

On the structure and development of nominal phrases in Norwegian

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Abstract

The suffixed definite article in Modern Norwegian developed from a clitic in Old Norse. Such a change creates interesting theoretical questions as to how we can account for this difference in phrase structural terms, and how such a change manifests itself. This paper discusses exactly this question and argues that this change can be viewed as grammaticalization “down the tree” from a high D head to a low *n* head. Furthermore, it argues that functional categories, like the definiteness category, are non-universal. That is, they are not part of Universal Grammar, but only arise when the child discovers them in the input. The paper also addresses some movement puzzles emerging in Old Norse and Modern Icelandic which have remained a theoretical puzzle. I will propose an analysis of this where I argue that we need to separate Modern Icelandic and Old Norse and thus give two separate analyses.

1. Introduction¹

There is an interesting difference between Old Norse and Modern Norwegian concerning the structure of the DP and the realization of definiteness.² In ON, the definite article was a clitic whereas in MN it is a suffix. The clitic in ON developed from a demonstrative, and the difference between ON and MN is illustrated in (1a)-(1d).³

- (1) a. *sá inn gamli hestr*
 that the old horse
 ‘the old horse’
- b. *hestrinn*
 horse.DEF
 ’the horse’
- c. *den gamle hesten*
 that old horse.DEF
 ‘the old horse’
- d. *hesten*
 horse.DEF
 ‘the horse’

We see that the definiteness marker *inn* in ON could either be attached to the noun like in (1b), or stand on its own like in (1a). The reason for the latter possibility is that the article originally developed from the demonstrative pronoun *hinn* ‘that’. In MN, the definiteness marker needs to be attached to the noun itself, cf. (1c) and (1d). In addition, a new phenomenon has developed in Norwegian and Swedish, that is, the use of double definiteness. ON did have instances of this use, but the phenomenon is much more pervasive in MN. Perhaps not surprisingly, Modern Icelandic (MI) does not have double definiteness either (Sigurðsson 1993, 2006:200, 205-206).⁴

The question we face is how to account for this change. It will be argued below that the definite article was a clitic in ON, which became grammaticalized into a suffix in MN.⁵ Since the same feature is expressed by different means in the two languages, there is reason to believe that this correspond to a difference in syntactic structure. Such a stand raises several questions, which

The main difference between ON and MN was presented above in (1a)-(1d), and the data are repeated here for expository convenience.

- (3) a. *sá inn gamli hestr*
that the old horse
 'the old horse'
- b. *hestrinn*
horse.DEF
 'the horse'
- c. *den gamle hesten*
that old horse.DEF
 'the old horse'
- d. *hesten*
horse.DEF
 'the horse'

Double definiteness was not very common in ON, although some examples exist. Note that they are from the latter part of the ON period (approximately 1270-1330). A couple of examples are provided in (4):

- (4) a. *ins versta hlutarins*
the worst part.DEF
 'of the worst part' (Faarlund 2004:58)
- b. *hinir beztu menninir*
the best men.DEF
 'the best men' (Faarlund 2004:58)

Lundeby (1965) is an extensive study of the development of double definiteness in Norwegian and related languages. Lundeby demonstrates its development through the texts and shows how it gains frequency. As is well known, Proto-Germanic and Proto-Nordic did not have any definite article, thus no double definiteness, so it must have developed during the ON period. Two other studies have also been concerned with the development of the definite article in Norwegian. Both Dyvik (1979) and Holm (2002) approach the issue from a semantic point of view. They elaborate on the foundation created by Lundeby (1965) but do also develop their own hypothesis. Since they are mostly concerned with how we got the article in the first place and what the semantic contribution amounts to, I will not discuss these studies any further at this point. The interested reader is referred to their work.

It has been argued convincingly that the definite article in ON was a clitic (Faarlund 2007, cf. also Faarlund 2004). The two most important reasons for this are that clitics may have free word counterparts, whereas affixes do not, and clitics may occur outside affixes. Both of these conditions are born out. See Faarlund (2007) for a discussion of other relevant criteria and for evidence that they confirm the clitic status. In order to get a better understanding of the structure of the DP in ON, let us look at some other different DPs in addition to those already mentioned above. (5) contains structures where the article is non-cliticized whereas (6) shows some typical uses of the cliticized article.

- (5) a. *it fyrra sumar*
the former summer
 'last summer/the summer before' (Faarlund 2004:56)
- b. *en þó var hann hit mesta afarmenni*
but still was he the greatest outstanding-man
 'But still he was a most outstanding man' (Faarlund 2004:56)

