suggest that this is because, in taxonomic terms, SA-modiﬁed weak deﬁnites constitute categories which are subordinate to the basic level category of the non-modiﬁed weak deﬁnite (cf. Rosch et al., 1976). If we assume that generally subordinate categories are less well-established kinds than the basic level category, a decreased acceptability of the sloppy reading in the SA-modification condition is expected.
Characterizing SAs. The diagnostics we apply to SAs cover five domains: intersectivity, acceptability in post-nominal position, acceptability in post-copular position, acceptability in DPs lacking an overt noun (DetAdjPs), and interaction with intersective adjectives (IAs). M&B use these domains to define RAs like political, territorial, and pulmonary (Bally, 1944). We use them to show that SAs behave like RAs: i) neither RAs nor SAs trigger the entailment relations typically associated with IAs; ii) both RAs and SAs most occur post-nominally in Romance languages; iii) in Spanish both are acceptable in post-copular position only if embedded in a context that invokes a contrast between subclasses; iv) in Spanish both can occur in DetAdjPs if they are embedded in a context that evokes a contrast between subclasses of objects; v) when interacting with IAs to modify the same noun, both RAs and SAs must occur in the position closest to the noun.

Analyzing SAs. Following M&B, we make three assumptions. First, as (5) represents, all common nouns have an implicit kind argument \( x_k \), which is related to the ordinary-individual argument \( y_o \) typically associated with nouns via the realization relation \( R \) (Carlson, 1977). Second, as (6) represents, SAs, just like RAs, denote properties of kinds. Third, adjectives denoting properties of kinds combine with common nouns through the composition rule stated in (7). The translation in (8) shows how the meaning of the AP psychiatric hospital would be derived.

(5) \( [[N]] = \lambda x_h \lambda y_o [R(y_o, x_k) \land N(x_k)] \)

(6) \( [[SA]] = \lambda x_h [A(x_h)] \)

(7) If a noun N translates as \( \lambda x_h \lambda y_o [R(y_o, x_k) \land N(x_k)] \) and an adjective phrase AP translates as \( \lambda x_h [A(x_h)] \) then [N AP] translates as \( \lambda x_h \lambda y_o [R(y_o, x_k) \land N(x_k) \land A(x_h)] \)

(8) a. \( [[hospital]] = \lambda x_h \lambda y_o [R(y_o, x_k) \land hospital(x_h)] \)

b. \( [[psychiatric]] = \lambda x_h [psychiatric(x_h)] \)

c. \( [[psychiatric hospital]] = \lambda x_h \lambda y_o [R(y_o, x_k) \land hospital(x_h) \land psychiatric(x_h)] \)

Discussion and predictions. Analyzing SAs as properties of kinds has several advantages. First, this analysis accounts for the distribution of SAs that we have observed in Dutch and in Spanish: it treats SAs as being different from IAs, which is what the entailment relations (i) and the post-copular contexts in Romance (ii) reveal; it is compatible with the condition that allows SAs in post-copular context (iii) and in DetAdjPs (iv) in Spanish, namely, the invocation of a contrast between subclasses of objects; it explains why a SA prefers the closest position to the noun when combined with a IA (v), namely, because otherwise the IA combines with the noun first and then the resulting AdjP, denoting a property of individuals, cannot longer combine with the SA. Second, analyzing SAs as properties of kinds is an intuitive step given Aguilar-Guevara and Zwarts (2010)'s analysis of weak definites, which is also formulated in terms of reference to kinds. Third, this analysis is a step towards a general approach to kind-level adjectives in a new, much broader sense than that of, e.g., Krifka et al. (1995). Analyzing SAs as properties of kinds predicts their presence in domains other than weak definites were reference to kinds is also involved, namely, definite generics (Krifka et al., 1995; Krifka, 2004; Dayal, 2004) and bare predication (cf. de Swart et al., 2007). Interestingly this prediction is only partially borne out and this seems to be due to the influence of a well-establishedness requirement in these constructions. In this presentation we also address this issue.

