

NP MYTHS

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There are several myths pertaining to the internal structure of noun phrases that pass from one paper to another without critical evaluation:

- (i) **DP are arguments (and predicates are not DPs)**, NPs cannot be arguments
- (ii) Slavic languages (without articles) allow **Left-Branch Constraint violations**
- (iii) The lack of the definite article with proper names is due to **N-to-D movement**
- (iv) **DPs (NPs) are phases**

(i)-(iii) can be disproven by casual consideration of the data; (iv) is impossible to prove or to disprove because diagnostics for phases conflict.

1. TIM'S SLEIGHT-OF-HAND

Stowell 1989, 1991: **arguments are uniformly DPs, while predicates are NPs.**

1.1. Bare predicates 1: English singleton offices

Nouns denoting office permit definite article omission in the predicate position in English on the precondition that at each time there is **a unique occupant of the office** in question:

- (1) a. The people elected Nixon (^{??}the) president.
- b. His crony was appointed (?the) ambassador to the UN.
- c. Charles has become (the) Prince of Wales.

Problem: most predicative noun phrases must have a determiner:

- (2) a. *The constituents elected Dick Nixon congressman.
- b. *John is doctor.
- c. *I consider Bill good lawyer.

Hypothesis (Stowell 1991): most nouns **denote properties of kinds** (cf. Carlson 1977) and require an article to start denoting properties of individuals.

Contemporary support (McNally and Boleda 2004): relational adjectives denote properties of kinds: they are intersective and can be predicative (exx. from Levi 1978:254):

- (3) a. The process by which compounds are formed is transformational.
- b. Her infection turned out to be bacterial, not viral.

If a relational adjective denotes a property of a kind, so does the noun it combines with.

An article is needed to convert the property of a kind into a property of individuals.

Stipulation: since *president*-class nouns denote **singleton kinds**, they can be predicated over their single member without conversion (or their subject is type-raised).

1.2. Bare predicates 2: Indefinite article drop with “role” nouns

In German (and many other languages) profession-denoting nouns permit article omission in the predicate position:

- (4) Hans ist (ein) Zahnarzt.
Hans is (a) dentist
Hans is a dentist.

Positional: predicates and vocatives

- [-referential] singleton kinds: English *president* (Stowell 1989, 1991)
- [-referential] superlatives: Norwegian (Borthen 1998, 2000, 2003, see also Vikner 2001), but not in Romance predicate superlatives (where it is the definite article that distinguishes superlatives from comparatives)
- [-referential] proper names (Matushansky 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2008)
- vocatives (I don't know whether common nouns and proper names diverge here)
- coordinated bare singulars in some European languages (Heycock and Zamparelli 2003, Roodenburg 2004)

Lexical semantic:

- **kinds** (Germanic vs. Romance bare plurals and mass; adjectival nominalizations – Chierchia 1998, Zamparelli 2002b, 2002a, Dayal 2004, Farkas and Swart 2007)
- **proper names** (languages with preproprial definite articles)

Some singulars (Stvan 1998), including time adverbials (*next week*) and musical instruments (*to play (the) guitar* vs. *to play the piano*), can be bare (but see Carlson and Sussman 2005).

The list is not exhaustive.

The whole thing has an **OT flavor** to it: the definite article can disappear when uniqueness is inherent to the NP or locally determined and preferably in non-argument positions.

1.4.2. Full definites

If the definite article is indicative of the presence of a DP-layer, DPs can be predicates:

NB: Obviously, these definites have no existential presupposition.

- (8) a. *Anne's death made George (the) king of England.*
b. *I consider him the best tennis player in the history of England.*

Possessives and even quantifiers and demonstratives can also appear in the predicate position (see Partee 1986):

- (9) a. *The marriage made George **my father-in-law**.*
b. *The house has been **every color**.*
c. *My hair has never been/become/turned **this color** before.*
d. *This dress is **the wrong shape**.*
e. ***Which kind of doctor** are you?*

Claiming that the predicates in (9) are not DPs is nonsensical.

1.4.3. Full indefinites

English singular predicates usually appear with an article.

In languages with bare predicates some predicates are not bare, especially when modification is added:

- (10) a. *Julie était *(un) génie.* ok if *genius* is understood as an occupation or social function
Julie was a genius
Julie was a genius.
b. *Carmen est ??(un) médecin espagnol.*
Carmen is a doctor Spanish
Carmen is a Spanish doctor.

