

Spellout domains and focalization in Mainland Scandinavian DP

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This study of the morpho-syntactic variation in the Mainland Scandinavian DP is intended to show that spellout domains formed as a result of divergent historical phonological developments can lead to differences in the syntactic derivation of DP in closely related languages. The latter has consequences for the semantic interpretation of the DP.

Norwegian (N.) and Swedish (S.) share the so called ‘double definiteness’ pattern where a pre-adjectival determiner (det.) *den/det* co-occurs with a suffixed definite det.: *den gamle hund-en* (‘the old dog-def’, N.) and *den gamla hund-en* (‘the old dog-def’, S.). This pattern is absent in Danish (D.): **den gamle hund-en*. Another contrast is that if an adjective is present in the D. definite DP, *den/det* is always used. In N. and S. it is usually omitted with the so called ‘selectors’, as pointed out by Dahl (2004), such as *först* (‘first’), *vänster* (‘left’), *hel* (‘whole’), ordinal numerals and superlatives. It can be also absent with other classes of adjectives. Cf.: *i bruna hus-et* (‘in the brown house’, S.) and *i det stora hus-et* (‘in the big house’, S.). The *den/det* omission pattern is well represented in Stockholm Umeå Corpus and The Oslo Corpus.

Intuitively, *den/det* in N. and S. is present when the context contains relevant alternatives to the property denoted by the adjective. It is absent when either there are no relevant alternatives because the property is unique (‘selectors’) or if alternatives to the property are not relevant. The latter happens in the contexts where the reference of the noun is contextually restricted: in the context of deictic expressions such as demonstratives, in cases when both speakers know that there is just one entity having a property denoted by N, as well as in name-like uses (Dahl, 2004, 156-157). In D., where *den/det* always accompanies an adjective, the contrast between the presence/absence of relevant alternatives is not expressed morphologically.

Drawing on Heusinger (1997)’s adaptation of Rooth (1992) to focus in complex NPs, I treat N. and S. *den/det* as focus operator that introduces a contextually relevant set of alternatives to the property denoted by the adjective. It is a matter of world knowledge then to ‘fill in’ that set with the appropriate properties, such as ‘red’, ‘white’ and ‘rosé’ in the case of color of wine. The alternative semantic composition of a focused adjective with a non-focused nominal proceeds along the lines of (Heusinger, 1997, 4) by combining every alternative in the set with the property denoted by the noun. The operator heads an A(djectival)F(ocus)Phrase that occupies Spec NP and takes an AP as its complement.

DPs in N. and S. differ from their Danish counterparts also on the level of phonology. As showed in Lahiri et al. (2005) and Kristoffersen (2006) among others, in N. and S. monosyllabic nouns with suffixed det. do not exhibit Accent 2 pattern, generally expected for bisyllabic words, but preserve Accent 1. That is, suffixal det. are ‘invisible’ for the accentuation. However, words formed by a noun plus a plural morpheme have Accent 2: \backslash hund ‘dog’ = \backslash hunden ‘the dog’ vs. \uparrow hun \backslash dar ‘dogs’, Central Swedish, Riad (2000). On the other hand, in D. the suffixal det. patterns with the plural morpheme *-(e)r* in triggering a phonological change in the stem, the phonation type called *stød*.

Based on this contrast, I propose that N. and S. differ from D. with respect to the timing of the spellout of D^o and its complement. Assuming that accentuation operates at the spellout and that NP is embedded within NumP, as in Julien (2003), I propose that in N. and S. NumP moves to Spec DP in a post-spellout movement. If there is an AFP in Spec NP, it moves along to Spec DP.

In D., on the other hand, there is N-to-D head movement before spellout. I argue that historically this movement emerged due to the reanalysis of the suffixal determiner as being in the same spellout domain with the noun. The latter is tightly connected with the emergence of *stød* and with the replacement of the accentual system by *stød* outlined in Riad (2000). As suggested in Fischer-Jørgensen (1989), among others, *stød* might have emerged in the context of the weakening (1100-1300 A.D.) of the final unstressed vowels in D. The appearance of *stød* in monosyllabic stems might date from 1150 to 1510, according to Skautrup (1944). The vowel weakening in the determiner created the right context for *stød*. The fact that the determiner was triggering a phonological change in the stem was analyzed by the speakers as evidence

that N^o was spelled out together with D^o, and that, consequently, N^o moved D^o before the spellout. The new N-to-D analysis is incompatible with the AFP (as part of NumP) to Spec DP movement. The latter made the focus operator analysis impossible for *den/det*, and it received the status of a definite allomorph in D. This resulted in the loss of the ‘double definiteness’ in D. which had had this pattern up until the 16th century, as suggested by the data in Petersen (1829).

To conclude, I have proposed that as a consequence of phonologically triggered syntactic divergence, what looks like the same ‘pre-adjectival determiner’ originating from an Old Norse demonstrative, came to be an adjectival focus marker in N. and S. and an allomorph of the definite morpheme in D.

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