Agreement with predicative adjectives, with non-finite verbs and with predicate nominals

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Contents

Abstract

Among the Germanic and Romance languages, the languages that lack predicative adjective agreement without lacking attributive adjective agreement are all SOV-languages (including Yiddish). I propose to link this to the OV/VO-difference by suggesting that languages with head-final VPs (i.e. OV-languages) also have head-final Adjective Phrases (AdjPs).

I will start out by noting how unexpected it is that a language with so much agreement morphology as German completely lacks predicative adjective agreement, (1a) when predicative adjective agreement is found in languages with very little agreement morphology, like Danish or French, (1b,c). My analysis resolves this paradox, setting the lack of predicative adjective agreement in the OV-languages apart from other kinds of lack of (or loss of) agreement, by attributing it to a particular structural cause, head-finality in the AdjP.

```
(1)    a. Ge.  Die Häuser  sind grün__
       b. Da.  Husene      er   grønne
       c. Fr.  Les maisons sont vertes
               The houses  are  green
```

I will then draw some parallels from adjectival agreement to verbal and nominal agreement.

Distinguishing between finite and non-finite verb agreement, I assume finite verb agreement to take place not in the VP but in IP, and therefore I will focus on non-finite verb agreement, examining to which extent it is parallel to predicative adjective agreement.

Agreement with nominals is a completely different story, and I will argue that the only agreement found here is agreement with a predicative DP. This is very different from the agreement types described above, in that it is agreement between phrases, not inside a phrase, and therefore it is not surprising that predicative nominal agreement is very different from predicative adjective agreement in that the former is also found in the Germanic SOV-languages, (2a), whereas the latter is not, (1a).

```
(2)    a. Ge.  Die Häuser  sind dänische Ferienhäuser
       b. Da.  Husene      er   danske sommerhuse
       c. Fr.  Les maisons sont des maisons de campagne danoises
               The houses  are  Danish holiday cottages
```

The adjectival part of this talk is based on Vikner (2001a,b), but with a somewhat different analysis.

1. Introduction

German would seem to have much more morphology than e.g. French or Danish. However, there is one area where German agreement morphology could not possibly be simpler, and where German is much easier for non-native speakers than e.g. French or even Danish: predicative adjectives. Both gender and number distinctions, (3a-b), disappear when adjectives are used predicatively, (3c-f):

```
(3)  Ge. a.  ein      grüner           Bus    /  zwei grüne          Busse
             a.M.NOM green.M.SG.NOM bus       two  green.PL.NOM buses
         b.  ein      grünes           Haus   /  zwei grüne          Häuser
             a.N.NOM green.N.SG.NOM house      two  green.PL.NOM houses

         c.  Ein      Bus    ist   grün_, (die anderen sind gelb )
             One.M.NOM bus    is    green, (the others   are  yellow)
         d.  Zwei      Busse sind  grün_, (die anderen sind gelb )
             Two       buses are    green, (the others   are  yellow)

         e.  Ein       Haus   ist  grün_, (die anderen sind gelb)
             One.N.NOM house   is    green, (the others are yellow)
         f.  Zwei      Häuser sind grün_, (die anderen sind gelb)
             Two       houses are    green, (the others are yellow)
```

Compare this to the situation in French (and all other Romance languages), where the inflectional differences found in the attributive construction are also found in the predicative construction:

```
(4)  Fr. a.  un  autobus vert_        /  deux autobus verts
             a.M bus      green.M.SG     two  buses   green.M.PL
         b.  une maison verte         /  deux maisons vertes
             a.F house  green.F.SG       two  houses  green.F.PL

         c.  Un     autobus est  vert_,      (tous les autres sont jaunes)
             One.M bus      is   green.M.SG, (all  the others are  yellow)
         d.  Deux   autobus sont verts       (tous les autres sont jaunes)
             Two    buses   are  green.M.PL, (all  the others are  yellow)

         e.  Une    maison  est  verte,      (toutes les autres sont jaunes)
             One.F house    is   green.F.SG, (all   the others are  yellow)
         f.  Deux   maisons sont vertes,     (toutes les autres sont jaunes)
             Two    houses  are  green.F.PL, (all   the others are  yellow)
```

In the following sections, the situation in the other Germanic languages will be examined.

2. Scandinavian

Danish (and also Norwegian and Swedish) are like French, exactly the same inflectional differences are found in the attributive construction and in the predicative construction :

```
(5)  Da. a.  en      grøn_        bus  /  to   grønne  busser
             a.M/F green.M/F.SG bus      two  green.PL buses
         b.  et   grønt      hus  /  to   grønne  huse
             a.N green.N.SG house      two  green.PL houses

         c.  En      bus    er  grøn_,     (de  andre  er  gule)
             One.M/F bus    is  green.M/F.SG, (the others are yellow)
         d.  To      busser er  grønne,    (de  andre  er  gule)
             Two     buses  are green.PL,   (the others are yellow)

         e.  Et      hus    er  grønt,     (de  andre  er  gule)
             One.N   house  is  green.N.SG, (the others are yellow)
         f.  To      huse   er  grønne,    (de  andre  er  gule)
             Two     houses are green.PL   (the others are yellow)
```

(These inflectional endings are only found in indefinite DPs. In definite DPs, attributive adjectives display no number or gender differences, cf. the form *grønne* in (31) below).