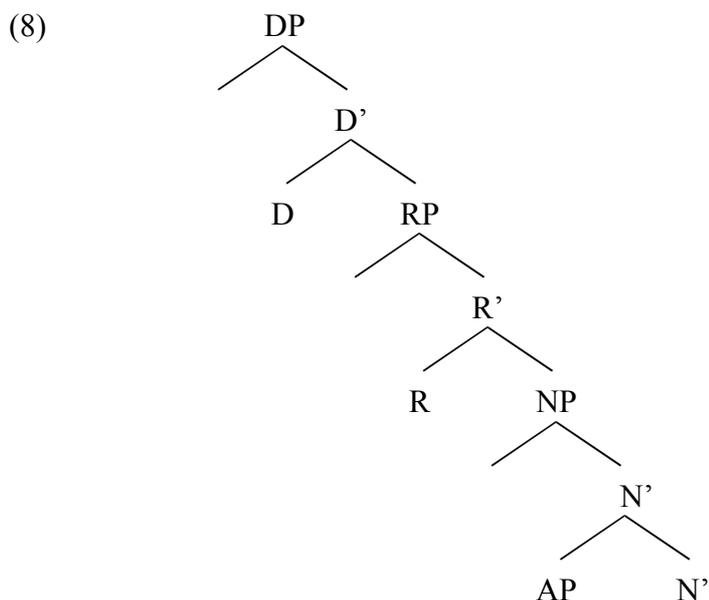
- c. þitt hitt milda andlit
your the mild face
 ‘your mild face’ (Faarlund 2004:60)
- (6) a. stýrimaðr fyrir skipinu
helmsman for ship.DEF
 ‘helmsman of the ship’ (Faarlund 2004:58)
- b. ok ekki þykkir fjáandanum jamillt
and nothing seems devil.DEF even-bad
 ‘and nothing seems equally bad to the devil’ (Faarlund 2004:58)
- c. þat er eigi at réttu mannsins óðal
that is not at right man.DEF legacy
 ‘That is surely not the purpose of mankind’ (Faarlund 2004:58)

There is nothing particularly special about these DPs. However, there are some structures that better illustrate some of the variation that we find:

- (7) a. hafit þat it djúpa
sea that the deep
 ‘the deep sea’ (Gordon 1957:312)
- b. fé þat allt
money that all
 ‘all that money’ (Faarlund 2004:84)
- c. ??sá hestrinn gamli
that horse.DEF old
 ‘that the old horse’

(7a) and (7b) show that the noun can move above the article and the demonstrative. The question is, however, whether a structure such as (7c) was allowed or not. It seems not to be mentioned in the literature (e.g., not in Faarlund 2004 or Nygaard 1906, the most comprehensive overviews we have of the data), which it most likely would be if it was encountered. Interestingly, (7c) does not exist in MI either (Kjartan Ottósson, p.c.), though the conditions which make it ungrammatical appears to be slightly different from the ones applying in ON. I will return to this in section 3, where I also discuss more closely whether it is likely to assume that (7c) is ungrammatical or not.

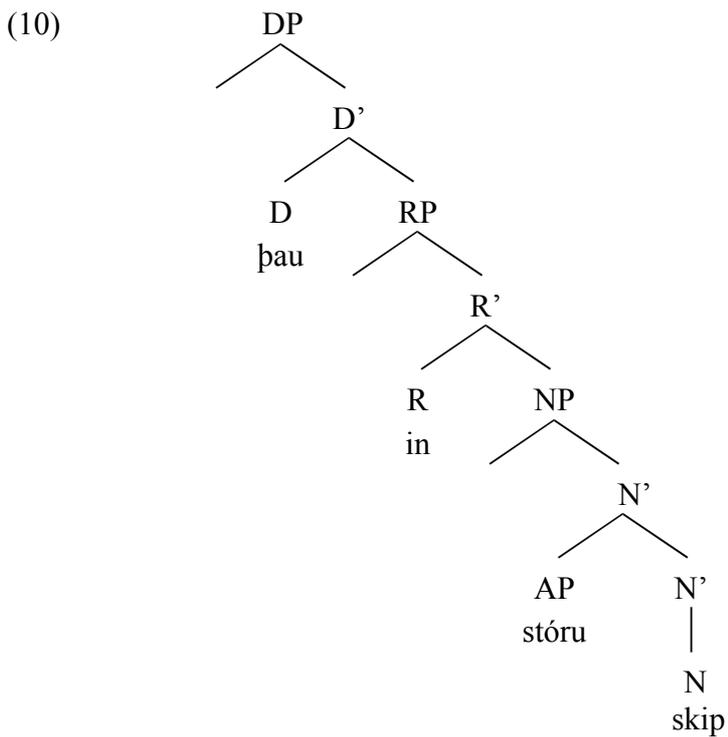
Faarlund (2004:83) proposes the following structure for the ON DP:



|
N

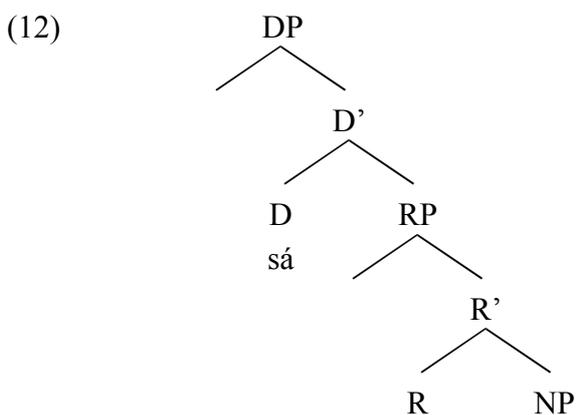
RP stands for a Referential Phrase, and as such resembles what Julien has decomposed into αP and nP (cf. below). Faarlund also suggests that the noun is attached to the article by way of movement from N to R (Faarlund 2004:57). Thus the sentence in (9) will get the structural representation in (10) (Faarlund 2004:82-83).