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From participle to adjective in Germanic and Romance

Petra Sleeman (ACLC, University of Amsterdam)

Traditionally, past participles are divided into two types: verbal passives and adjectival passives (see, e.g., Wasow 1977 and Levin & Rappaport 1992). Following Kratzer (1994), Embick (2004) distinguishes three types of passive participles in English: eventives, resultatives and statives, which in his analysis in the framework of Distributed Morphology differ in their internal syntactic structure. Embick argues that eventives are verbal passives, whereas resultatives and statives are adjectival passives.

According to Embick (2004), eventive participles cannot occur in prenominal position, the prenominal position being reserved to adjectival passives, i.e. to resultatives and statives:

1. the door opened by John (eventive)
2. the unopened door (resultative)
3. a learned scholar (stative)

On the basis of data from Dutch and English, Sleeman (2011) claims, however, contra Embick, that prenominal participles can have an eventive reading and can thus be verbal participles:

4. recently opened restaurants (eventive)

In Sleeman’s view, the four types of participles range from a purely verbal type to a purely adjectival type, with two intermediate types:

5. adjectival → verbal
   stative  resultative  prenominal eventive  postnominal eventive

Sleeman proposes an analysis couched in the framework of Distributed Morphology: participles are the spell-out of the features of a root and various dominating functional projections. The range and properties of the functional projections determine their being more or less verbal. The prenominal or postnominal position of the eventive participle is, in Sleeman’s view, associated to the argument licensing properties of v.

In this paper, on the basis of a Romance language, French, I defend Sleeman’s claim that participles can have a less eventive reading, besides a fully eventive, a resultative, and a stative interpretation. The argumentation is based on the combination of the adverbs beaucoup ‘much’ and très ‘very’ with participles. As a rule, beaucoup modifies verbs and très modifies adjectives. However, it has been shown in the literature that très can also be combined with participles with a verbal interpretation (Gaatone 2008).

In this paper, on the basis of a Romance language, French, I defend Sleeman’s claim that participles can have a less eventive reading, besides a fully eventive, a resultative, and a stative interpretation. The argumentation is based on the combination of the adverbs beaucoup ‘much’ and très ‘very’ with participles. As a rule, beaucoup modifies verbs and très modifies adjectives. However, it has been shown in the literature that très can also be combined with participles with a verbal interpretation (Gaatone 2008).

I present my analysis of a corpus research. In my analysis of the data it is not the interpretation of the adverb that is focalized (as in, e.g., Doetjes 1997; Abeillé & Godard 2003; Gaatone 2008), but rather the interpretation of the participle. On the basis of the distribution I argue that participles modified by beaucoup always have a purely verbal interpretation:

   I have much worked
   “I have been working very hard.”
The more interesting cases, however, are the participles modified by the adverb *très*. The results of my corpus research show that *très* modifies not only adjectival participles (resultatives, as in (7), and statives, as in (8)), as expected, but that its use is also preferred with verbal passives, as in (9). I associate the interpretations of these participles to the other three interpretations distinguished above, viz. the less verbal one (9), the resultative one (7), and the purely adjectival, i.e. stative interpretation (8).

(7)  
Strasbourg vous plaît? ... Beaucoup. Je suis très séduit.  
Strasbourg you pleases? Much. I am very seduced  
‘Do you like Strasbourg? … Very much. I like it a lot.’

(8)  
ils furent très surpris  
‘they were very surprised’

(9)  
il est très apprécié par ses élèves  
he is very appreciated by his pupils  
‘he is much appreciated by his pupils’

The combination of *très* with participles raises the question why *très* combines with verbal participles, but not with simple verbs, and why *très* especially combines with passive participles and much more rarely with active or reflexive participles. In the paper I propose an answer to these questions.

I account for the data within a syntactic approach to morphology: participles combined with *beaucoup* will have the richest “verbal” functional structure, whereas participles combined with *très* will have less “verbal” functional structure. In this way, participles modified by *très* will be related to the prenominal ones in Germanic, showing that adjectivization is a gradual process, both in Germanic and Romance.