The situation is no simpler in those Scandinavian languages which have retained a rich inflectional system, Faroese and Icelandic:

```
(6)  Fa. a.  ein grønur        bussur  /  tveir grønir         bussar
             a.M green.M.NOM.SG bus        two.M green.M.NOM.PL buses
         b.  eitt grønt         hús   /  tvey grøn_          hús
             a.N  green.N.NOM.SG house     two.N green.N.NOM.PL houses

         c.  Ein   bussur er  grønur
             One.M bus    is  green.M.NOM.SG
         d.  Tveir bussar eru grønir
             Two.M buses  are green.M.NOM.PL

         e.  Eitt  hús    er  grønt
             One.N house  is  green.N.NOM.SG
         f.  Tvey  hús    eru grøn_
             Two.N houses are green.N.NOM.PL

(7)  Ic. a.      grænn            strætisvagn / tveir grænir           strætisvagnar
             (a) green.M.NOM.SG bus            two.M green.M.NOM.PL buses
         b.      grænt            hús        / tvö  græn_            hús
             (a) green.N.NOM.SG house          two.N green.N.NOM.PL houses

         c.  Einn  strætisvagn    er  grænn
             One.M bus            is  green.M.NOM.SG
         d.  Tveir strætisvagnar eru grænir
             Two.M buses         are green.M.NOM.PL

         e.  Eitt  hús            er  grænt
             One.N house         is  green.N.NOM.SG
         f.  Tvö   hús            eru græn_
             Two.N houses        are green.N.NOM.PL
```

Agreement is thus found in predicative adjective constructions in all the Romance and all the Scandinavian languages, irrespective of whether these have a rich inflectional system (like Icelandic, Faroese, or French) or a relatively poor one (like Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish).

3. West Germanic

Is German unique in not having agreement in predicative adjective constructions? No.

Two situations have to be kept apart: Languages which trivially lack predicative adjective inflection, because they do not have any adjectival inflection at all, and languages which only lack adjectival inflection in predicative adjective constructions, but have adjectival inflection in attributive constructions.

Two Germanic languages lack adjectival inflection completely, English and Afrikaans:

```
(8)   En. a.  a green_ bus    /  two green_ buses
          b.  a green_ house  /  two green_ houses

          c.  One bus    is  green_
          d.  Two buses  are green_

          e.  One house  is  green_
          f.  Two houses are green_

(9)   Af. a.  'n groen_ bus    /  twee groen_ busse
              a  green  bus       two  green  buses
          b.  'n groen_ huis   /  twee groen_ huise
              a  green  house     two  green  houses

          c.  Een bus    is  groen_
              One bus    is  green
          d.  Twee busse is  groen_
              Two  buses are green

          e.  Een huis   is  groen_
              One house  is  green
          f.  Twee huise is  groen_
              Two  houses are green
```

The other West Germanic languages all lack adjectival inflection ONLY in predicative adjective constructions, and NOT in attributive adjective constructions. We have already seen the German data in (3) above, and the following examples show that the situation is completely parallel in Dutch, West Flemish, Frisian, Swabian, three types of Swiss German (from Sankt Gallen, Zürich, Bern), and finally Yiddish:

```
(10)  Du. a.  een groene    bus    /  twee groene   bussen
              a   green.M/F bus        two  green.PL buses
          b.  een groen_    huis   /  twee groene   huizen
              a   green.N.SG house     two  green.PL houses

          c.  Een bus    is   groen_
              One bus    is   green
          d.  Twee bussen zijn groen_
              Two  buses  are  green

          e.  Een huis   is   groen_
              One house  is   green
          f.  Twee huizen zijn groen_
              Two  houses are  green
```

(11) WF. a. nen   groen<u>en</u>   bus   / twee groen<u>e</u>   bussen
        a.M/F green.M/F bus   two green.PL buses
     b. een   groen_   us   / twee groen<u>e</u>   uzen
        a.N   green.N.SG house   two green.PL houses

     c. T'   is   eenen bus   groen_
        There is   one   bus   green
     d. T   zyn twee   bussen groen_
        There are two   buses   green

     e. T'   is   een   us   groen_
        There is   one   house   green
     f. T   zyn twee   uzen   groen_
        There are two   houses green

(12) Fs. a. in grien<u>e</u>   bus   / twa grien<u>e</u>   bussen
        a   green.M/F bus   two green.PL buses
     b. in grien_   hûs   / twa grien<u>e</u>   huzen
        a   green.N.SG house   two green.PL houses

     c. Ien bus   is   grien_
        One bus   is   green
     d. Twa bussen binne grien_
        Two buses are   green

     e. Ien hûs   is   grien_
        One house is   green
     f. Twa huzen binne grien_
        Two houses are   green