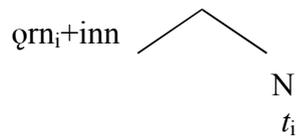
- (9) þau in stóru skip
those the big ships
 ‘those big ships’



For the cliticized article, he provides the structure in (12) for the sentence in (11) (Faarlund 2004:82-83):

- (11) sá ornninn
that eagle.DEF
 ‘that eagle’





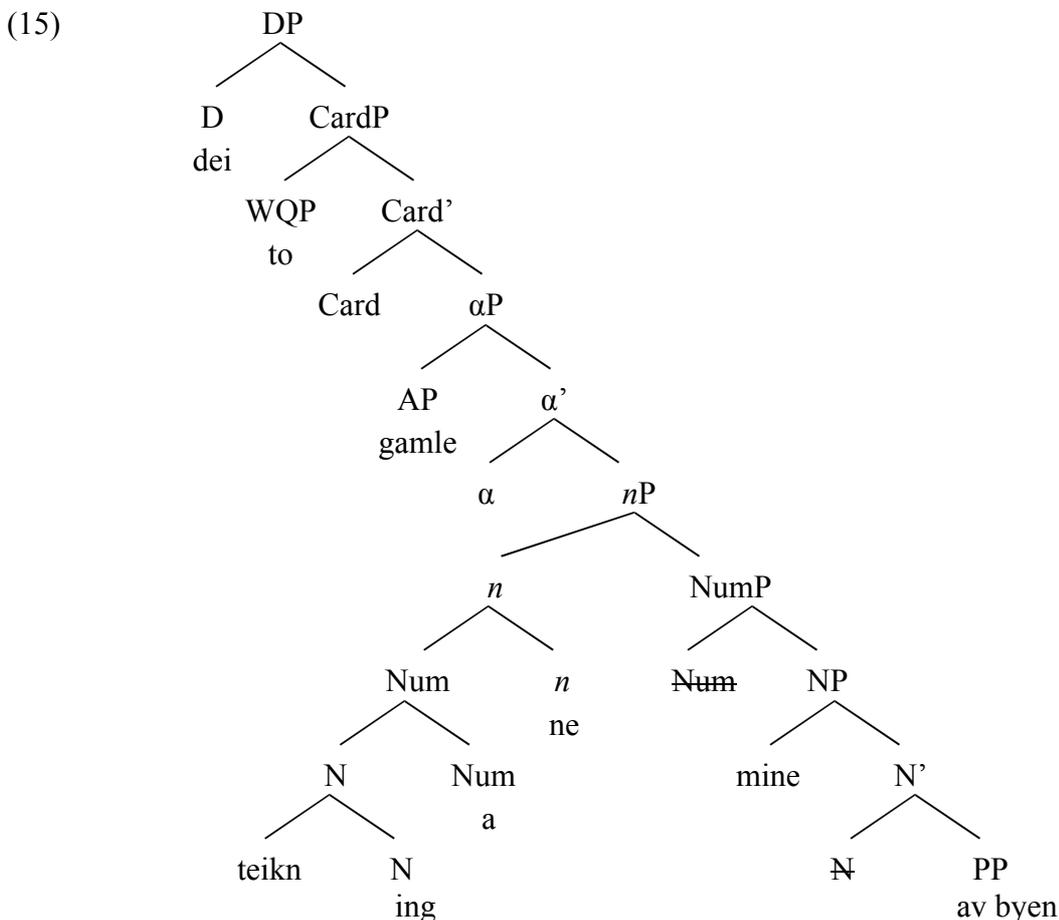
This structure evidently has its merits, as it seemingly accounts for the structure of the ON DP. Let us now look at the structure of the MN DP to see the differences.

Julien (2005) is a major investigation of Scandinavian nominal phrases from a contemporary perspective, building on important previous studies of Norwegian and Mainland Scandinavian (Taraldsen 1990, Delsing 1993, Kester 1993, Santelman 1993, Sandström & Holmberg 1994, Vangsnes 1999, Zamparelli 2000, Vangsnes, Holmberg & Delsing 2003, Svenonius 2006). Recently, Anderssen (2005) has also developed Julien's structure somewhat further and related it to the acquisition of Norwegian DPs. Julien (2005) proposes the following maximally expanded structure (Julien 2005:281):

- (13) [DP D [PossP POSS [CardP Card [α P α [n P n [NumP Num [NP N]]]]]]]]

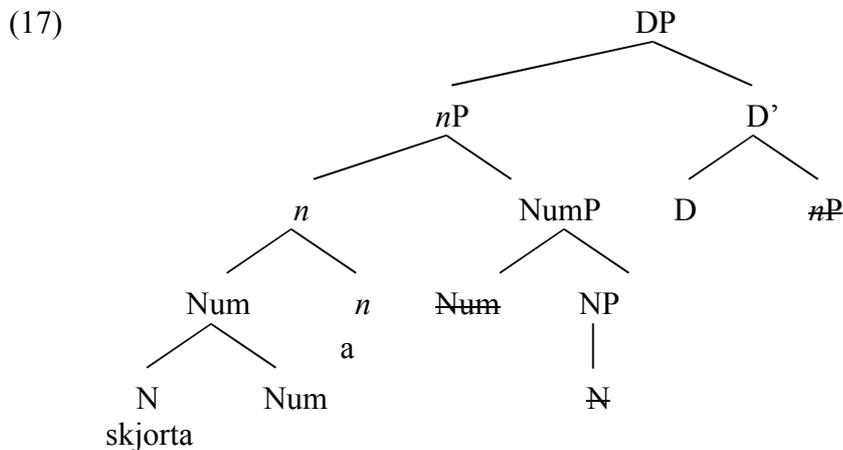
To make this more explicit, consider the structure in (15) for the Modern Norwegian DP in (14) (Julien 2005:11). Note that she adopts a very strong formulation of the nonlexical approach to morphology (cf. Baker 1988, Marantz 1997, Cinque 1999, Julien 2002), which appears to be supported by the findings in Anderssen (2005). I will assume this to be correct without further justification.

