Word building, definiteness marking and the structure of the North Germanic Noun Phrase

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1 Introduction


(1) Danish  
| a. hest-en | b. den røde hest |
| horse-the | the red horse |

(2) Icelandic  
| a. hestur-inn | b. gamli hestur-inn |
| horse-the | old horse-the |

(3) Faroese  
| a. kettlingur-in |
| kitten-the |

The Icelandic pattern in (2), is only one of three possible orders of numeral, adjective, noun, pronominal possessor and article within a definite DP (Magnússon 1984, Práinsson 2007, Pfaff 2007, 2009, 2014).

(4) a. frægu myndir-nar mínar  
b. myndir-nar mínar þrjár  
c. hinar þrjár frægu myndir  
| famous pictures-the my three |
| pictures-the my three famous pictures |
| the three famous pictures |

Previous analyses, attempting to treat the preposing of the noun and adjective as a single movement operation, all exclude (4b) (e.g. Sigurðsson 1993, Vångnes 1999, Julien 2005, Schoorlemmer 2012).

Many of the more recent analyses have claimed that the preposing of elements observed in (4a) is due to fronting of a constituent containing the noun, adjective and the pronominal possessor (e.g. Vångnes
1999, Julien 2005, Norris 2011, Schoorlemmer 2012). However, non-pronominal possessors and PPs remain to the right of the numeral.

(5) a. myndir-nar þrjár hennar Astridar af Dorian Gray
pictures.the three PROP Astrid.GEN of Dorian Gray
Astrid's picture of Dorian Gray
b. *myndirnar þrjár hennar Astridar af Dorian Gray þrjár
pictures.the PROP Astrid.GEN of Dorian Gray three

These analyses either do not address this (Vangsnes 1999, Schoorlemmer 2012) or propose a DP-internal extraposition of the postnominal elements (Julien 2005, Pfaff 2009, Norris 2011).

1.1 The analysis

Analysis couched in Distributed Morphology (DM; Halle and Marantz 1993, 1994, etc.).


\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\text{D} \quad \omega \text{P} \\
\quad \omega \quad \varphi \text{P} \\
\quad \varphi \quad \text{nP} \\
\quad \text{n} \quad \sqrt{\text{ROOT}}
\end{array}
\]

Icelandic:

- Both bound and free article is a realization of D.
- The bound article and preposing of the noun are a result of head movement to D (cf. Sigurðsson 1993).
- Preposing of adjectives is a separate operation to N-to-D movement.
- Pronominal possessors cliticize to elements bearing nominal category features (drawing on Baker 2003).

Danish:

- The article is a realization of D (cf. Julien 2005)
- The bound article is a result of lowering of D to N (cf. Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005).
- Lowering reformulated to make it sensitive to the feature content of its possible destination.

Double definiteness:

- The bound article is a realization of \( \omega \), the free article is a realization of D (Vangsnes 1999, Julien 2005).
- Realization of D is contingent on whether it undergoes lowering.
1.2 Roadmap

§2 The Icelandic DP

§3 Danish

§4 Double definiteness

§5 Conclusions

2 The Icelandic DP

For indefinite TNPs there is only one possible order of elements (Magnússon 1984, Sigurðsson 2006, Práinsson 2007). There is no indefinite article in Icelandic.

NUM > ADJ > NOUN > GEN > PP

(7) þrjár frægar myndir Astridar af Dorian Gray
    three famous pictures Astrid’s of Dorian Gray

Astrid’s three famous pictures of Dorian Gray

The acceptability of indefinite possessive construction is contingent on the semantic class of the noun (Sigurðsson 1993:192-3, Práinsson 2007:93). In (7), PICTURE must refer to a particular work and not a physical object.

For definite TNPs, the different orders yield different readings (Práinsson 2007, Pfaff 2007 et seq.). Typically the order ADJ > ART yields a restrictive reading and the order ART > ADJ yields a non-restrictive reading.

(8) a. Allar góðu bækur-nar hans brunnu.
    all good books-the he.GEN burned
    All of his good books burned. (Some of his bad to mediocre may have survived)

b. Allar bækur-nar hans góðu brunnu.
    all books-the he.GEN good burned
    All of his good books burned. (They were all good)

In case of inherently non-predicative adjectives, the order ART > ADJ is obligatory.

(9) a. #svokallaða afstæðiskenning-in
    so-called theory.of.relativity-the
    the so-called theory of relativity

b. hin svokallaða afstæðiskenning
    the so-called theory.of.relativity

c. afstæðiskenningin svokallaða
    theory.of.relativity-the so-called
    (Pfaff 2014:49)

Non-intersective reading is not limited to DET > ADJ configuration.
In (10), the order $\text{ADJ} > \text{DET}$ yields a non-intersective reading, hence no contradiction in (10a) but the order $\text{DET} > \text{ADJ}$ yields an intersective reading, hence the contradiction in (10b) and (10c).