(13) St. a. an   grin<u>r</u>   Bus   / zwoi grin<u>e</u>   Bus
        a.M.NOM green.M.SG.NOM bus   two green.PL.NOM buses
     b. a   grin<u>s</u>   Haus   / zwoi grin<u>e</u>   Heisr
        a.N.NOM green.N.SG.NOM house   two green.PL.NOM houses

     c. Oin   Bus   isch grin_
        One.M.NOM bus   is   green
     d. Zwoi   Bus   sen   grin_
        Two   buses are   green

     e. Oi   Haus isch grin_
        One.N.NOM house is   green
     f. Zwoi   Heisr sen   grin_
        Two   houses are   green

(14) SG. a. än   grüen<u>e</u>   Bus   / zwei grüen<u>i</u>   Büs
        a.M.NOM green.M.SG.NOM bus   two green.PL.NOM buses
     b. äs   grüe<u>s</u>   Huus   / zwei grüen<u>i</u>   Hüser
        a.N.NOM green.N.SG.NOM house   two green.PL.NOM houses

     c. Ain   Bus   isch grüe_
        One.M.NOM bus   is   green
     d. Zwei   Büs   sind grüe_
        Two   buses are   green

     e. Ais   Huus isch grüe_
        One.N.NOM house is   green
     f. Zwei   Hüser sind grüe_
        Two   houses are   green

(15) Zü. a. en   grüen<u>e</u>   Bus   / zwäi grüen<u>i</u>   Büs
         a.M.NOM green.M.SG.NOM bus   *two green.PL.NOM buses*
      b. es   grüen<u>s</u>   Huus   / zwäi grüen<u>i</u>   Hüüser
         a.N.NOM green.N.SG.NOM house   *two green.PL.NOM houses*

      c. Äin   Bus   isch grüen_
         One.M.NOM bus   is   green
      d. Zwäi   Büs   sind grüen_
         Two   buses are green

      e. Äis   Huus   isch grüen_
         One.N.NOM house is   green
      f. Zwäi   Hüüser sind grüen_
         Two   houses are green

(16) Be. a. ei   grüen<u>e</u>   Böss   / zwe   grüen<u>i</u>   Bösse
         a.M.NOM green.M.SG.NOM bus   *two.M.NOM green.PL.NOM buses*
      b. eis   grüen<u>s</u>   Huus   / zwöi   grüen<u>i</u>   Hüser
         a.N.NOM green.N.SG.NOM house   *two.N.NOM green.PL.NOM houses*

      c. Ei   Böss   isch grüen_
         One.M.NOM bus   is   green
      d. Zwe   Bösse si   grüen_
         Two.M.NOM buses are green

      e. Eis   Huus   isch grüen_
         One.N.NOM house is   green
      f. Zwöi   Hüser si   grüen_
         Two.N.NOM houses are green

(17) Yi. a. a grin<u>er</u>   oytobus / tsvey grin<u>e</u>   oytobusn
         a green.M.SG.NOM bus   *two   green.PL buses*
      b. a grin_   hoyz   / tsvey grin<u>e</u>   hayzer
         a green.N.SG   house   *two   green.PL houses*

      c. Eyn   oytobus iz   grin_
         One   bus   is   green
      d. Tsvey oytobusn zaynen grin_
         Two   buses   are   green

      e. Eyn   hoyz   iz   grin_
         One   house   is   green
      f. Tsvey hayzer   zaynen grin_
         Two   houses   are   green

At least for Afrikaans and Yiddish, the possibilities given in (9) and (17) above do not give the complete picture. In the plural, Afrikaans and Yiddish predicative adjectives might seem to also be possible with agreement:

```
(18)   a. Af.  Twee  busse     is      groenes
       b. Yi.  Tsvey oytobusn  zaynen  grine
               Two   buses     are     green.PL
```

However, I shall follow the analysis suggested for Yiddish by e.g. Weinreich (1971:308), Katz (1987:87), and Lockwood (1995:112) in taking the agreeing form in (18) to be a nominalisation. Lockwood (1995:112): "Exceptionally frequently, [Yiddish] adjectives (including participles) in predicative position are nominalisations". In other words, (18) would correspond to English "two buses are green ones" (see Olsen 1988:345 and Delsing 1993:86 on nominalised attributive adjectives). This analysis is based on the fact that the possibilities for inflected predicative adjectives in the singular are:

```
(19)   Af. a. *Een bus     is      groene
           b.  Een bus     is   a  groene
               One bus     is  (a) green.SG

(20)   Yi. a. *Eyn oytobus iz      griner
           b.  Eyn oytobus iz   a  griner
               One bus     is  (a) green.M.SG.NOM
```

which makes it clear that the Afrikaans and the Yiddish for "one bus is green" must use an uninflected adjective, cf. (9c) and (17c), and that the only way to have an inflected adjective in a predicative construction is to use the expression corresponding to "one bus is a green one", namely (19b) and (20b).