- (14) dei to gaml-e teikning-a-ne mine av by-en
*DEF.PL two-W old drawing-PL-DEF my.PL of town-DEF.MASC.SG*⁶
 'my two old drawings of the town'



Concerning double definiteness, Julien (2005:28) assumes that a Norwegian phrase like (16) has the structure in (17).

- (16) skjort-a
shirt-DEF.FEM.SG
 ‘the shirt’



In other words, *nP* moves to SpecDP, and she argues that *D* agrees with *n*. As Julien points out, this is in accordance with the Agree system of Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006) where Move can be part of Agree. She further takes NP, NumP, *nP* and DP to be present in every Scandinavian DP. Note that she also derives the impossibility of *nP* moving to SpecDP in cases where an AP intervenes, cf. (18).

- (18) *teikningane gamle
drawings.DEF old

An AP that is merged in Spec α P will agree with α , which in turn agrees with *n*. This means that when an AP is present, this AP will be a closer goal for *D*, and thus we derive the impossibility of *nP* moving above AP (Julien 2005:29). This could probably also have been derived along the lines of relativized minimality (Rizzi 1990, Starke 2001), though I will not pursue that alternative here.

Julien argues as mentioned that *nP* is present in every Scandinavian DP. This means that not every language can spell this head out overtly. Danish is one such instance, as it only has a pronominal article (adapted from Julien 2005:65):

- (19) a. et stort hus
a big house
 ‘a big house’
 b. det store hus(*-et)
*the big house (*DEF)*
 ‘the big house’

Interesting support in favor of her argument that *n* is present covertly, is the following sentence (Julien 2005:66):

- (20) Ved du ikke det, stor-e pige!
know you not that big-DEF girl
 ‘Don’t you know that you big girl!’

Here, the nominal phrase *store pige* ‘big girl’ is vocative and definitely definite as the adjective has weak inflection: “Consequently, there must be a definite *n* head in this phrase, although it is not spelled out” (Julien 2005:66). This is interesting also with respect to ON, as ON is similar to Danish in this respect (and so is MN with respect to this particular structure). In fact, we do find such phrases as (21a) and (21b) in ON:

(21) a. til þess helg-a húss
to that sacred-DEF house
 ‘to that sacred house’ (Faarlund 2004:68)

b. sam-a haust
same-DEF autumn
 ‘the same autumn’ (Faarlund 2004:68)

In (21a) there is a demonstrative, which we can interpret as making the NP definite. However, in (21b) there is no demonstrative, though it is common in ON to use the definite form with comparatives and superlatives. Although these examples do not mirror (20) exactly, they indicate that we have a definite interpretation that cannot be due to the presence of a definite article. Note, however, that the examples of this kind quoted in Faarlund (2004) are fairly old, thus from the latter part of the ON period (approximately 1200-1330, judging from the age of the manuscripts). I take this to mean that at this stage, *n* is probably present due to the development of double definiteness and the ongoing change of the definite article. Given the fact that we also find instances of double definiteness in ON, cf. (4), repeated here as (22), we can conclude that *n* develops already during the ON period.

(22) a. ins versta hlutarins
the worst part.DEF
 ‘of the worst part’ (Faarlund 2004:58)

b. hinir beztu menninir
the best men.DEF
 ‘the best men’ (Faarlund 2004:58)

However, since we know that double definiteness develops during this period of time (Lundeby 1965, Dyvik 1979, Holm 2002), and that we seldom find instances of double definiteness in the early writings, it is most likely to assume that *n* was not present in Proto-Nordic. I will return to a formalization of this change in section 4.

We have now seen accounts of the ON nominal phrase and the MN nominal phrase, in addition to some considerations of the Modern Scandinavian varieties. Obviously, the structures proposed for ON in (12) and for MN in (15) are very different when it comes to complexity. The structures are repeated here as (23) and (24).

(23) [DP D [RP R [NP N]]] ON

(24) [DP D [PossP POSS [CardP Card [_{αP} α [_{nP} *n* [NumP Num [NP N]]]]]]] MN

We have to bear in mind that Faarlund (2004) and Julien (2005) work within quite different assumptions. Whereas Julien adopts a very strong formulation of the mirror principle (Baker 1988), Faarlund does not assume any such principle. Thus it is not that easy to compare the structures in (23) and (24). Evidently, the lower part of Julien’s structure, from *nP* and downwards, is clearly a reflex of assuming the mirror principle.⁷ ON nouns inflect for number, as is illustrated in (25).⁸

(25) a. hest-r

- horse-SG.NOM
 b. hest-ar
 horse-PL.NOM

Thus the question is more pertinent for the phrases above *nP*. However, looking at the structures discussed in Faarlund's monograph, we do find clear indications favoring (24) instead of (23). The following postverbal nominal phrase contains a CardP, a α P, a NumP and a NP (and possibly a covert *nP*, cf. the discussion above).