Selected references:
Kratzer, A. 1994. The event argument and the semantics of voice. Ms, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.  
This study investigates interfaces as vulnerable domains within the phenomenon of French adjective placement in three groups of German-French bilinguals. Interfaces are “areas of cross-modular integration of linguistic information” (Rothman, 2009b: 158) and it is assumed that phenomena at interfaces are more likely to be affected by incomplete acquisition or language attrition than purely syntactic phenomena (Montrul, 2008; Rothman, 2009a). In French, pre- and postnominal adjectives are possible and this variable placement depends on semantic and pragmatic factors. There are adjectives where the position (syntax) depends on the meaning (semantics) of the noun they modify, others where the context (pragmatics) is decisive and idiomatic expressions with a fixed adjective position (lexicon) which reverses the regular order. In this study, I compare adult simultaneous bilinguals with oppositional language dominance patterns with each other and with advanced second language learners. This comparison is motivated by the fact that simultaneous bilinguals have often been compared to monolinguals (Montrul 2004, 2006; Polinsky 2006, 2008;), which does not take into account the fact that simultaneous bilinguals have to deal with two linguistic systems, although they acquired both languages as a first language, which may lead to differences in language processing, so that comparability with monolinguals is not guaranteed.

In most previous studies the vulnerability of the different interfaces was investigated by comparing several phenomena using different methodology (Hulk & Müller, 2000; Sorace & Serratrice, 2009; Tsimpli & Sorace, 2006) revealing that phenomena at language-external interfaces are more susceptible than phenomena at language-internal interfaces (Sorace & Serratrice, 2009; White, 2009). My results differ from these results, in showing that performance on items at the language external syntax-pragmatics interface was better than performance at the internal syntax-semantics and syntax-lexicon interface.

The advantage of investigating French adjectives with regard to linguistic interfaces is the possibility of studying the role of more than one and language-internal and -external interfaces within the same phenomenon. To test adjective placement in this study, an acceptability judgment task (henceforth AJT) was designed. I grouped the items according to the interfaces which are involved to decide whether the adjective is placed pre- or postnominally and I propose that the syntax-semantics interface, the syntax-lexicon interface and the syntax-pragmatics interface are involved.

Three groups of bilinguals are investigated: advanced adult second language learners of French with German as native language (L2 group) and two groups of simultaneous German-French bilinguals who grew up in bi-national families following the one parent - one language strategy (Ronjat, 1913; Romaine, 1995). These two groups of simultaneous bilinguals are divided according to the country where they spent their childhood, which is France or Germany. One group of bilinguals acquired French at home in a predominantly German society (2L1weak group wrt French). For this group, French can be considered “heritage language”. The other group learned French in France, and German only at home from one parent, so that German can be considered “heritage language” (2L1strong group wrt French). Following Rothman (2007) “A heritage language is a minority language within a majority-language-environment” (p. 360). The fact that one of the languages is only spoken at home may lead to an unbalanced linguistic development, which, in most cases, only becomes more acute when monolingual schooling is commenced. In fact, this is what we found in all of our bilingual subjects. It is often assumed that the competence of the minority (weaker) language is not as developed as the competence of the majority
(stronger) language. Some authors even claim that native-like attainment in a heritage language is not guaranteed (Montrul, 2008; Polinsky, 1997).

I found that German-French bilinguals who grew up in France outperform German-French bilinguals who grew up in Germany as well as second language learners in the French AJT. Furthermore, I found that with regard to interfaces the 2L1weak group showed the same pattern as the L2 group, having most problems with adjectives at the interface between syntax and lexicon.

References


Weak adjectives in early Swedish/Scandinavian
Ulla Stroh-Wollin (Uppsala University)
Rico Simke (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg)

An early Germanic novation is the so-called weak declension of adjectives. This means that Old Germanic attributive adjectives did not only agree with the head noun in gender, number and case, but that each combination of gender, number and case also showed up in two different guises, a strong form and a weak form. Even though there has been a considerable reduction of adjectival forms in most Germanic languages, the strong-weak distinction as such remains in modern Germanic, English being the only exception.