The "exceptionally high frequency" of nominalisations in Yiddish cited above might be connected with the existence of a parallel structure, the so-called long-form adjectives in the Slavic languages (see Matushansky 2008:44-48 and references there for arguments in favour of analysing these as attributive adjectives followed by a zero noun). According to Weinrich (1958:383), cited in Eggers (1998:314), there is a difference in interpretation between nominalisations (with an inflected adjective) and a normal uninflected predicative adjective, and a similar difference is found between short and long forms of predicative adjectives in Russian: *ikh bin a kranker*, `I am an ill (one)' means that the speaker is chronically ill, whereas *ikh bin krank*, `I am ill' means that the speaker is only temporarily ill. This does not carry over to all other constructions, though, it is not the case that the colour of the bus is less temporary in (20b) than in (17c). Also in the Russian counterparts of these two examples, there would be no such difference.

A further remark on Afrikaans is also in order, concerning attributive adjectives in Afrikaans.

Like predicative adjectives, attributive adjectives show no agreement in Afrikaans. Some polysyllabic attributive adjectives (Lass 1990:88-95, Donaldson 1993:163, Ponelis 1993:366), and also a few monosyllabic ones, e.g. *vred* `cruel', or *vreemd* `foreign' or `strange', have an affix (*-e*), which is diachronically derived from an agreement ending (Lass 1990:88-90, Ponelis 1993:364), but shows no distinctions of number, gender, or case:

```
(21)  Af.  a.   'n reusagtige bus    /  twee reusagtige busse
              a  huge.ATT  bus          two  huge.ATT  buses
           b.   'n reusagtige huis   /  twee reusagtige huise
              a  huge.ATT  house        two  huge.ATT  houses

           c.   Een  bus   is  reusagtig_
              One  bus   is  huge
           d.   Twee busse  is  reusagtig_
              Two  buses  are huge

           e.   Een  huis  is  reusagtig_
              One  house  is  huge
           f.   Twee huise  is  reusagtig_
              Two  houses are huge
```

Furthermore, in some cases this ending is only possible in a figurative, (22a), and not in a literal reading, (22d) (Theresa Biberauer, p.c.):

```
(22)  Af.  a.  'n swaare slag       c. *'n swaare sak
           b. *'n swaar_ slag       d.  'n swaar_ sak
               a  heavy blow           a  heavy bag
```

The analysis to be suggested below will only be able to account for this in so far as it will account for why earlier stages of Afrikaans (like modern Dutch, modern German, …) had agreement on attributive adjectives and not on predicative ones. In other words, whereas it will not explain why some attributive adjectives in Afrikaans have kept a residue of agreement morphology (i.e. they might as well all have lost the endings completely, as in English), the analysis does predict that if such a residue should be found anywhere in the Afrikaans adjective system, it would be in the attributive forms, not in the predicative ones.

Summing up, the overall picture is as follows: Of all the Romance and Germanic languages, only the West Germanic ones lack predicative adjective agreement. English and Afrikaans lack both attributive and predicative adjective agreement, the other West Germanic languages lack only predicative adjective agreement.

(23) ┌─── Attributive adjective agreement
      │   ┌─── Predicative adjective agreement
      ↓   ↓

      a. + +   Romance, Scandinavian

      b. + −   Dutch, German, Frisian, Yiddish (& their dialects)

      c. − +   -----   (no languages)

      d. − −   Afrikaans, English

Vikner, p. 9

4. Explaining the differences

The observations made in the preceding sections are not completely new. They have also been made, at least partially, in e.g. Haugen (1982:173), Abraham (1995:245), and Kester (1996:89, 92), although these works merely note the difference and do not try to relate them to other differences between the languages in question.

The goal of an account of the adjective agreement facts should be to explain why the West Germanic languages lack predicative adjective agreement, why the Scandinavian and the Romance languages have it, and why it is not the other way around. This is only possible if the adjective agreement facts are related to other properties of the languages in question.

In the following, I would like to suggest an analysis which relates the facts discussed to other properties of the languages in question. So far we have seen that the two groups could be described as

(24) 1. Predicative adjective agreement: Romance, Scandinavian
      2. No predicative adjective agreement: West Germanic

but unless this is related to other differences, it remains as descriptive as the treatments cited above. I shall suggest that the crucial property is whether verb phrases and adjective phrases are head-initial or head-final, making a slightly different division between the languages:

(25) 1. Head-initial VPs and AdjPs (VO):   English, Romance, Scandinavian
      2. Head-final VPs and AdjPs (OV):   All West Germanic languages except English

It is not always possible simply to take the surface word order as an indication of head-finality (or the opposite). Cases where surface word order seem to conflict with the above classification include the assumption that Yiddish has a head-final VP. As in Vikner (2001b, 2003), I shall follow e.g. Hall (1979), Geilfuß (1991) and Haider & Rosengren (1998:78-81, 2003:253-255), against e.g. Santorini (1993), Diesing (1997), in assuming Yiddish to be an OV-language.