- (27) ok því næst fann han einn gamlan munk.
and that next met he one old monk
 'And next he met some old monk.' (Faarlund 2004:74)

Here *einn* 'one' is the CardP and *gamlan* 'old' is the α P. In (27) we find a PossP:

- (27) var þeira dóttir Húngerðr.
was their daughter Hungerd
 'Their daughter was Hungerd.' (Faarlund 2004:60)

The structures in (26) and (27) then serve as evidence for the child growing its ON grammar, and the child will thus encounter the rich structure in (24) and not the structure in (23). One important difference between ON and MN to bear in mind is that ON has a clitic article in D (Faarlund 2007) instead of a suffix article in *n*. In section 4, I will propose an analysis of this difference between ON and MN. Before turning to that, let us examine some patterns of movement within the nominal phrases in ON and MI.

3. Movement in Old Norse and Modern Icelandic nominal phrases

Sigurðsson (1993, 2006) discusses the structure of the MI noun phrase. Interestingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, the noun phrases in MI exhibit some of the same properties as the ones on ON. However, it is possible to discuss the issues in far more depth concerning MI as it is a living language and one can rely on judgments by native speakers. Here I will try to deal with the movement issue that (7c) poses, repeated here for expository convenience as (28). My reason for doing so is that it can tell us something about the structure that Julien has proposed and its validity. As will be argued, her structure captures the differences between ON and MI.

- (28) ??sá hestrinn gamli
that horse.DEF old
 'that the old horse'

MI clearly disallows (28), and perhaps also ON, but apparently for different reasons. For ON, the reason is maybe that the presence of the demonstrative pronoun *sá* 'that' and the adjective *gamli* 'old' blocks movement, whereas for MI it is the adjective only that blocks movement. That would explain the grammaticality of the following two sentences in ON:

- (29) a. á Orminum langa
on Serpent.DEF long.DEF
 'on board "The Long Serpent"' (Faarlund 2004:71)
 b. í eilífri dýrð fǫður ok sonar ok *andans helga*
in eternal glory father and son and spirit.DEF holy.DEF
 'in the eternal glory of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit'

(Faarlund 2004:71)

However, as Faarlund (2004: 71) says, these are less common. The common pattern in ON is the following:

- (30) a. inn mesti vinr Erlings
the greatest friend Erling
'a very good friend of Erling's' (Faarlund 2004:70)
- b. Þjóðólfr inn fróði ór Hvini var skáld Haralds ins hárfagra
Thjodolf the learned.DEF of Hvin was poet Harald the hair-fine.DEF
'Thjodolf the learned of Hvin was Harald the Fine-haired's poet'
(Faarlund 2004:70)

We see that the common way of using the definite article is to let it stand alone in D (30a). When we have proper names, as in (30b), we often get movement. Faarlund says that "this is presumably movement to the specifier position of R, which prevents cliticization of the article" (Faarlund 2004:70). Hence an entire phrase may precede the article:

- (31) Hákonar jarls ins ríka
Hakon earl the mighty.DEF
'of Earl Hakon the mighty' (Faarlund 2004:70)

Let us now turn to the MI nominal phrase. One difference between ON and MI is that the definite article is a suffix and not a clitic (though see Sadock 1991:113-116 for a different view).⁹ In other words, we find the same situation as in MN. However, one can find a variant which resembles ON, though this variant has a more literary flavor (Sigurðsson 1993: 180). The general pattern in MI can thus be illustrated as follows (Sigurðsson 1993:179):

- (32) a. Hið fræga verk.
the famous work
- b. *Hið fræga verkið.
the famous work.DEF
- c. Fræga verkið.
famous work.DEF

(32a) is the one closest to ON, while (32c) is the common one today. As we see in (32b), MI does not have double definiteness.

When it comes to different movement patterns, MI is rather similar to ON. Consider the following structures:

- (33) a. ?Alla þrjár greiningarnar eru réttar.¹⁰
all three analyses.DEF are correct
'All three analyses are correct.' (Sigurðsson 2006:204)
- b. Allar [greiningar]nar þrjár [] eru réttar.
all analyses.DEF three are correct
'All three analyses are correct.' (Sigurðsson 2006:204)
- c. [Greiningar]nar þrjár [] eru réttar.
analyses.DEF three are correct
'The three analyses are correct.' (Sigurðsson 2006:204)
- d. Allir bílarnir þínir þrír [] eru rauðir.
all cars.DEF your three are red

‘All your three cars are red.’

(Sigurðsson 2006:214)

We see that it is unproblematic to move above the numeral in CardP (33b-33d). However, the following movement in (34b) is illicit (Halldór Sigurðsson, p.c.):

- (34) a. Allar gömlu greiningar þrjár [] eru réttar.
all old.DEF analyses.DEF three are correct
‘All three old analyses are correct.’
b. *Allar greiningar gömlu [] eru réttar.
all analyses.DEF old.DEF are correct
‘All old analyses are correct.’

(34b) shows that it is not possible to move above an adjective. We do find some instances where movement appears to be allowed, cf. (35a)-(35b), but it is mostly disallowed (35c) (Halldór Sigurðsson, p.c.). # indicates that the sentences are highly marked.

- (35) a. #stúlkan fagra.DEF
girl.DEF beautiful.DEF
‘the beautiful girl’
b. #dagurinn bjarti
day.DEF bright.DEF
‘the bright day’
c. *bókin nýja.DEF
book.DEF new.DEF
‘the new book’

Halldór Sigurðsson (p.c.) informs me that the instances in (35a)-(35b) are lexically or stylistically limited. First, they sound archaic and second they have a very limited use. This is probably also the case for ON. So a valid conclusion appears to be that it actually is the adjective that blocks movement in MI. The question is then how we can give an analysis of this phenomenon for both MI and ON.