In the modern Scandinavian languages, the distribution of strong and weak forms correlates well with the indefinite-definite distinction. Accordingly, the strong form is sometimes labelled indefinite and the weak form definite. Interestingly, Old Slavonic and Old Baltic languages also developed double adjectival declensions; a simple affixation of a demonstrative to the originally unmarked (later indefinite) forms resulted in a set of definite forms. (Lyons 1998, 82 ff.) The origin of the Germanic weak adjectival declension is, however, much less transparent. Nor is there an equally strong correlation between weak forms and definiteness in e.g. modern German as there is in the modern Scandinavian languages.

Nevertheless, it seems as the weak forms were associated with definiteness from the beginning. However, to judge from Old Scandinavian, they were not obligatory in definite noun phrases. On the contrary, they appear with low frequency in runic inscriptions and early mediaeval manuscripts. Surprisingly little attention is paid to this fact in the literature, handbooks included. Delsing 1994 highlights the distribution of strong and weak forms of adjectives in noun phrases containing both adjectival and possessive attributes in Swedish mediaeval texts. The earlier non-use of the weak form in the same context also plays an important role in Stroh-Wollin forthc.

Our contribution to the workshop is based on empirical investigations of weakly inflected adjectives in all kinds of semantically definite noun phrases in the Scandinavian runic inscriptions and Old Swedish manuscripts. Figure 1 gives an overview of the increasing proportion of weak forms in four texts (religious prose), dating from c. 1300 to the 1430s. The four texts are electronically available (at Fornsvenska textbanken) and all instances of some forty different adjectives were searched in each text or some part of it. The adjectives chosen were fairly common and prototypical adjectives, so that one could expect them to have full sets of strong and weak forms. Only positive forms (i.e. no comparatives or superlatives) in truly definite noun phrases are accounted for in the chart.

![Fig. 1. The proportion of weakly inflected adjectives in semantically definite noun phrases in four Old Swedish texts from c. 1300, c. 1330, 1380-90 and 1430-40.](image_url)
Figure 1 gives the proportion of weak forms of all adjectives found in definite noun phrases in the different texts. Now, figure 2 gives the proportion of weak forms of five single adjectives in the texts. The chart reveals that some adjectives are ahead of others in the development.

![Chart showing the proportion of weakly inflected forms of the adjectives gamal 'old', hælgr 'holy', goðr 'good', sandr 'true', kristinn 'Christian' in semantically definite noun phrases in the four texts.]

The primary aim of the empirical investigations is to shed more light on the details of the process whereby the weak form of the adjective gradually becomes obligatory in definite noun phrases in Swedish and Scandinavian as a whole. The ultimate goal is a better understanding of the nature of the weak declension and if and how the increased use of weak forms relates to other changes in the early Scandinavian noun phrase, such as word order changes and the development of definiteness inflexion on nouns.

References


Fornsvenska textbanken. www.nordlund.lu.se/Fornsvenska/Fsv%20Folder/index.html


In various ways, German attributive adjectives project peculiar structures. Attributive APs constitute full (potentially transitive) argument projections, serve as binding domains and even allow for AP-internal scrambling movements. In which way, then, could an attributive AP or participle phrase be a 'sentence-like' structure? In the analysis proposed here, the alleged case, gender and number morphology (CGN) found on adjectives, participles and relative pronouns can, in some Germanic languages, be analyzed as a syntactic phase head that implements attribution syntactically and semantically. In these languages, it is predicted that attributive structures show sentential and 'phasal' properties even in attributive structures that are substantially 'smaller' than relative clauses.

Earlier analyses of sentential attributive constructions often capitalize on the defective feature content of prenominal attributes: They assume that a prenominal attribute is a sentential structure lacking a finite verb, which allows for a covert pronominal subject (cf. e.g. Drijkoningen '87, Kremers 2003, Toman '86). PRO/pro receives a coreferential reading with the modified noun, implementing the attributive semantics. However, problems remain: Firstly, it is not clear whether PRO is syntactically licensed in this structure (cf. e.g. Wunderlich '87). Also, CGN receives no principled explanation: Toman ('86, '87), e.g., assumes it is a nominal ending that is affixed to an IP converted into an AP (cf. example 1). This looks dubious syntactically – and cannot be motivated by interface effects: Why are nominal suffixes in this German phonologically unlike CGN, whereas all attributive structures have phonologically similar suffixes? Also, the semantics of Toman's analysis turn out to be stipulative (cf. Struckmeier 2007): Why is the subject never interpreted as arbitrary PRO, i.e. as not coreferring with the modified N? Note that non-coreference is an available option in, e.g., Middle High German (cf. example 2).