Now English belongs to group (25.1) where it before belonged to group (24.2). This regrouping of English has no empirical consequences, however, as it merely says that English **could** have predicative adjective agreement, not that it **has to** have it. To be more precise, given the predictions spelled out in (30) below, the prediction for a VO-language is that it either has agreement with both attributive and predicative adjectives (e.g. Danish) or with neither (English). The prediction for an OV-language is that it either has agreement only with attributive adjectives (e.g. German) or with neither (Afrikaans).

5.   The subject originates inside the predicative AdjP

According to Delsing (1993:84), "normally, linguists assume, implicitly or explicitly, that predicative adjectival agreement is an instance of Spec-Head agreement where the XP subject is base generated as the specifier of AP and raised to SpecIP, to get Case". This analysis is also found in, among others, Couquaux (1981), Stowell (1981:262), Burzio (1986:154), Vikner & Sprouse (1988:19), and to some extent even in Bach (1967:467).

Chomsky (1995) also belongs in this group, as he gives the following analysis of predicative adjectives (1995:(184), 354, 356):

```
(26)   En.   John is [AdjP t1 [Adj' t2 intelligent]]
```

The subject *John* is base-generated in the position marked t_2, i.e. in the "inner specifier" of the AdjP whose head is the Adj° *intelligent*. It then moves to the position marked t_1, i.e. (the "outer") AdjP-spec, where adjectival agreement is "checked". Finally it moves out of the AdjP into the subject position of the clause.

I shall follow this to the extent that I assume

> a) that the subject of a predicative adjective construction has to be linked (presumably by movement) to an empty category inside AdjP (which represents an empty argument slot in the argument structure of the adjective), and

> b) that this link includes AdjP-spec.

Whether the empty category inside AdjP is the specifier or the complement presumably depends on the adjective in question, cf. e.g. Cinque (1990).

This also means that the copula in a predicative adjective construction does not assign any thematic role to its subject. This assumption is supported by the fact that in the syntax of English, the copula *be* falls into the same group as auxiliary *be*, *have*, and *do* (they do not assign any thematic roles, they may occur to the left of sentential adverbs, and they do not require *do*-insertion in negated sentences) and not into the same group as all other main verbs, including main verb *have* and *do* (they assign thematic roles, they occur only to the right of sentential adverbs, and they require *do*-insertion in negated sentences).
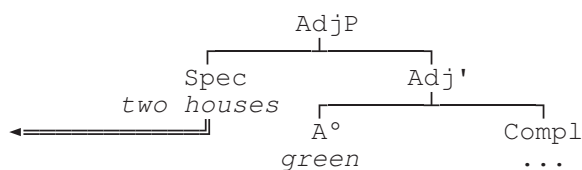
6.   Predicative adjective agreement is spec-head agreement inside AdjP

Regardless of whether the subject DP is linked to the empty specifier of AdjP or to the empty complement of Adj°, I will assume the link to take the form of a chain that includes AdjP-spec. I will further follow Chomsky (1995:353-354) in assuming that the result of AdjP-spec being part of the chain is predicative adjective agreement (even though below I shall limit this to head-initial AdjPs, i.e. to AdjPs in the VO-languages). If AdjP-spec would not be part of such a chain, there would be no adjective agreement.

I thus assume that in languages with a head-initial AdjP, the subject DP of a predicative adjective construction is base-generated either in AdjP-spec, (27a) or inside the complement of Adj°, (27b,c), or. It does not matter for the purposes of this analysis whether a given DP is base-generated in one or the other of these two positions, as long as any DP that is moved out of the AdjP (by means of A-movement) has to move via AdjP-spec, i.e. as long as (27c) is ruled out.