We noticed above that in Julien’s (2005) structure the AP block movement of *nP* as AP is a closer goal than *nP*. This appears to give the right predictions for MI, but the wrong ones for ON when it comes to proper names and movement of phrases which do not undergo cliticization.¹¹ The relevant examples are repeated here for expository convenience in (36). Adjectives are put in boldface.

- (36) a. Hákonar jarls ins **rika**
Hakon earl the mighty.DEF
‘of Earl Hakon the mighty’ (Faarlund 2004:70)
b. Þjóðólfr inn **fróði** ór Hvini var skáld Haralds ins **hárfagra**
Thjodolf the learned.DEF of Hvin was poet Harald the hair-fine.DEF
‘Thjodolf the learned of Hvini was Harald the Fine-haired’s poet’
(Faarlund 2004:70)

The problem is how one should explain these cases if the adjective count as an intervener for this apparently restricted class of nouns. Note, however, that all cases like these involve a definite adjective. Sadly, this generalization does not give us anything, as a proper name may precede an indefinite adjective as well:

- (37) Hákon herðibreiðr.
Hakon broad.shouldered

‘Hakon the broad-shouldered.’

(Faarlund 2004:71)

To make things even more complicated, even common names can precede the independent article (cf. also (29a)):

- (38) engi maðr mátti nefna hann annan veg, en jarl inn illa.
no man could mention him other way than earl the evil.DEF
‘Nobody was allowed to refer to him in any other way than as “the evil earl”.’
(Faarlund 2004:70)

What should be clear from these examples is that it is unfeasible to give a unified account of the possible movements in both MI and ON DPs. In MI, adjectives appear to block movement in most cases, whereas in ON this blocking seems to be conditioned by the presence or non-presence of a demonstrative together with an adjective.¹² The adjective itself does not count as an intervener in ON (36), and cliticization is also not prohibited when just a demonstrative is present (39) (repeated from (11)).

- (39) sá qrninn
that eagle.DEF
‘that eagle’

Thus it seems rather unlikely that the structure *sá hestrinn gamli* ‘that the old horse’ (25) is ungrammatical, since it is merely a combination of the two alternatives. Due to the lack of native speaker judgments, this is however impossible to confirm. Despite the fact that neither Faarlund (2004) nor Nygaard (1906) have listed this as a possible structure, I think the above data show that we have every reason to assume the structure to be grammatical. If that is the case, then the adjective (α P) does not count as the closest goal in ON, but it does in MI. An important point to bear in mind here is that I have suggested that the *n* is not present in ON (see also next section). Julien (2005:12) assumes that every functional element introduced into the structure will agree with the elements that are already there (cf. Sigurðsson 2004a). Since there is no *n*, there is no definiteness feature for α to agree with. Hence there is no such feature that makes α (P) a closer goal than Num(P), and thus Num(P) can move to D(P). From this we can conclude that the α P is predicted not to be an intervener in ON, and as such derive the grammaticality of the examples above. Notice that it also derives the MI cases: Since *n* is present in MI, movement crossing an adjective is predicted to be impossible.

Thus Julien’s structure appears to be rich enough to capture the essentials of the ON, MN, and MI nominal phrase, and thus suit as a tool for accounting for definite article’s change from a clitic to a suffix. I turn to that in the next section.

4. An account of the change

We have seen examples of how the structure of nominal phrases was both in ON and MN. At the end of the previous section, it was shown that we should assume a quite rich structure for ON, too. It has also been established that the definite article changed from a clitic in ON to a definite suffix in MN. One question that we have not answered is how exactly we should represent this change in phrase structural terms. In this section I shall provide an answer to that question, which also touches upon larger issues having to do with how we understand the role of functional categories within Universal Grammar.

In the introduction, we briefly mentioned the two opposing views within generative grammar concerning the universality of functional projections. Let us elaborate somewhat on these. The main proponent of the view which says that all functional projections are present in all

languages, is Cinque (1999) (see also Sigurðsson 2004b, Borer 2005). He argues that there is a universal structure within the functional domain (see section 1). Cinque points to a relevant point concerning the opposite view, the view that functional projections exist only in the presence of overt morphological material:

Since, in this case, (most) adverbs would not be systematically related to a functional head, UG would have to countenance two distinct conditions (one ruling over the hierarchy of heads, the other over the hierarchy of AdvPs), basically yielding (duplicating) the same information on the relative scope of what are essentially identical functional notions (Cinque 1999:107).

He also points to the problem of acquisition, and says that the child will have less left to acquire on his hypothesis than on the opposite view. This view has been supported by much research into language acquisition, e.g., Poeppel & Wexler (1993), Harris & Wexler (1996), Guasti (1993/1994), Hoekstra & Hyams (1998), Hyams (1996), Schütze (1997), Wexler (1998), Borer & Rohrbacher (2003). One especially debated issue is the one concerning root infinitives (also known as optional infinitives); those cases where the child omits inflecting the verb (see Radford 1990 for English and Wexler 1994 for other languages). I will, however, not have the opportunity to review the debate here.

Thráinsson (1996, 2003) has argued in favor of the other main position, and suggested what he calls “The Real Minimalist Principle”, stated in (40) (Thráinsson 1996:261).

