Adjectival definiteness marking and noun-phrase internal functions

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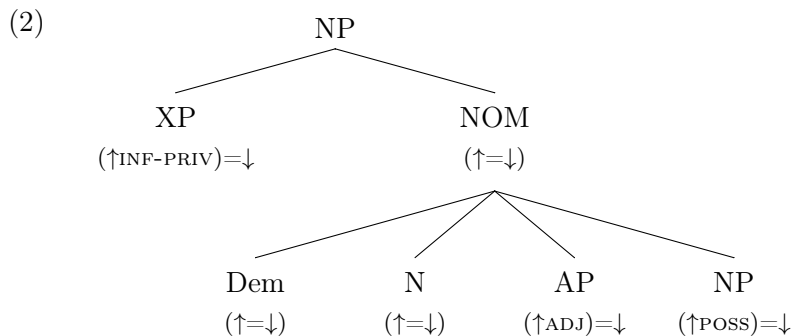HEADLEX, 25 July 2016

1 Noun phrase structure in Old Norse

- (in)definiteness marking is not required for (in)definite interpretation

- there are a number of definiteness markers

  - free (h)*inn* and bound -*inn*
  - distal demonstrative *sá* (most forms in *þ*- such as *þat*)
  - proximal demonstrative *sjá* (most forms in *þ*- such as *þetta*).

- *einn* is not yet an indefinite article

- 'the word order within the NP seems almost totally unconstrained by syntactic rules' (Faarlund, 2004:55)

- free word order represented as flat structure

- initial information-structurally privileged position

In *Gunnlaugs saga Ormstungu* possessives generally postnominal:

faðir hans 'his father'	*húsfreya þín* 'your wife'
dóttur þinnar 'your daughter'	*bróður sinn* 'his.REFL brother'
kona hans 'his wife'	*frœndi minn* 'my kinsman'

But when contrastive prenominal:

(1) at **minn faðir** væri eptirbát **þins** **fǫður**
     that my   father was after.boat you.GEN father.GEN
     'that my father trailed in the wake of your father' (Gunnl 9.33)

(2)

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{NP} \\
\diagup \qquad \diagdown \\
\begin{array}{cc}
\text{XP} & \text{NOM} \\
(\uparrow\text{INF-PRIV})=\downarrow & (\uparrow=\downarrow)
\end{array}
\end{array}
$$

NP
— XP (↑INF-PRIV)=↓
— NOM (↑=↓)
  — Dem (↑=↓)
  — N (↑=↓)
  — AP (↑ADJ)=↓
  — NP (↑POSS)=↓

2   Adjectives in Old Norse

Adjectives occur in two forms:

- STRONG adjectives are associated with indefiniteness, but can occur in definite noun phrases (see Delsing 1994; Stroh-Wollin and Simke 2014)

(3)   slægr   karl ok vitr
      cunning.STR man and clever.STR (Bandamenn, 784)

- WEAK adjectives occur only in definite noun phrases and always accompanied by (h)*inn*

- (h)*inn* only occurs immediately preceding a weak adjective

Regardless of whether the adjective precedes or follows the noun and repeated for each adjective:

(4)   maðr hinn sami
      man HINN same.WK (Grettir, 1694)

(5)   hinir skírlífustu   ok hinir postuligustu   menn
      HINN most chaste and HINN most apostolic man.PL
      (Marta, 805)

Even when the adjective would otherwise be immediately preceded by another definite element:

(6)   það ið   mikla   hark ok óp
      DEM HINN great.WK tumult and shouting (Alexander, 1323)

(7)   Stýrimannskona sú   hin   unga
      skipper's wife   DEM HINN young.WK
      'that young wife of the skipper' (Grettir, 409)