This is trivially the case for DPs base-generated in AdjP-spec, and I will also assume that it holds for DPs base-generated inside the complement of Adj°. If the movement in question is taken to be A-movement, this would follow from e.g. Relativised Minimality (Rizzi 1990:93), which basically says that any particular type of movement may not skip any specifiers of the same type (this can be reformulated in terms of e.g. the Minimal Link Condition, Chomsky 1995:294). As both IP-spec and AdjP-spec are potential argument positions, i.e. A-positions, any movement to IP-spec which skips AdjP-spec violates Relativised Minimality, cf. the impossible (27c), in which an attempt is made to skip the specifier:
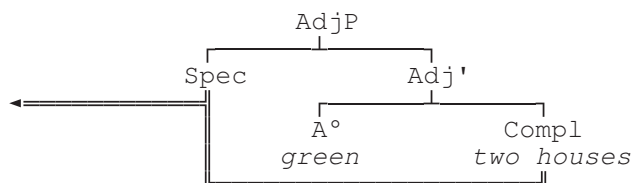
```
(27)   a.                        AdjP                    The result is
                          ┌───────┴───────┐              adjective agreement
                        Spec             Adj'
                      two houses    ┌──────┴──────┐       (AdjP-spec is part of the chain)
               ◄────────────────┘   A°          Compl
                                   green          ...


       b.                        AdjP                    The result is
                          ┌───────┴───────┐              adjective agreement
                        Spec             Adj'
                     ┌──►              ┌───┴───┐          (AdjP-spec is part of the chain)
               ◄─────┘            A°          Compl
                                 green      two houses


       c. *                      AdjP                    The result would have been
                          ┌───────┴───────┐              no adjective agreement
                        Spec             Adj'
                      ■               ┌───┴───┐           (AdjP-spec is not part of the chain)
                      ■            A°          Compl
                      ■           green      two houses
               ◄──────■──────────────┘
                      ■
```
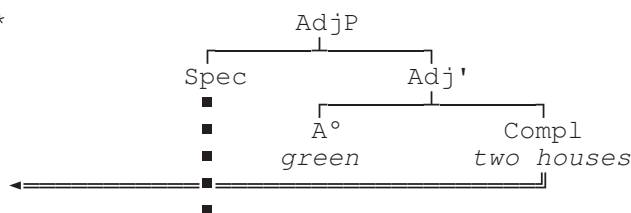
7. Spec-head agreement is a property of head-initial phrases

As in Vikner (2001b), I will adopt (parts of) the analysis of head-final VPs in Haider &
Rosengren (1998:48-51, 2003:207-211). The basic idea there is that languages vary with respect
to the licensing direction of verbs (and by extension adjectives), and that therefore VP-spec
(and AdjP-spec) is exceptional in VO-languages (where it is on the "wrong" side of the verb,
since the verb in VO-languages licenses to the right), whereas VP-spec/AdjP-spec is not
exceptional in OV-langauges (where it is on the "normal" side of the verb, since the verb in
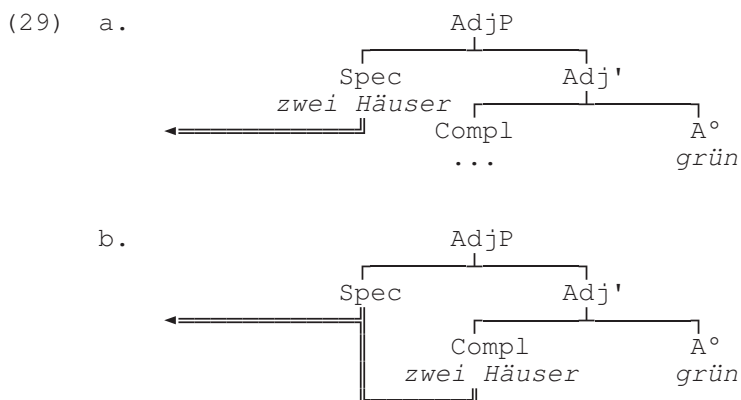OV-languages licenses to the left).

In earlier versions of this work (Vikner 2001a,b), I also followed Haider & Rosengren's
idea (e.g. 2003:208) that in OV-languages arguments of the verb may be base-generated
adjoined to VP. Applying this to AdjP meant that arguments could be moved out of AdjP (into
the subject position of a clause with a predicative adjective) without moving through AdjP-spec,
as AdjP-spec would not intervene in the chain (it would not c-command any part of it):

```
(28)                         AdjP
                    ┌──────────┴──────────┐
        zwei Häuser                      AdjP
    ◄────────────┘            ┌───────────┴───────────┐
                            Spec                      Adj'
                            ...              ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                                          Compl                    A°
                                           ...                    grün
```
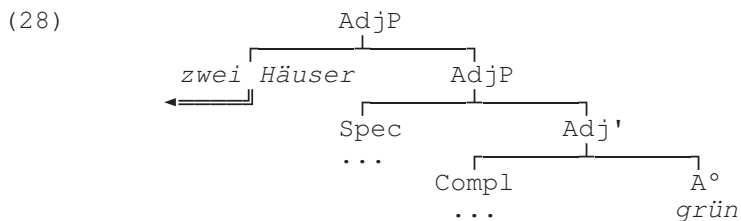
Although the result of this was that predicative adjective agreement could only be avoided in the
OV-languages, it did not straightforwardly predict that it was downright impossible int these
languages.

Consider now a somewhat different adaptation of the suggestions in Haider & Rosengren
(1998:48-51, 2003:207-211). The idea is that spec-X° agreement is a last resort, only found in
those projections where the specifier (which I take to be to the left of X′ universally) cannot be
licensed in the licensing direction of the head, i.e. only found in head-initial projections. This is
less radical than it may sound, as I take functional projections to be head-initial universally, so
that only lexical elements may vary (and only within narrow limits, see Vikner 2001b:143-146).
In brief, there is no spec-X° agreement in VP and AdjP in German and the other OV-
languages.