The analysis proposed in this talk assumes that CGN constitutes the head of a phase structure (cf. the analyses in 3). The task of this head is to identify an argument from the embedded predication for coreference with the head noun (e.g. the TP subjects in 3): CGN is not a case, gender and number marking itself. Rather, it identifies an argument by the argument's case, gender and number. Differences between the subtypes follow from the presence or absence of verbal finiteness: e.g., non-finite attributes must raise the highest argument contained (the covert op, cf. Fanselow '86) because its Case must be licensed by defective Agree in the edge of the CGN phase. Relative clauses face no such restrictions (see 4). Case assignment also serves as a partial explanation of the accessibility hierarchy of relativization here. This analysis is able to avoid the problems that plagued reduced relative analyses: CGN is unlike nominal inflection because it constitutes an independent system. There is no dubious conversion process and no PRO/pro: A relativized argument raises to the specifier of CGN in each example. This also covers the fact that attributive constructions in German usually do not show the reconstruction effects that substantiated Kayne's raising analysis for (some) English relative clauses (cf. Kayne '94, Borsley '97, Aoun & Li 2003). Furthermore, iff the 'sentential' analysis is correct, pre-nominal attributive structures are predicted to contain sentence-level phenomena, such as scrambling, argument or verum focus – which turns out to be true.

The talk includes cross-linguistic comparisons of attributive structures in Modern German, Dutch, English, and Middle High German. The presence or absence of CGN-like morphology can be correlated with the 'sentential' properties the analysis describes. In sum, the approach allows for interesting comparisons between the Germanic languages. If these considerations are on the right track, they can serve as a tertium comparationis for the empirical properties of attributive structures cross-linguistically: Which lexical items in other languages project phase-level attributive structures?
Examples

(1) \[[\text{IP=AP PRO} \quad \text{[VP NPObj V-]} \quad \text{participle suffix}\]-\text{CGN N}]\] (cf. Toman 1986, 1987)

(2) a) daz lebende brôt  
the living bread  
"the bread that makes somebody (!) live"

b) des armen klagende armuot  
the poor's wailing poverty  
"the poor's poverty that makes one wail"

(3) ein [den Gegner besiegender]/kluger Zug  
"a smart move/ move that defeats the opponent"

Ein Zug, [der den Gegner besiegt]  
"a move [that the opponent defeats]"

(4) a) *der (in dem) (ich) gehende Garten  
the in which I walking garden  
‘the garden I am walking in’ (intended)

b) der Garten, in dem ich gehe  
the garden, in which I walk  
‘the garden I am walking in’

References

The position proper of the adjective in Middle English:  
a result of language contact?  
Carola Trips (Universität Mannheim)

This talk seeks to shed light on the provenance of the Noun-Adjective (N-A) pattern in Present-Day English (PDE) and tries to argue in favour of language contact as a factor and possible source for the occurrence of this pattern in the history of English.

If Germanic and Romance languages are compared concerning the position of the attributive adjective in the DP/NP, a clear contrast occurs:

(1)  
a. the blue sky vs. *the sky blue  
b. der blaue Himmel vs. *der Himmel blau  
c. le ciel bleu vs. *le bleu ciel  
d. il cielo azzurro vs. *il azzuro cielo

Whereas in Germanic languages like English and German the attributive adjective has to occur in prenominal position in the unmarked case, in Romance languages like French and Italian it has to occur in postnominal position. However, as an exception to the rule, in PDE an adjective can occur in postnominal position in a restricted number of cases as in shortened relative clauses ("a hat (that is) proper to the occasion") or in conjoined phrases ("He gave a smile sweet and obstinate", cf. Lamprecht, 1986, 108f, Greenbaum and Quirk, 1990, 136f, Quirk et al., 2004, 419f). Further, there are cases that relate to the origin of the adjective undergoing postposing:

1. certain adjectives with the suffixes -able/-ible: "the only book available"  
2. proper with restrictive meaning: "architecture proper"  
3. in titles and fixed expression on the model of Latin and French: "the lords spiritual and the lords temporal", "proof positive", "the heir apparent" "the president elect"

In the literature, a number of factors determining the position of the postnominal adjective in PDE have been proposed, e.g., semantic differences (durative vs. temporal state, König, 1971), information-structural differences (Markus, 1997, 492, Weinrich, 1976, 2005, Fìrbas, 1964, ’08), its metacommunicative function (Markus, 1997, 495), its origin (Mossé, 1991). In line with Mossé I will argue that it is the etymological origin of the adjective, i.e., its French roots, that determine its position. More precisely, I will show that the structural and semantic properties of postnominal adjectives in PDE can be explained if the language contact situation in Middle English times, starting with the Conquest of William of Normandy in 1066, is taken into account as a factor that led to the integration of a new pattern into the English language. New insights into this language contact situation have been gained by Wright and others (Wright, 1997, 1998, 2003, 2010, Trotter, 2000, Trotter, 2010, Ingham, 2010) who have investigated mixed texts from that period showing instances of code-switching, which corroborate the assumption that the contact between OF and ME was intense and led to a period of at least three hundred years where multilingualism was prevailing in Britain.

To find proof in favour of the language contact hypothesis, in a first step I will discuss the relative order of the adjective and the noun in Old English (OE) and show that although
postmodification does occur, the patterns found are different from those found today and hence Germanic as a source for the postnominal pattern can be excluded. In a further step, I will investigate the situation in medieval times when the two languages came into contact and provide a comparison of Old French (OF) and Middle English (ME) which will serve as a basis for the following discussion. Empirically, my assumptions will be based on findings gained from a corpus study of The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2, Kroch and Taylor, 2000) as well as on a full text comparison of the OF Somme le roi (1279) and its English translation the Ayenbite of Invy (1340). I will especially focus on three phenomena: (i) the origin of the adjective occurring in postnominal position, (ii) the French plural construction, (iii) the reinterpretation of the French article le described in Wright (2010). I will come to the conclusion that these three phenomena are evidence for a strong impact of French on English and that it is likely that the N-A pattern is an instance of structural borrowing.

References


The attributive inflectional schwa is not functionless yet

Freek Van de Velde (K.U. Leuven)

The attributive inflectional schwa on Dutch adjectives has a turbulent history (Van de Velde 2006). It derives from the Germanic weak inflection, which expressed definiteness. In an earlier stage, in Proto-Indo-European, it was a derivational suffix on nouns. Currently, the inflectional schwa appears to be more or less functionless: it is used with adjectives in attributive, definite, singular, neuter noun phrases, but it does not unequivocally mark either of these functions. Being functionless, it can be expected to be prone to exaptation, the re-use of functionless morphology, and indeed, in Afrikaans (see Lass 1990) and in a number of other Dutch-based creoles (Van Marle 1995), the inflectional schwa was refunctionalised in different ways.

In this paper, I argue that this piece of opaque inflectional morphology in Dutch is not entirely functionless. Though it does not transparently express a particular feature (definiteness, number, gender) on adjectives, it is nevertheless a conspicuous marker of attributive adjectives, and this is capitalised on by language users, who exploit the inflectional schwa in what seems to be derivational processes of categorical transposition: first, the schwa is used on noun modifiers to indicate whether they occupy the adjective or the determiner slot. As (most) Dutch determiners do not take the inflectional schwa in the same grammatical contexts in which adjectives do, the presence or absence of inflectional can be used as a marker for categorical status. Numerals can occupy both slots in the NP, and the inflectional schwa indicates where they are in the syntactic structure (see Van de Velde 2009:42-45). This helps to explain: (1) the seemingly erratic inflection on Dutch quantifier veel (veel/vele mensen); (2) the loss of inflectional schwa on adjectives like ontelbaar (‘innumerable’) and oneindig (‘endless’) when they come to function as numerals (e.g. met oneindig mogelijkheden, ‘with innumerable possibilities’); (3) Performance errors in quantifiers like ieder en elk (geschikt voor elk vrouw ‘suitable for every:UNINFL woman’); (4) the absence of inflectional schwa on anaphoric adjectives when they enter the determiner slot (voornoemd/*voornoemde boek, ‘aforementioned book’) (see Van de Velde 2011:247-248). Second, the inflectional schwa can be used to smuggle adverbs into attributive position. This accounts for patterns such as een groot genoeg verzameling (‘a big enough:INFL collection’), de kortst mogelijke afstand ‘the shortest possible distance’ (see Van de Velde 2009:115-122), een grofwegge onderverdeling (‘a rough subclassification’) (Diepeveen & Van de Velde 2010:399). Third the absence of inflectional schwa can be used to coerce an ‘adverbial’ reading on bona fide adjectives, as in een groot pianospelner (‘a great:UNINFL piano_player’).