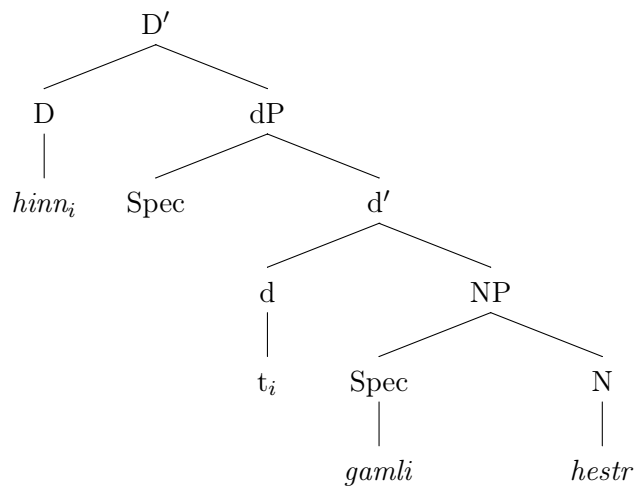- adjectives appear not to occur recursively: co-ordination with more than one adjective

(8)   fátækjan   ok útlendan   sigurvegara
      poor.STR.ACC and foreign.STR.ACC conqueror.acc
      (Alexander,.564)

(9)   Lítið   verk ok löðrmannlegt
      petty.STR.NOM work and cowardly.STR.NOM
      'petty and cowardly work' (Grettir,.26)

3   The role of (h)*inn*

- 'North-Germanic and Rumanian developed an "adjectival" article, which in principle only has scope over an adjective' (Perridon and Sleeman, 2011:8)

- (h)*inn* 'seems to be just a formal element preceding adjectives with the so-called weak inflection' (Stroh-Wollin, 2009:7–9)

- association between adjective and definiteness in other varieties of early Germanic (Curme, 1910; Heinrichs, 1954)

- but theoretical analyses do not capture this

4 Previous analyses of $(h)inn$

```
                    D′
            ┌───────┴───────┐
            D               dP
            │         ┌──────┴──────┐
          hinn_i     Spec           d′
                              ┌──────┴──────┐
                              d             NP
                              │       ┌──────┴──────┐
                              t_i    Spec           N
                                      │             │
                                    gamli         hestr
```

(Stroh-Wollin (2009:19), see also Faarlund (2004, 2009) and Lohndal (2007))
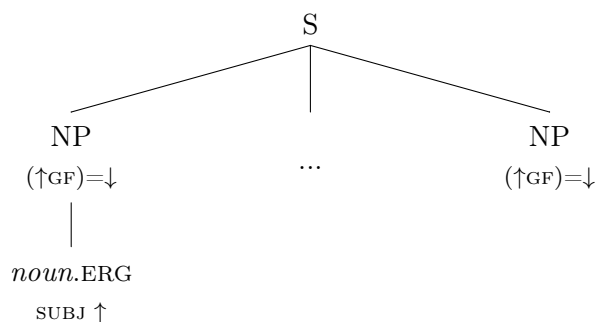
5 The analysis of $(h)inn$

- Rießler refers to elements whose role it is to 'to specify the syntactic relation between a head noun and an adjectival modifier' (2011:57)

- $(h)inn$ **licenses** the weak adjective as a modifier

- the licensing is **functional** rather than categorial, $(h)inn$ allows the weak A to function as an ADJ

6 Functional uncertainty and inside-out designators

- compare functional uncertainty in clauses in for instance Wambaya as in (10) (Nordlinger, 1998)

- case markers contribute inside-out designators which resolve uncertainty: SUBJ↑ in (10)

(10)
```
                              S
            ┌─────────────────┼─────────────────┐
           NP                ...                NP
        (↑GF)=↓                              (↑GF)=↓
           │
        noun.ERG
         SUBJ ↑
```

7 Functional uncertainty and ON adjectives

- A STR adjective is associated with an inside-out designator that creates an ADJ (cf *slægr* in (3)):

(11)

$slægr$ A $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$'cunning'
          $(\text{ADJ }\uparrow)$
          $(\uparrow\text{GEND})=$ m
          $(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$ sg
          $(\uparrow\text{CASE})=$ nom

- A WK adjective has no such designator (cf *unga* in (7)):

(12)

$unga$ A $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$'young'
          $(\uparrow\text{GEND})=$ f
          $(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$ sg
          $(\uparrow\text{CASE})=$ nom