Even NPs containing cardinals can function as predicates (exx. from Stowell 1991):

- (11) a. *?I consider John and Bill two (of my) friends.*
b. *I consider John and Bill two of my closest friends.*

If indefinites are NPs, then NPs are not restricted to the predicate position.

1.4.4. Bare indefinites

Setting aside bare plural and mass nouns in episodic environments, strongly non-specific (“incorporated”) bare singulars (Schmitt and Munn 1999) can appear in argument positions.

And of course, in a lot of languages there are no indefinite articles.

1.5. Conclusion

Article drop tends to occur in non-argument positions and with non-referential NPs.

This, however, is a **tendency**; bare NPs can also appear in argument positions.

Definite and quantified DPs can appear in predicate positions.

There is no causal relation involved in the projection of the DP layer and argument status.

NB: Every move towards “the presence of a strong determiner does not mean the presence of a DP” amounts to a shift towards the semantic definition of syntax.

2. LEFT BRANCH CONDITION IN SLAVIC

Ross 1967: “No NP which is the leftmost constituent of a larger NP can be reordered out of this NP by a transformational rule”.

Standard reinterpretation: **Nothing can be extracted out of a Left Branch of an NP.**

Uriagereka 1988, Corver 1990, 1992: languages without articles allow violations of the Left Branch Condition (a necessary, but not sufficient condition):

- (12) a. Cuiam_i amat Cicero [t_i puellam]? Latin
whose loves Cicero girl
Whose girl does Cicero love?
- b. Kakuju_i ty kupil [t_i mašinu]? Russian
what you bought car
What car did you buy?

Explanations differ, but what is important is that putative Left Branch Condition violations may not involve movement out of the left branch at all:

- (13) Na sledujuščij ostan'tes' trolleybus! Pereltsvaig 2008
for next stay-IMP-PL trolleybus
Stay for the NEXT trolleybus!

The preposition is pied-piped with the linearly first constituent inside the DP.

The preposition need NOT be a phonological clitic, as proposed by Corver 1992 – pied-piping occurs with phonologically heavy prepositions as well (Bašić 2004, Pereltsvaig 2008) and a non-constituent may be fronted (Pereltsvaig 2008):

- (14) a. Protiv sovetskoj on vystupal vlasti. Pereltsvaig 2008
against Soviet he demonstrated regime
It is against the SOVIET regime that he demonstrated. or
It is AGAINST the Soviet regime that he demonstrated.
- b. Ja prosto probovala vot èti češskie s supinatorami pokupat' tufli.
I simply tried here those Czech with arch-supports to-buy shoes
I simply tried to buy those here Czech shoes with arch-supports.

Whatever the generalization is due to, this is not extraction out of the Left Branch.

This is relevant, for instance, for the discussion of the obligatory ellipsis in sub-comparatives (Kennedy and Merchant 2000, Kennedy 2000, 2002).

3. N-TO-D MOVEMENT IN ROMANCE AND GERMANIC

All purported instances of N-to-D in Romance and Germanic are questionable, but the most questionable one is **article omission with proper names**.

3.1. The grandeur that was Rome

Longobardi 1994, 1999 et seq.: Italian proper names may appear with the definite article. The variation may be stylistic, grammatical, or dialectal:

- (15) a. Petrarca è uno dei miei poeti preferiti.
Petrarch is one of my poets favorite
b. Il Petrarca è uno dei miei poeti preferiti.
the Petrarch is one of my poets favorite
Petrarch is one of my favorite poets.

Longobardi's proposal: The variation is due to the presence/absence of N⁰-to-D⁰ movement:



Longobardi presupposes that the prepropprial definite article is expletive, but this assumption is not essential for the syntactic side of his analysis.

Possessive adjectives are also claimed to show the effect of N-movement:

- (17) a. il mio Gianni
the my Gianni
my Gianni
b. Gianni mio
Gianni my
my Gianni
c. *mio Gianni
my Gianni
d. il Gianni mio
the Gianni my
MY Gianni (as opposed to others')
- (17')
DP
├── D⁰
│ └── il
└── NP
 ├── AP
 │ └── mio
 └── NP
 └── N⁰
 └── Gianni

(17a) is the underlying order, (17b) results from N-to-D movement. (17c) is ungrammatical since D⁰ must be filled, and (17d) has a contrastive interpretation, showing that the AP *mio* is post-nominal underlyingly (which makes it irrelevant to the paradigm).

