

Germanic definiteness marking: morphological variations on the same syntactic theme

Introduction: Within Germanic languages, there is an intriguing contrast with respect to whether definiteness marking is sensitive to adjectival modification. In German, Dutch and English (henceforth *group 1*), definiteness is marked by a freestanding definite article irrespective of the presence of an Attributive Adjective (AA): *the (old) man*. In Swedish (Sw), Norwegian (No), and Faroese (Fa) (henceforth *group 2*), definiteness is marked differently depending on the presence of an AA. In unmodified DPs, definiteness is marked by a suffix: *hus-et* ‘house-the’ (Sw.). However, definiteness is expressed twice in definite DPs with AAs, both by a suffix on the noun and a freestanding article, *det stora hus-et* (**the** big house-**the**) (a.k.a. double definiteness (Delsing 1993, Julien 2005)). Despite these two different patterns, I argue that the structure of definite DPs is identical in both language groups. The two different patterns of definiteness marking are attributed to a small morphological difference.

Unmodified definite DPs: I propose that unmodified definite DPs have the structure in (1). The only difference between group 1 and 2 is morphological. In the postsyntactic morphological component (Halle & Marantz 1993, Embick & Noyer 2001), the article that is inserted in D is a free morpheme in group 1 and a suffix in group 2. Because of this, the article in group 2 undergoes Local Dislocation in the sense of Embick & Noyer (2001) to the right of the noun, cf. (1c), while this is not the case for the article in group 1, cf. (1b). Local Dislocation is supported in this case by the observation that some nouns do not take the definite suffix, like *den studerende* ‘the student’, cf. Hankamer & Mikkelsen (2005).

- (1) a. $[_{DP} D [_{NP} N]]$ b. GROUP 1: *the house* c. GROUP 2: *-et hus* → $\begin{array}{c} \text{hus-et} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{LOCAL DISLOCATION} \end{array}$

Modified definite DPs: I argue that in Narrow Syntax the AA is merged later than the definite D, cf. (2a). This is supported by the sensitivity of the adjectival agreement to definiteness as displayed by the distinction between strong (Sw. *ett stor-t hus*) and weak adjectival inflection (*det stor-a huset*). On the null hypothesis that adjectival agreement is licensed by Agree (Chomsky 2000, 2001), this shows that the AA must c-command the definite D and hence must be merged after D. However, this puts the AA outside the semantic domain of the definite D, contrary to its interpretation. In order to put the AA back in the semantic domain of D, D undergoes Internal Merge to a position above the AA, cf. (2b). At the CI-interface, the higher D-copy is interpreted yielding the correct interpretation, cf. (2c).

- (2) a. $[[_{AP} A] [_{DP} D [_{NP} N]]]$ b. $[D [_{AP} A] [_{DP} D [_{NP} N]]]$ c. $[D [_{AP} A] [_{DP} \emptyset [_{NP} N]]]$

In the morphological component, the definite suffix of group 2 languages is inserted in both the higher and lower D-copy, cf. (3a). The lower D-copy is suffixed on the noun via Local Dislocation, just like in unmodified definite DPs, cf. (3b). The higher D-copy is however not adjacent to a nominal host. Its nominal suffixal property can therefore not be satisfied by Local Dislocation. At last resort, a dummy host *d-* is inserted (cf. *d-support* in Roehrs 2006, Santelmann 1993), cf. (3c). Since the lower D-copy undergoes morphological reanalysis as part of Local Dislocation and morphological reanalysis bleeds Chain Reduction (Nunes 2001), none of the two D-copies can be deleted. This yields the double spell-out of the definite article in group 2 languages.

- (3) a. *-et stora -et hus* b. *-et stora* $\begin{array}{c} \text{hus-et} \\ \uparrow \\ \text{LOCAL DISLOCATION} \end{array}$ c. *d-et stora hu-et*

In group 1 languages, the definite article inserted in the two D-copies is a free morpheme, cf. (4a). Therefore, unlike in group 2 languages, Local Dislocation or another form of morphological reanalysis is not triggered. Hence, Chain Reduction (Nunes 2001) applies; deleting the lower D-copy, see (4b). In this way, the absence of article doubling in the group 2 languages receives a morphological account.

- (4) a. *the old the house* b. Chain Reduction: *the old ~~the~~ house* → *the old house*

The patterns of definiteness marking in Danish and Icelandic can be accounted for under this analysis by minor variations of operations in the morphological and syntactic components.