Different as all these examples are in their details, there is nevertheless a general trend: language users can be observed to exploit superficial similarities or ‘local generalisations’ (Joseph 1992). This opportunistic (re-)use of quirky morphology is rampant in the diachronic morphology of Dutch (see Van de Velde & Van der Horst, ms.).
References:


How nouns turn into adjectives: The emergence of new adjectives in French, Dutch and English through debonding processes
Kristel Van Goethem & Hendrik de Smet (K.U. Leuven)

This study will focus on French, Dutch and English adjectives that arose through "debonding" from N+N- or N+A-compounds or compound-like sequences. Debonding is a type of degrammaticalization defined by Norde as "a composite change whereby a bound morpheme in a specific linguistic context becomes a free morpheme" (Norde 2009:186). It typically involves processes such as severance (i.e. decrease in bondedness), flexibilization (i.e. increase in syntactic freedom), scope expansion and recategorialization.

In French, debonding of N+N-compounds such as problème-clé 'key problem', chiffre record 'record figure' and cas limite 'borderline case' occurs when, for instance, an adverbial modifier is inserted into the compound: un problème vraiment clé, un chiffre absolument record, un cas très limite. This operation seems to confer adjectival status to the N2, which may develop more typical adjectival (1-2), and sometimes even adverbial constructions (3):

(1) Que c'est un projet humaniste porteur de progrès pour l'individu, une dynamique où la relation à l'autre est clé. [...] ' [...] a dynamic in which the relation to others is key [...]’ (Glossa, 6 May 2011)

(2) Ajoutons que le chiffre des abstentionnistes [sic], qui depuis ma naissance est record à chaque scrutin, est de 7.218.592. ' [...] the figure of the abstentionists, which has been at record levels ever since I was born [...]’ (Glossa, 1 July 2001)

(3) Je trouve ça limite exhibitionniste. 'I find that almost exhibitionistic' (Glossa, 29 January 2011)

In Dutch, compounds such as sleutelprobleem 'key problem', recordcijfer 'record figure' and grensgeval 'borderline case' do not allow this debonding process (*dit probleem is sleutel; *dit cijfer is record; *ik vind dit grens exhibitionistisch), which may partially be explained by the strong cohesion in Dutch compounds, e.g. revealed in their word stress. However, it is striking that Dutch compounds with an intensifying left-hand member (with nominal origin) and -e- interfix often do allow debonding:

(4) Als we de fundamenten van de klassieke partijen, [...], onderuit halen zetten we een reuze stap richting onafhankelijkheid.' [...] a giant step towards independency' (Glossa, 3 April 2011)

(5) Echt een buitenkansje voor een nieuw appartement op een klasse locatie... ' [...] a new flat at a prime location' (Glossa, 6 July 2011)

(6) En voor we het vergeten, danke aan de collega's van Antwerpen voor de lama (het is een pokkebeest, maar op een bepaalde manier ga je je er toch aan hechten), danke aan de collega's van Gent en Brussel voor het gebruik van de camera (het is pokke dat de batterijen niet goed tegen de kou kunnen, maar daar vinden we wel een oplossing voor) [...] 'lit. [...] a pock-animal 'an annoying animal' [...] it's a rotten luck that the batteries don't resist the cold [...]’ (Glossa, 15 December 2009)

In English, changes take place reminiscent of the examples from French, with nouns such as key, signature or champion, which originally occur in noun-noun sequences (a key
player, a signature event, a champion swimmer) but can be reanalyzed as adjectives, as evidenced in (7)-(9). However, genuine compounds (characterized by a stress pattern with single primary word stress) are not found to engage in the process.