The same effect can be observed with adjectives:

- (18) a. l'antica Roma
the+ancient Rome

- b. *antica Roma
ancient Rome
- c. Roma antica
Rome ancient
Ancient Rome

Longobardi explains the absence of this Italian pattern in English, etc., by proposing that in other languages the N-to-D movement happens after Spell-Out.

3.1.1. Against N-to-D movement in Italian

The list of adjectives showing the contrast above is extremely small (Longobardi 1994): possessives, ordinals, the adjectives *vecchio* 'old', *giovane* 'young', *antico* 'ancient', *scorso* 'last', *solo* 'only' and perhaps a few more.

When a proper name is modified, the article is generally obligatory, and further modification of proper names modified by adjectives like *antico* restores the definite article:

NB: In fact, Google comes up with quite a few hits for *la Roma antica* without further modifications as well.

- (19) a. *(la) Mary Poppins francese
the Mary Poppins French
the French Mary Poppins
- b. *(la) Roma antica di Cesare
the Rome ancient of Caesar
the Ancient Rome of Caesar

If (19b) does not involve N-to-D (the article is overt), then the identical word order in (18c) also doesn't.

Simpler explanation: these are simply complex proper names: *Ancient Rome*, *Big Ben*, *Pliny the Younger*...

Possessives might involve non-restrictive (perhaps, expressive) modification.

Names of days of the week, holidays and months are claimed to behave like proper names:

- (20) a. Lo scorso giovedì/ Natale/ maggio è stato un giorno/mese terribile.
the last Thursday/Christmas/ May is been a day/ month terrible
Last Thursday/Christmas/May was a terrible day/month.
- b. *Scorso giovedì/ Natale/ maggio è stato un giorno/mese terribile.
last Thursday/Christmas/ May is been a day/ month terrible
- c. Giovedì/ Natale/ maggio scorso è stato un giorno/mese terribile.
Thursday/Christmas/ May last is been a day/ month terrible
Last Thursday/Christmas/May was a terrible day/month.
- d. Il giovedì/ Natale/ maggio scorso è stato un giorno/mese terribile.
the Thursday/Christmas/ May last is been a day/ month terrible
Last Thursday/Christmas/May was a terrible day/month.

But the adjective *scorso* 'last' appears without an article in English as well, perhaps due to its superlative semantics:

- (21) a. (*the) last Thursday/Christmas/May/week/month/year
- b. the last Thursday/Christmas/May/week/month/year of the millennium

Ordinals with names of sovereigns also appear without a definite article, but they have such a strange syntax in English that it's hard to see what to make of it:

- (22) a. il terzo Napoleone
the third Napoleon
- b. *terzo Napoleone
third Napoleon
- c. Napoleone terzo
Napoleon third
- d. *il Napoleone terzo
the Napoleon third

NB: Note that the pattern is different from that holding with modified proper names in (17) and (18) or with days of the week, holidays and months in (20).

- (23) a. **King Richard** the Lion-Hearted NP before the article
b. **the** young Richard **the** Lion-Hearted article doubling
c. Jack the **Ripper** non-adjectival modifier

Note, however:

- (24) But Strabo tells us that the Arsinoe who 'founded' this place was Queen Arsinoe, wife of a **Ptolemy, possibly the second of this name.**

To summarize: the evidence is rather poor and the N-to-D analysis proposed does not explain a larger data pool.

3.1.2. What are proper names?

Proper names are not heads:

- (25) a. Miss Alice Plaisance Liddell complex proper name
b. Anna Arkadyevna Karenina – Annu Arkadyevnu Kareninu F.SG-NOM/ACC
c. Anna i Sergej Ivanovy coordination (Russian); surname is plural

Name-internal case-marking and the presence of a conjunction marker argue for their phrasal status.

3.2. Scandinavian

Delsing 1988, Taraldsen 1990, Giusti 1993, Longobardi 1994, among others: Scandinavian has N-to-D, blocked by prenominal adjectives and numerals, as well as by restrictive relative clauses:

- (26) a. hest-en
horse.DEF
the horse
- b. *den hest
DEF horse
- c. den *(røde) hest
DEF red horse
the red horse

If N-to-D is like V-to-T, why should an adjunct (an AP, a relative clause) interfere with head-movement?