This means that the possibilities in the OV-languages are completely parallel to the VO
ones in (27) above. Extraction has to go via AdjP-spec, regardless of whether the base-
generated position is the specifier, (29a), or the complement, (29b), of AdjP. The difference
between OV- and VO-languages is simply that in OV-languages, movement via AdjP-spec does
not trigger overt morphological agreement.

```
(29)   a.                       AdjP
                       ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                     Spec                    Adj'
                 zwei Häuser       ┌───────────┴───────────┐
           ◄──────────────┘     Compl                       A°
                                 ...                        grün


       b.                       AdjP
                       ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                     Spec                    Adj'
           ◄───────────┐          ┌───────────┴───────────┐
                       │        Compl                      A°
                       └──── zwei Häuser                  grün
```

8. Predictions

▪ A **phonetic / morphological** reason for lack of predicative adjective agreement:
   the erosion of endings found throughout the Germanic and Romance languages.

▪ A **syntactic** reason for lack of predicative adjective agreement:
   That head-final AdjPs do not have spec-X° agreement, cf. the preceding sections.

This particular syntactic reason does not apply to attributive adjectives. Presupposing that there are no other reasons why adjectives should lack agreement, the following predictions are made:

(30) 1. Languages with head-final AdjPs do not have agreement on predicative adjectives.
   2. Languages with head-initial AdjPs do not have agreement only on attributive adjectives.
   3. No languages have agreement only on predicative adjectives.

The prediction (30.3) is borne out, at least for the Germanic and the Romance languages. The predictions (30.1), that languages with head-final AdjPs never have predicative adjective agreement, and (30.2), that languages with head-initial AdjPs never have adjective agreement only with attributive adjectives, are almost borne out, but not quite.

There is not much agreement in the literature as to what might count as reliable independent evidence of whether a given language has head-final or head-initial AdjPs, and therefore this prediction is difficult to test (cf. e.g. that Haider & Rosengren 1998:27 take the German AdjP to be head-final, whereas Corver 1997 takes the Dutch AdjP to be head-initial).

If the additional assumption is made, as in section 4 above, that head-finality in the AdjP co-varies with head-finality in the VP (at least in the Germanic and Romance languages), the two predictions become much easier to test: (30.1), that OV-languages never have predicative adjective agreement, and (30.2), that VO-languages never have adjective agreement only with attributive adjectives. As outlined in section 4 above, both turn out to be correct for all the Germanic languages, that is, for all the Germanic languages spoken today[1].

For one of these languages, namely **Yiddish**, the situation with respect to head-finality in the VP and in the AdjP is not uncontroversial. In so far as this analysis of predicative adjectives is on the right track, the fact that Yiddish has agreement only with attributive adjectives lends some support to the grouping of Yiddish with the Germanic OV-languages, as also suggested by e.g. Hall (1979), Geilfuß (1991) and Haider & Rosengren (1998:78-81,

---

[1] As Jürg Fleischer (p.c.) has pointed out, this is actually not quite true: In the very southernmost varieties of Swiss German, e.g. in the German-speaking part of the canton Valais (German: *Wallis*), predicative adjective agreeement occurs, although not obligatorily:

(i) Wa. a. Är isch alt<u>ä</u>   *He is old.M*
       b. Si isch alt<u>i</u>   *She is old.F*
       c. Es isch alt<u>s</u>   *It is old.N*   (from Hotzenköcherle 1961:214)

Fuchs (1993:77) finds predicative adjective agreement to have applied only in 40% of the possible cases. She also reports that only adjectives used in their literal sense may inflect:

(ii) Wa. a. Das isch schweer_   *It is heavy*
        b. Das isch schwee<u>rs</u>   *It is heavy.N*   (from Fuchs 1993:76)

The German adjective *schwer* corresponds to both *heavy* and *difficult* in English. When something is heavy, either (iia) or (iib) can be used, whereas when something is difficult, only (iia) can be used.
   For more information, see Fleischer (2007a,b) and references there.

2003:253-255), cf. the discussion of (25) at the end of section 4 above. Notice that under this analysis, we expect head-final AdjPs to be the only option in Yiddish, head-initial AdjPs are not possible at all, as otherwise Yiddish should have optional predicative adjective agreement.

8.1 Historical predictions

Testing the two predictions for earlier stages of the Germanic languages is made difficult both by the scarcity of evidence and by the fact that the evidence that does exist is not always unambiguous. It seems that the older languages fall into three groups:

Languages with no predicative adjective agreement, e.g. **Middle Dutch** (Burridge 1993:248) and **Old Frisian** (Markey 1981:169). As these languages are always taken to be OV-languages, this is as expected.