Pronominal possessors immediately follow N-ART, proper name possessors do not.

(11) a. góðu myndir-nar mínar þrjár _ af Astrid
good pictures-the my three of Astrid
my three good pictures of Astrid
b. góðu myndir-nar hans þrjár _ af Astrid
good pictures-the he.\text{GEN} three of Astrid
his three good pictures of Astrid
c. *góðu myndir-nar (hans) Jónasar þrjár _ af Astrid
good pictures-the prop Jónas.\text{GEN} three of Astrid
Jónas’ three good pictures of Astrid

(12) a. *góðu myndir-nar þrjár mínar af Astrid
good pictures-the the three my of Astrid
my three good pictures of Astrid
b. *góðu myndir-nar þrjár hans af Astrid
good pictures-the the he.\text{GEN} of Astrid
his three good pictures of Astrid
c. góðu myndir-nar þrjár hans Jónasar af Astrid
good pictures-the the prop Jónas.\text{GEN} of Astrid
Jónas’ three good pictures of Astrid

Pronominal possessors can also precede the numeral in certain quantifier construction despite the noun following the numeral (Sigurðsson 2006).

(13) a. allar þínar þrjár nýju kenningar
all your three new theories
b. allar hennar þrjár nýju kenningar
all she.\text{GEN} new theories
c. *Allar Maríu þrjár nýju kenningar
all María.\text{GEN} three new theories
(Práinsson 2007:119)
2.1 The structure of the Icelandic TNP

I assume that NP consists of at least four elements:

- A node $\omega$, which encodes referentiality and licenses arguments (cf. Vangsnes 1999, Julien 2005, Harðarson 2013 and others)

I assume that genitives/possessors are placed in Spec-$\varphi$P and PPs are placed within nP. Adjectives are placed in Spec-$\omega$P and numerals are adjoined to $\omega$P. Given that Icelandic has not developed an indefinite article I assume that there is no DP layer dominating indefinite NPs. The root undergoes subsequent headmovements to $\omega$. The structure of (7) above is then as follows.

\[
\text{(14) a. þrjár frægar myndir Astridar af Dorian Gray}
\]

three famous pictures Astrid.GEN of Dorian Gray

Astrid’s three famous pictures of Dorian Gray

b. 

Definite TNPs contain an additional DP layer dominating $\omega$P. A DP with a freestanding article is as follows. Note that the complex head $\omega$ has been collapsed to N.
2.2 Icelandic bound article — D or ω

The bound article in Norwegian, Swedish and Faroese appears to encode specificity rather than definiteness (Julien 2005:38–39).

(15) a. hinar þrjár gömlu myndir (hennar) Astridar af Dorian Gray
   the three old pictures PROP Astrid.gen of Dorian Gray
   Astrid’s three famous pictures of Dorian Gray

b. 

\[
\begin{aligned}
  & \text{DP} \\
  & \text{D} \\
  & \text{THE} \\
  & \text{hin} \\
  & \text{NUM} \\
  & \text{THREE} \\
  & \text{þrjár} \\
  & \text{AP} \\
  & \text{OLD} \\
  & \text{gömlu} \\
  & \text{N} \\
  & \text{PICTURES} \\
  & \text{myndir} \\
  & \text{GEN} \\
  & \ldots \\
  & \text{PP} \\
  & \text{Astridar af Dorian Gray}
\end{aligned}
\]

2.2 Icelandic bound article — D or ω

The bound article in Norwegian, Swedish and Faroese appears to encode specificity rather than definiteness (Julien 2005:38–39).

(16) a. dei verste bøllar
   the worst bullies
   the worst bullies (non-specific)

b. dei verste bølla-ne
   the worst bullies-DEF
   the worst bullies (specific)
   (Norwegian, Julien 2005:35)

In case of double definiteness, Julien argued that the freestanding article is a realization of D, whereas the bound article is a realization of ω. As for Icelandic, Julien (2005:57) argued that it is only possible to realize one or the other, never both simultaneously.

In double definiteness languages, the prenominal article is not overt in vocatives (Julien 2005:31–32).