NB: Julien 2002, 2003, 2005, Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005: prenominal adjectives in Scandinavian are APs

The facts are more complicated than they seem.

Nouns followed by (argument or adjunct) PPs appear with the **suffixal** definite article.

- (27) a. gris-en med blå pletter
pig-DEF with blue spots
the pig with blue spots
- b. *den gris med blå pletter
the pig with bluespots

In this case, linear order seems to play a role (though Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005 argue that PPs are attached above the DP level).

The choice of a particular head noun may rule out the definite suffix:

- (28) a. *studerend-en
 student-DEF
 Danish: Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005
- b. den studerende
 DEF student
 the student
- c. den fattige studerende
 DEF poor student
 the poor student

Proper names functioning as common nouns cannot occur with the postnominal article:

NB: This is part of a more general constraint: despite their definiteness, proper names appear without any overt definite articles. Restrictive modification yields the free-standing definite article.

- (29) Maria(*en) som har boet i København i mange år flyttede til Malmö i januar.
 Maria.DEF that has lived in Copenhagen for many years moved to Malmö in January
 Maria, who has lived in Copenhagen for many years, moved to Malmö in January.

In non-restrictively modified **plural proper names** the suffixal article reappears.

Finally, double definiteness is possible/required in some dialects:

- (30) a. *gamla mus-en
 old mouse-DEF
 Swedish: Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005
- b. **den** gamla mus-**en**
 DEF old mouse-DEF
 the old mouse
- c. *den gamla mus
 DEF old mouse

If this is N-to-D, it is not constrained as expected. The head-movement analysis is not ruled out but more work is needed.

3.3. Romanian

Romanian definite article is suffixal:

- (31) a. un om
 a man
- b. om-ul
 man-DEF
 the man

Dobrovie-Sorin 1987, Grosu 1988, Cornilescu 1992: Romanian has N-to-D.

Giusti 1993: the cliticization of the article is constrained by linear order:

- (32) a. bătrînul om
 old-DEF man
 the old man
- b. om-ul bătrîn
 man-DEF old
 the old man

Furthermore, the demonstrative behaves like an adjective:

- (33) a. acest om
 this man
 this man
- b. om-ul acesta
 man-DEF this-AGR
 this man
- c. om-ul acesta bătrîn
 man-DEF this-AGR old
 this old man
- d. *om-ul bătrîn acesta
 man-DEF old this-AGR
- e. *batrînul acesta om
 old-DEF this-AGR man

Giusti 1993: the inflected form of the demonstrative in (33b) is due to agreement with N.

The article is either absent altogether or (more likely, see Ortmann and Popescu 2001) its null allomorph is used. Since allomorphy is a head-internal process, Dem-to-D seems to be the answer – but then what happens in (33b, c)?

What precedes the article can be a maximal projection and in coordination it is distributed (Dimitrova-Vulchanova and Giusti 1998):

- (34) a. lingvist-ul foarte inteligent b. foarte inteligent-ul lingvist
 linguist-DEF very intelligent very intelligent-DEF linguist
 the very intelligent linguist *the very intelligent linguist*
- c. bun-ul si inteligent-ul lingvist
 good-DEF and intelligent-DEF linguist
 the good and intelligent linguist

Giusti 1993: two different effects: AP-to-[Spec, DP] and N-to-D

Ortmann and Popescu 2001: then why no simultaneous two movements? Also, the phonology of the adjective/noun triggers article allomorphy.

Observation: A similar effect arises for the so-called *Long Head-Movement* in Serbo-Croatian (see Rivero 1991, 1994, Ackema and Čamdžić 2003): the first position of the matrix can be occupied by either a maximal projection or by the participle:

NB: Irish also shows a similar effect: non-verbal predicates and verbs apparently compete for the same position (Carnie 1995).

- (35) a. Ivan je pojeo sve gljive. Ackema and Čamdžić 2003
 Ivan is eaten all mushrooms
 Ivan has eaten all the mushrooms.
- b. Sve gljive je pojeo.
 all mushrooms is eaten
 He has eaten all the mushrooms.
- c. Sve je gljive pojeo.
 all is mushrooms eaten
- d. Bio je pojeo sve gljive.
 been is eaten all mushrooms
 He had eaten all the mushrooms.

