

## The syntax internal to Germanic Determiners

Thomas Leu, New York University

**1. Background and claims:** Determiners are usually thought to be “words,” i.e. lexical items and hence opaque syntactic constituents. We claim that a wide range of “determiners” (at least in Germanic) are (A) syntactically complex, (B) derived in a similar fashion, and (C) involve adjectival and degree-like modification. We identify two derivational patterns that characterize two variants of these elements. The (complex) stem can combine with adjectival morphology (1a), or it can precede an indefinite article (1b). In either case, an element of the stem moves into the DP left periphery.

- (1) a. ADJECTIVAL PATTERN:  $Y \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP XP-(adj)-AGR]} \end{array} \right] \text{ NP}$
- b. DEG-MVT PATTERN:  $Y \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP XP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ Indef.Article } t_{\text{xAP}} \text{ NP}$

Languages and individual “determiners” may differ with regard to the choice of derivational variant allowed. The two patterns may sometimes interact with interpretive possibilities along the TOKEN versus TYPE and the INTERROGATIVE versus EXCLAMATIVE division (cf. Vangsnes 2006). In this paper we will concentrate on the morphosyntax.

**2. Two patterns for *was für*:** Building on the proposal in Leu (to appear) that *what for* is an adjectival phrase (AP), we show that there are two derivationally distinct variants of *what for*, corresponding to (1a) versus (1b). Both involve DP-internal wh-movement of *what*, but one involves a prior movement step of the extended AP (xAP) (2b), akin to English type degree fronting (*[how big] a t tree*).

- (2) a.  $\left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ was } \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ t}_{\text{was}} \text{ für -ig } \text{ -i } \text{ ] } \text{ bluämä } \text{ Swiss German}$   
 $\left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ hva } \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ t}_{\text{was}} \text{ for slags } \text{ ] } \text{ bil } \text{ Norwegian}$   
 $\text{ what } \text{ for -adj } \text{ -agr } \text{ N}$
- b.  $\left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ was } \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ t}_{\text{was}} \text{ für] } \text{ nä } \text{ t}_{\text{xAP}} \text{ bluämä } \text{ Swiss German}$   
 $\left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ hva } \left[ \begin{array}{c} \uparrow \\ \text{[xAP]} \end{array} \right] \text{ t}_{\text{was}} \text{ for] } \text{ en } \text{ t}_{\text{xAP}} \text{ bil } \text{ Norwegian}$   
 $\text{ what } \text{ for } \text{ a } \text{ N}$

In (2a) the *what for* phrase exhibits adjectival morphology. In (2b) the *what for* phrase has instead moved to the left of an indefinite article. In either case, *was* can subsequently leave the xAP, allowing for *was für* split. Evidence from Swiss German (3) and Dutch suggests that *was* typically leaves the xAP also in non-split examples, moving into the DP left periphery. The presence of two articles in (3) is parallel to *a such a NP*, which some variants of English allow (Wood 2002).

- (3) (%es) was für es velo wotsch? Swiss German  
 a what for a bicycle want.you

The presence of the leftmost article in (3) is strongly incompatible with splitting, suggesting that when *was* has to move, it will compete with (and overrule) merger of the article. Since typically there is no initial article with *what for*, we conclude that in most cases *what* extracts out of the xAP into the left periphery of the DP (obligatorily so in some languages).

**3. Two patterns for *welch-/solch-/manch-*:** The two derivational patterns (1a) and (1b) are also found with ‘*which*,’ ‘*such*,’ and ‘*many*.’ German allows both (4).

- (4) a.   welch-es alt-e       Buch / manch-es Buch / ein solch-es Buch  
           wich-AGR old-WEAK book / many-AGR book / a such-AGR book
- b.   welch ein alt-es       Buch / manch ein Buch / solch ein Buch  
       which a old-AGR book / many a book / such a book

Swiss German only allows the adjectival pattern (1a) (*wel-es, mäng-s*). Dutch *welk-/zulk-* also inflect like adjectives (Broekhuis et al. 2003), instantiating pattern (1a), whereas the West Flemish counterparts do not inflect but instead precede a (spurious) indefinite article (Haegeman 2007), hence exhibit pattern (1b). Vangsnes (2006) observes that Scandinavian has adjectivally inflecting *hvílikr* (Old Norse), pattern (1a), and (*h*)*vilk-en* (Modern Mainland Scandinavian) which is (*h*)*vilk* followed by what may be an indefinite article, pattern (1b).

**4. Two patterns for possessives:** The two patterns also distinguish Swiss German (pattern (1a)) versus German (pattern (1b)) possessive determiners.

- (5) a.   mi-s           altä           büäch                               Swiss German  
           my-AGR       old-WEAK   book
- b.   m- ein       alt-es       Buch                               German  
       1SG- a     old-AGR   book

The morphology of both the possessive determiners themselves and the following adjective is exactly parallel to the patterns with *welch-* in (4), suggesting that syntactically [m-] is parallel to [welch-] etc. The fact that plural *m-eine Bücher* ‘my books’ also features *ein* is related to the notion of ‘‘spurious article’’ (Bennis et al. 1998).

**5. Two patterns for negative *k-ein*:** If the proposal for *m-ein* is on the right track, it is bound to obtain also for *k-ein* ‘no.’ That means that *k-* undergoes degree fronting around *ein* (6a). Archaic German has (6b) (albeit with a not fully transparent meaning), whose morphological structure is very close to adjective *was für-ig*.

- (6) a.   k       ein   t<sub>k</sub>       Buch                               German  
           not   a        book
- b.   ein   nicht-ig-es   Geschäft  
       a     not-ADJ-AGR business

Such a proposal feeds into the proposal in Roehrs (2006) that *k-ein* is the spell-out of *nicht+ein*. Again, Swiss German allows a pre-article with *kä* ‘no,’ similar to (3).

**6. Summary and Consequences:** A great number of determiners in Germanic are syntactically derived. The derivation involves an AP and a modifier thereof with the syntax of a degree modifier. The xAP is sometimes subject to degree fronting and to extraction of a functional morpheme from it. The latter leaves the determiner as a non-constituent, hence supporting the stance on the notion of ‘‘word’’ taken in e.g. Julien (2002). Whether the derivation of a given determiner is subject to degree fronting seems to be parametrized, whereby parametrization is understood as located at the level of functional elements (microparameters). A second aspect of microparametric variation is the spuriousness of the article. While e.g. German does have a spurious article in *m-ein-*, and *k-ein-*, the article in *welch ein-* is not spurious, i.e. it does not overtly survive in plurals for instance. The discussion suggests that spuriousness of an article (i.e. its occurrence in certain unexpected environments) is a matter of (non-)pronunciation, i.e. in certain environments the article is usually silent. This constitutes a shift in expectations. It is not the presence of a (spurious) article that needs to be explained, but its absence.

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