(17) Veit du ikkje det (*den) stor-e jent-a!
   know you not that the big-DEF girl-DEF
   Don’t you know that, you big girl!
   (Norwegian, Julien 2005:32)

Danish does not mark any definiteness in vocatives, hence the bound article in Danish appears to be a realization of D (Julien 2005:66). Note that the adjective has a definite suffix despite the absence of an overt definiteness marker.
2.3 Deriving the different orders in the Icelandic DP

The fronting of the noun and the fronting of the adjective are two separate operations and the bound article is a result of N raising to D (cf. Sigurðsson 1993).¹

(21) DP
    | D
    | N
    | PICTURES
    | myndir
    | [+bound] nar
    | D
    | NUM
    | THREE
    | prjár
    | ωP
    | AP
    | OLD
    | gömlu
    | N
    | ϕP
    | GEN
    | ‥″ PP
    | Astridar af Dorian Gray

This correctly accounts for the postnominal sphere without having to resort to displacement of the postnominal material.

Fronting of adjectives appears to be motivated by factors that are partially independent from the fronting of the noun, i.e. the adjective can only be fronted when the noun is fronted, but not vice versa (see also Ticio 2003 on Spanish).

¹It is possible that in the absence of prenominal material, D lowers to N and the raising is only implemented when lowering is blocked, although given the drastically different timing of the two operations, that seems unlikely.
Pronominal possessors are clitics and raise to D.

(23) a. góðu myndir-nar **mínar** þrjár _ af Astrid
good pictures-the my three of Astrid
my three good pictures of Astrid

b. góðu myndir-nar **hans** þrjár _ af Astrid
good pictures-the he.Gen three of Astrid
his three good pictures of Astrid

c. *góðu myndir-nar (**hans**) Jónasær **þrjár** _ af Astrid
good pictures-the prop Jónas.Gen three of Astrid
Jónas’ three good pictures of Astrid

(24) a. *góðu myndir-nar **þrjár** mínar af Astrid
good pictures-the three my of Astrid
my three good pictures of Astrid

b. *góðu myndir-nar **þrjár** hans af Astrid
good pictures-the three he.Gen of Astrid
his three good pictures of Astrid

c. góðu myndir-nar **þrjár** hans Jónasar af Astrid
good pictures-the three prop Jónas.Gen of Astrid
Jónas’ three good pictures of Astrid

(25) a. allar **bínar** þrjár nýju kenningar
all your three new theories

b. allar **hennar** þrjár nýju kenningar
all she.Gen new theories

c. *Allar **María** þrjár nýju kenningar
all María.Gen three new theories
(Práinsson 2007:119)
3 Danish

In Danish, whether the article is bound or free is contingent on the presence/absence of prenominal modifiers.

(26) Danish (Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2002:137)

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>hest-en</td>
<td>the horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>horse-the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>*den hest</td>
<td>the horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>den røde hest</td>
<td>the red horse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following Hankamer and Mikkelsen (2005), I assume that D lowers to N in Danish. I argue however that it is not necessary to assume lowering to take place after vocabulary insertion to account for the reluctance of certain nominals to D lowering.

Deverbal nouns containing the present participial morpheme -ende, which resist the bound article in the absence of prenominal modifiers (see e.g. Mikkelsen 1998, Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2002, 2005).

(27) a. en studerende student  
    a. a student  
    b. *studerend-en student-the  

(Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2002:146)

Neuter counterparts of these nouns do not.

(28) a. mællemværend-et between.being-the  
    b. *det mellemværende the unfinished.business  

(Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005:98)

Other common gender deverbal nouns do not show the same pattern.

(29) a. løber-en runner-the  
    b. *den løber the runner  

(Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005:101, n. 21)

To capture this exception, Hankamer and Mikkelsen (2005) suggest that lowering occurs following vocabulary insertion since D appears to be vocabulary sensitive: Makes reference to inflectional class (gender) etc. (Embick and Noyer 2001:566–567).\(^2\)

Lowering can be said to be sensitive to a combination of animacy and features/structure associated with the present participle (see also Julien 2005:72 for an alternative in this vein).

Animacy plays a role in e.g. selection of arguments (Larson 1990:610–611).

(30) a. John blamed Max for the accident.  
    b. ??John blamed the weather for the accident.

These nominals resist plural morphology as well (Julien 2005:71–72).

\(^2\)See however Bobaljik (2012:163–167) on pre-VI sensitivity to diacritic features.
5 Conclusions

Assuming a NP structure that mirrors the structure of the noun, in addition to returning to a head movement approach to definiteness marking, allows for a full coverage of the Icelandic DP.

The different orders observed in the definite appear to be the result of three separate movements.

- Head movement of N to D
- Phrasal movement of AP to Spec-ωP
- Cliticization of pronominal possessors

For Danish and double definiteness, it was shown that exception to the distribution of the prenominal determiner in case of -ende-nominalizations can be sufficiently accounted for using lowering without having to make reference to phonological material.
References