- e. Pojeo je bio sve gljive.
eaten is been all mushrooms

Serbo-Croatian facts are relevant also because the configuration there is not sufficiently local for head-movement.

Conclusion: without a full theory of the complementary distribution of head-movement and XP-movement, talking about head-movement in Romanian DPs is premature.

4. DPS ARE (NOT) PHASES

The taste of things to come (based on Matushansky 2005b): what are phases, anyway?

Natural-sounding hypothesis: there are limitations on the size of the tree/constituent that can be kept in the workspace/short-term memory, hence Multiple Spell-Out:

- (36) Phase (Chomsky 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005):
A phase is a unit of syntactic computation that can be sent to Spell-Out.

Are noun phrases phases?

4.1. Yes

If (36) is true, DPs must either be phases or contain phases. Since DPs can be iterated and thus arbitrarily long, at some point they must exhaust the memory resources available **if these resources are limited**:

NB: Since in many languages no preposition is involved, it is not a PP that is a phase.

- (37) a. my mother's sister's mother's sister's ... son
b. a friend of a friend of a friend...

NB: The same sort of argument can be applied to modification...

DPs can clearly be isolated in the same contexts and under the same conditions as vPs:

- (38) a. (Hillary was elected president) – President? $\langle e, t \rangle$
b. Hillary? $\langle e \rangle$
c. A woman? $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$

They can also be moved, showing the phonological independence associated with phases.

NB: Iteration and phonological independence do not distinguish different kinds of extended NPs.

Chomsky 2000: Phases must be θ -complete, i.e. have all their internal arguments saturated.

DPs can have different semantic types: e (specific indefinites or definites), $\langle e, t \rangle$ (definite or indefinite predicates) and $\langle \langle e, t \rangle, t \rangle$ (quantified NPs).

Specific (referential) NPs are islands (see Fiengo and Higginbotham 1981, Stowell 1989, Enç 1991, Diesing 1992, Mahajan 1992) and thus could be phases without an escape hatch. This hypothesis is unfalsifiable.

NB: Davies and Dubinsky 2003 show that the situation is more complex than described here, with argument structure playing a crucial role.

Putative escape-hatch on the DP-periphery attested in degree fronting (Bresnan 1973, Abney 1987, Bowers 1987, Bennis, Corver and den Dikken 1998, Matushansky 2002, Troseth 2009, among others):

- (39) a. How long an t_i article do you have to write?
b. What an t_i amazing movie!

BUT the presence of an escape-hatch does not entail phasehood and the phenomenon is really strange.

In English plural and mass NPs allow degree inversion only if the indefinite article is present:

- (40) a. **How clean** *glasses/*water/✓a glass did you see t_i ?
b. St. George fought **so dangerous** *dragons/*crime/✓a dragon.

In other languages such is not the case (Bennis, Corver and den Dikken 1998, Troseth 2009):

- (41) a. Wat **een** twee mooie vazen staan er op tafel! Bennis et al. 1998
what a two beautiful vases stand there on table
What beautiful two vases are on the table!
b. Han opdraetter lige så fine får somsin far. Troseth 2009
he raises just as fine sheep as REFL-POSS father
He raises sheep just as fine as his father.

Only degree movement gives rise to this effect and overt extraction of degree operators out of the DP is ungrammatical.

4.2. No

Impenetrability: DPs are crucially not impermeable to Case:

- (42) a. Liza nabrala vosem' očkov.
Lisa gathered eight-NOM points-GEN
Lisa got eight points.
b. Liza ne nabrala ?(i) vos'mi očkov.
Lisa NEG gathered and eight-GEN points-GEN
Lisa didn't get (even) eight points.

(42) illustrates Genitive-of-Negation: under phrasal negation non-specific internal arguments turn genitive.

The fact that the head noun can be case-marked from outside the DP shows that the DP is not “enough of a phase” to be impermeable to such assignment. But in (42b) an unquestionable phase boundary is introduced between the DP and its case assigner (phrasal negation): the vP (but see Harves 2002 for an alternative proposal, where vPs are weak phases in the presence of negation).

4.3. Summary

If DPs are phases, we need a better definition of phases (cf. Boeckx and Grohmann 2007).

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