(40) Assume only those functional categories that you have evidence for

Theoretically this principle has been defended by various people, e.g., Fukui (1986, 1995, 2005), Bobaljik & Thráinsson (1998), Thráinsson (1996, 2003), van Gelderen (1993), Vangsnes (1999), Fukui & Sakai (2003). It has also been argued on the basis of acquisition studies (Lebeaux 1988, Radford 1990, 1996, 2000). A possible conjecture as to how this happens is provided by Thráinsson (1996:260):

The Functional Projection Alibi

Let F be a functional head and Φ the set of ϕ -features (and/or other features) which F contains. Now assume that the different values for the ϕ -features in Φ are systematically represented in overt morphology in language L in clauses of type A but never in clauses of type B. Assume further that there is evidence for overt syntactic movement to F and/or to Spec-FP in language L in clauses of type A but no such evidence can be found in clauses of type B. Then we may hypothesize that F is absent in clauses of type B in language L although it is present in clauses of type A.

His main goal is to account for the variation we find regarding verb movement between the Mainland Scandinavian languages and the insular languages like MI and Faroese. Vangsnes (1999) takes a somewhat similar approach as Thráinsson (1996, 2003) does. He argues in favor of a principle of identification, which he defines as follows:

A functional category must be identified by having a constituent containing one or more relevant morphological features either in its specifier or head position. The constituent must be merged within the extended projection of which the functional category is a part (Vangsnes 1999:4, 47).

Vangsnes assumes that “all functional categories are headed by abstract heads” (p. 47), and that the fixed order within a noun phrase is semantically ordered. This ordering may very well be universal, and thus both the inventory of functional categories and their relative ordering is fixed (Vangsnes

1999:47). This latter argument shows that it is possible to assume that functional categories have a universal ordering, but that they must be identified in each single language.

A third alternative might be to say that the Initial State involves some functional structure, but as Anderssen (2005:168-169) points out, “the task of determining which projections should be considered universal is complicated”. Such a stand seems to be doomed to fail as it appears to be impossible to determine what the core functional categories would be and what the more peripheral categories would be.

On purely conceptual grounds it seems quite unlikely that we have more or less hundred functional projections between the verb projection and the complementizer, and that we only use some of them.¹³ If true, that means that we need to attribute very much to things we know rather little about or at least have a hard time confirming. It is not implausible at any rate that we come pre-equipped with some structure, e.g., a clausal spine including the main projections (whatever they turn out to be), but it is hardly likely that we have all structure present. The principle (48) takes the opposite stand: we only have evidence for what we discover. However, it would be nice if the data itself could have anything to say about this. Anderssen (2005:149) says that “the possibility that there is no functional structure present cannot be excluded based on child language data”. That seems to be correct given for instance the large debate and disagreement concerning root/optional infinitives. Still, perhaps some data from the languages themselves can tell us something. In addition, theoretical points of views should also be considered. In the following, I will consider one example of each using the material above. Hopefully this can also shed some light on the nature of the change we have discussed.

Above we discussed evidence in favor of a complex nominal phrase in ON. One example that we discuss was the one where a structure has definite meaning but indefinite syntax. The two relevant examples are repeated here as (41).

- (41) a. Ved du ikke det, stor-e pige!
know you not that big-DEF girl
‘Don’t you know that you big girl!’ (Julien 2005:66)
- b. af fyrr-a konungi
of former-DEF king
‘of the former king’ (Faarlund 2004:68)

We took these structures to indicate the presence of *nP*. This was further supported by the fact that ON also developed double definiteness. When this change happened, the child must somehow get a cue as to where in the phrase structure this second marker of definiteness should appear. If we take a universal structure of the Cinque kind to be the correct answer, then the solution appears to be simple: If the structure of the DP has a universal structure, a second marker of definiteness has its natural place, namely low in the structure. However, this argument is probably too weak. First, languages vary with respect to the ordering within the DP layer (Cinque 2005), so there is not any reason for expecting there to exist a universal ordering. Second, there is no a priori reason why syntax itself is not sufficient, that is, why syntax itself does not suffice as a trigger. In fact, given the variation found, we are lead to expect that syntax needs to play some role in order to determine the final landing place in cases of movement. So far both approaches seem to be compatible with the data. Let us therefore turn to a more important theoretical argument.

In an interesting paper, Abels & Neeleman (2006) argue that assuming universal base structures gives us a non-restrictive theory of movement. The latter is of course a bad result for minimalism and its inclination towards restrictiveness. Abels & Neeleman discuss Cinque’s (2005) paper in particular and put forward another suggestion as to how we can maintain the insights of Greenberg’s Universal 20 without lowering the standards for a theoretically restrictive theory. They argue in favor of several base structures and against the view that there only exists one single base from where every movement departs. Given that they are correct, this makes a strong case for the view that we only assume what is present. If there is some kind of universal structure, this probably

needs a universal ordering too (Cinque 1999, 2005; see also Vangsnes 1999). Where this universal ordering comes from, remains less clear.

I think this theoretical argument lends support to Thráinsson's argument, i.e., that phrase structure develops according to presence (either semantically or overtly) in the input. Thus my answer to the development of *n* during the ON period is that the *n* emerged in the phrase structure. Why it occurred at its specific place must have been determined by the syntactic input, by itself there is not any reason why definiteness should be so low in the structure, and in particular why it resides between α P and NumP. This change can be accounted for by assuming grammaticalization "down" the tree, as the article goes from D to *n*, that is, from being a clitic to being an inflectional affix (as in the traditional literature, represented by the grammaticalization cline as presented in e.g., Hopper and Traugott 2003:7; see also Faarlund 2007). It has been argued convincingly by van Gelderen (2004a, 2004b) that grammaticalization, as the result of economy principles (see also Roberts & Roussou 2003), overwhelmingly goes "up" the tree.¹⁴ An example of this is the preposition *for* in Old English developing into a complementizer in Middle English; compare (42a) and (42b) (van Gelderen 2004b:30):

- (42) a. þæt he for eaxlum gestod.
 that he before shoulders stepped
 'that he stood in front of...'
 b. Locrin ₇ Camber to þon scipen comen. for to habben al þa æhte.
 Locrin and Chamber to the ships came for to have all the goods
 'Locrin and Chamber came to the ships to take all the goods.'