- But $(h)inn$ does, and it also assigns [+DEF] to the noun phrase:

(13)

hin D $((\text{ADJ }\uparrow)\ \text{DEF})=+$
          $(\uparrow\text{GEND})=$ f
          $(\uparrow\text{NUM})=$ sg
          $(\uparrow\text{CASE})=$ nom

8   Noun phrase with strong adjective

(14)   (15)

AP f_1
|
A f_2
$(\uparrow=\downarrow)$
|
$slægr$
$(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$'cunning'
$(\text{ADJ }\uparrow)$

(16) $\left[\text{ADJ}\ \left[\text{PRED}\quad\text{'cunning'}\right]_{f_1\ f_2}\right]$

9   Noun phrase with weak adjective

(17)

AP f_1

D f_2 A f_3
$(\uparrow=\downarrow)$ $(\uparrow=\downarrow)$
| |
hin $unga$
$((\text{ADJ }\uparrow)\ \text{DEF})=+$ $(\uparrow\text{PRED})=$'young'

(18) $\left[\begin{array}{ll}\text{DEF} & + \\ \text{ADJ} & \left[\text{PRED}\quad\text{'young'}\right]\end{array}\right]_{f_1\ f_2\ f_3}$

4

10 Functional uncertainty and the AP

- if the lexical items create the grammatical function ADJ, this does not have to be introduced structurally

- we can then introduce functional uncertainty into the tree to get (20) instead of (19)

- in (20) we generalise over function — GF — and over category — XP

(19)

NOM
($\uparrow=\downarrow$)

N
($\uparrow=\downarrow$)

AP
($\uparrow$ADJ)$=\downarrow$

(20)

NOM
($\uparrow=\downarrow$)

N
($\uparrow=\downarrow$)

XP
($\uparrow$GF)$=\downarrow$
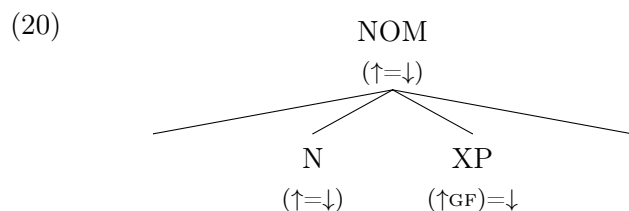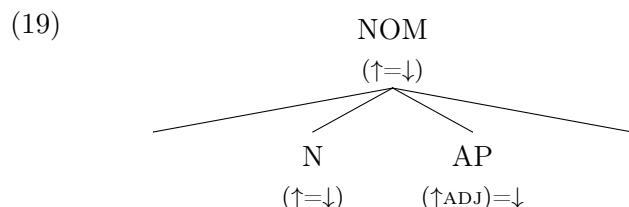
11 Functional uncertainty beyond the AP

- the annotation involving functional uncertainty in (20), permits any function within the NP

- hence we no longer need a separate node with ($\uparrow$POSS) as in (2)

- possessive pronouns and genitive noun phrases are associated with a designator that constructs the specific function

For instance *hans* in (21) and (22) gets the specification in (23):

(21) hans   sendiboðum   hinum hæstum
      3.SG.M.GEN messenger.PL HINN   high.SPL (Marta, 445)

(22) In   vinstri hönd hans
      HINN left   hand 3.SG.M.GEN (Homiliubok, 813)

(23) *hans*   Pron   ($\uparrow$PRED) = pro$_i$
                      ($\uparrow$CASE)=gen
                      (POSS $\uparrow$)

12 Hypothesised historical development

- (h)*inn* started out as a functional licenser of a weak adjective

- it is likely that the weak adjective was definite in origin (see for instance Stroh-Wollin (2009:5) and Ratkus (2010:249) for Gothic)

- over time, (h)*inn* came to be structurally associated with the noun phrase rather than the adjective phrase, and later it was replaced in this use by what is now *den* in the modern Mainland Scandinavian languages

- In Icelandic an adjective does not need a syntactic determiner, but in Mainland Scandinavian and Faroese it does, we argue this is structural persistence

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