(7) The U.S. [...] has said it will do more in terms of intelligence-sharing to [...] stop some of the killings, and really restore some -- some law and order in these pockets of lawlessness that -- that tend to be along some very key border areas. (COCA)

(8) You know, it's your home, so find things that feel signature to your style. (COCA)

(9) Until now, the champion terrible explanation for going public was Gennifer Flowers's contention that she was disclosing her long-term affair with Bill Clinton because he was "denying our love". (The New York Times)

In our paper, we will investigate for each of the three languages how the debonding process is impacted by four different factors: (1) the semantics of the noun subject to debonding, (2) the degree of (prosodic) cohesion of the sequence, (3) the presence of adjective inflection in the language and the resemblance of a compound element to an inflected adjective and (4) the possibility of clipping.

With regard to the semantics, debonding seems to be restricted in all three languages to nouns with a qualifying function. Classifying compounds such as Fr. requin-marteau / Du. hamerhaai ('hammerhead shark') do not allow debonding (e.g. *requin vraiment marteau, *die haai is hamer, *a hammerhead blue shark) (cf. Amiot & Van Goethem (forthcoming)). However, the semantic argument does not account for the fact that the French sequences with clé (1) and the English ones with key (7) act differently from the Dutch compounds with sleutel- (e.g. secteur économique clé, key economic sector; *sleutel economische sector) (Denison 2001, De Smet (manuscript), Amiot & Van Goethem (forthcoming)). This indicates that the degree of cohesion of the N+N- (or N+A-)sequence, manifested through spelling and word stress, is also involved. Further, reanalysis of the noun as an adjective may be favored in languages with no or little inflection on the adjective (as in English and French respectively). Inversely, the form of most debonded Dutch adjectives suggests that the linking morpheme -e- in (4) and (5) can be reinterpreted as an inflectional affix, thereby occasioning reanalysis. Finally, it should be observed that, especially in Dutch predicative constructions, the new adjective can also be the result of the clipping of the right-hand member of N+A-compounds, in which case a gradual process of debonding is possibly not the only mechanism at work (e.g. Hij is helemaal stapel op haar (stapel = 'stapelgek', lit. 'pile-mad', 'madly in love') 'he is madly in love with her').


De Smet, Hendrik. (manuscript). "The course of actualization". Manuscript Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Although the way in which inflectional properties develop may be more or less in accordance with a ‘grammaticalization cline’, this is hardly explanatory: it remains unclear why some (but not all) languages develop particular inflectional features, and why some (but not all) languages lose it again. This holds for inflection in general, but in particular for adjectival inflection. For verbal agreement there are some ideas on how subject pronouns or clitics may have been reanalyzed as verbal suffixes (Givon 1976, Fuss 2004 a.o.). Although much is uncertain here, even less is known about the origin of adjectival inflection. Lehmann (2005-7), for instance, notes: “It is assumed that adjectives were originally inflected like nouns in Proto-Indo-European […]”, suggesting that agreement was there right from the start. This may be true but is not very helpful in finding out what the origin of adjectival agreement is.

Even more than other sorts of inflection adjectival inflection very often seems entirely redundant and useless. In many cases it is moreover extremely complicated (cf. German). Why do we have adjectival inflection of this extremely complicated sort? Why are not all languages like English, where adjectival inflection is entirely absent? With respect to communication and other functional properties nothing seems to be wrong with adjectives in this language. Until recently it was only possible to speculate on the questions just mentioned, but I will show that combing work from several linguistic sub disciplines (theoretical linguistics, L1/L2 acquisition, comparative and typological linguistics, historical linguistics) offers promising answers, focusing on Germanic (and Dutch more in particular).