However, the development of definiteness suggests very clearly that the article grammaticalized downwards, going from a clitic to an inflectional affix. If the present analysis is on the right track, it would be an interesting example entailing that grammaticalization can proceed both upwards and downwards. Van Gelderen's (2004b) account is guided by what she dubs "The Late Merge principle", which says "Merge as late as possible" (van Gelderen 2004b:28). Note, however, that this instance of upward grammaticalization does not go against her principle. Recall that this change happened during a time at which double definiteness developed, and as such a need to express definiteness twice within the nominal phrase developed. When a definite pre-nominal article occurs, this blocks the movement of the post-nominal article, hence it is impossible for the latter to move further up the tree. Thus no conflict arises, and the post-nominal article has merged as late as possible.

To conclude, we have seen that the empirical data does not in itself provide any clues as to whether the functional structure is universal or not (as mentioned by Anderssen 2005 too). I have, however, argued that on theoretical grounds we ought to prefer the developmental story. This is also in line with current minimalist tenets, where theoretical machinery is sought to be kept at a minimum.

5. Conclusion

In this article I have argued that double definiteness developed during ON as an instance of "downward" grammaticalization of the definite article. This entails the presence of a low definiteness head, and I have argued that this head developed alongside double definiteness. I have also discussed some movement puzzles in ON and MI, arguing that the two languages require different analyses. The MI cases appear to be straightforward handled as an instance of α P blocking *n*P, whereas I suggested that this blocking does not occur in ON.

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Notes

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² The following abbreviations are used in the text: DEF = definiteness; FEM = feminine gender; MASC = masculine gender; MI = Modern Icelandic; MN = Modern Norwegian; NOM = nominative; ON = Old Norse; PL = plural; SG = singular.

³ The Modern Norwegian examples in this paper are given in Nynorsk, which is one of the two written standards of the language. In the cases at hand, the choice of written standard makes no difference to the argumentation.

⁴ I say surprising, because there is a very intimate relationship between ON and MI. ON is usually used as a cover term for both Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic, which shows us that originally MN and MI were one common language. I have chosen the neutral term to avoid entering a discussion regarding the choice of term, as the latter also is very much a political choice (see e.g. Faarlund 1990:10-11, Haugan 2000:4-8). The important point to bear in mind is this close relationship between ON and MI.

⁵ In this paper I will only focus on what happens internal to the DP. Leiss (2000) argues that the article/determiner develops in the rhematic position as soon as aspect disappeared. Unfortunately, a careful study on the relationship between Leiss's proposal and the one developed here will have to remain for future research.

⁶ This sentence is glossed according to the glosses in Julien. w = weak inflection. I assume the other glosses to be self evident. In general, I will not detail the glosses to such a degree that Julien does, but simplify them according to the purposes of this paper. This also applies to all the data taken from Faarlund (2004), where glosses are simplified as much as possible in order to focus on the issue at hand.

⁷ Julien argues that *n* is a phase head (Julien 2005:4, 73), but since the N moves to this head it is within the phase edge and can as such move on to D (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

⁸ Due to the fact that the ON morphology is heavily flexional, we face problems when it comes to segmentation. I will not address these questions here, but see the debate between Enger (1993, 1997) and Papazian (1995).

⁹ One argument in favor of this is that the definite article in MI must appear suffixed to the noun (Sadock 1991:113):

- (i) a. hesturinn
horse.DEF
'the horse'
- b. *hinn hestur

¹⁰ (Sigurðsson 2006:204) comments in a footnote that "this word order is degraded for me, but is accepted by some speakers (see Vangsnes 2004)".

¹¹ There is an exception when it comes to proper names in Icelandic. They preferably undergo movement; cf. (ia)-(ib). This is probably due to some feature which makes it a more attractive goal and hence the probe looks beyond AP. However, that proposal is rather tentative, and deserves to be worked out more completely.

- (i) a. [_{DP} Anna litla] fékk dúkku.
Anna little got doll
'Little Anna got a doll.' (Julien 2005:19)
- b. ?[_{DP} Litla Anna] fékk dúkku.
little Anna got doll
'Little Anna got a doll.' (Julien 2005:19)

¹² Since we have cliticization and not suffixation, we have head movement in ON. Thus an AP does not count as an intervener since it is a phrase and not a head. Thus this appears to favor a relativized minimality account of the data.

¹³ As Newmeyer (1998:364) puts it, "there is no logical necessity for the set of parameters of variation to be innate; one can imagine the possibility of a theory in every respect like recent principles-and-parameters models, but in which the parameters are arrived at inductively by the child".

¹⁴ There has been a huge amount of literature on grammaticalization recently, and, obviously, grammaticalization from a functional and a formal point of view is two different things. I will not discuss the concept of grammaticalization more closely here, but in addition to the cited work in the main text, see Lohndal (2006) and in particular Faarlund (in press) for a compelling argument that grammaticalization is not an independent process, but should be studied from the point of view of the child growing its language.