Languages where predicative adjectives do not show any agreement in the majority of the cases, e.g. **Old English** (Brunner 1965:236, Mitchell 1985:62), **Old High German** (Paul 1917:164, Penzl 1986:55), and **Middle High German** (Paul 1998:360, Penzl 1989:82). If this is taken as evidence that predicative adjectives do not agree, then this is as expected, as these languages are commonly taken to be OV-languages. If, however, this is taken to show that some varieties/dialects of the three languages did have predicative adjective agreement, then this is unexpected.

And finally, the third group of older Germanic languages is languages where predicative adjectives do show agreement, e.g. **Old Norse** (Nygaard 1905:68) and **Gothic** (Braune 1956:74). This is not unexpected for Old Norse, if e.g. Nygaard (1905:357-358) and Hróarsdóttir (1999:318-319) are right that Old Norse was a VO-language, like the modern Scandinavian languages (contra Faarlund 1990:110, who takes Old Norse to be non-configurational). It is, however, rather unexpected for Gothic, at least if Eythórsson (1995:22), Ferraresi (1997:7, 34) and references cited there are right that Gothic was an OV-language (This last remark also goes for **Latin**: Like Gothic, it has predicative adjective agreement but it is most commonly assumed to be an OV-language).

Summing up, the data that go against the predictions made are that Old and Middle High German show predicative adjective agreement in some cases, and that Gothic (and Latin) always shows predicative adjective agreement.

A(nother) potential weakness could be that the analysis has nothing to say about why there are languages where predicative adjectives in the superlative lack agreement, even though predicative adjectives in the base form show agreement. Predicative superlative adjectives lack agreement not only in the languages where all adjectives lack agreement (English, Afrikaans) and in the languages where all predicative adjectives lack agreement (Dutch, Frisian, German, …), but also in some of the languages where all other predicative adjectives show agreement, namely Danish, Norwegian and Swedish. Only in Icelandic (and conservative Faroese) is there agreement:

```
(31)  Da. a.  Den        grønne bus    er størst_
              The.M/F.SG green  bus    is  biggest
          b.  De         grønne busser er størst_
              The.PL     green  buses  are biggest

          c.  Det        grønne hus    er  størst_
              The.N.SG   green  house  is  biggest
          d.  De         grønne huse   er  størst_
              The.PL     green  houses are biggest

(32)  Ic. a.  Græni           strætisvagninn            er  stærstur
              Green.M.NOM.SG  bus-the.M.NOM/AKK.SG      is  biggest.M.NOM.SG
          b.  Grænu           strætisvagnanir           eru stærstir
              Green.PL         buses-the.M.NOM.PL        are biggest.M.NOM.PL

          c.  Græna           húsið                     er  stærst_
              Green.N.SG      house-the.N.NOM/AKK.SG    is  biggest.N.NOM/AKK
          d.  Grænu           húsin                     eru stærst_
              Green.PL        houses-the.N.NOM/AKK.PL   are biggest.N.NOM/AKK
```

Notice that Matushansky (2008), who proposes a comprehensive account of superlatives across many languages, also has to leave unexplained the lack of agreement on Danish, Norwegian and Swedish superlatives (Matushansky 2008:81-84).

8.2 Adjective agreement in causatives

The analysis also predicts that adjective agreement in causative constructions (e.g. *make someone nervous* or *paint something green*) should co-vary with predicative adjective agreement, which it does:

```
(33)  Da. a.  Barnets       opførsel gjorde faderen     nervøs_
              Child-the's behaviour made   father-the  nervous.M/F.SG
          b.  Barnets       opførsel gjorde forældrene  nervøse
              Child-the's behaviour made   parents-the nervous.PL

(34)  Ge. a.  Das Benehmen  des     Kindes hat den Vater   nervös_ gemacht
              The behaviour of-the child  has the father  nervous made
          b.  Das Benehmen  des     Kindes hat die Eltern  nervös_ gemacht
              The behaviour of-the child  has the parents nervous made


(35)  Da. a.  De   malede væggen    grøn_
              They painted wall-the  green.M/F.SG
          b.  De   malede væggene   grønne
              They painted walls-the green.PL

(36)  Ge. a.  Sie  haben die Wand   grün_ gestrichen
              They have  the wall   green painted
          b.  Sie  haben die Wände  grün_ gestrichen
              They have  the wall   green painted
```

The reason is that also here the argument DP (*father*, *parents*, *wall*, or *walls*) has a trace inside AdjP. It is even possible that the DP is actually in AdjP-spec, but this is unlikely, as a quantifier like *very* would occur between the DP and the adjective.

9. Verbal (participial) agreement

The analysis also makes a further prediction, under the assumption that head-finality in the AdjP and head-finality in the VP cooccur. In the languages where VPs and AdjPs are head-final, we would not only expect there to be no agreement with Adj° when an argument is extracted under A-movement from AdjP (i.e. in predicative adjective constructions), we would also expect there to be no agreement with V° when an argument is extracted under A-movement from VP. The relevant question is whether a non-finite verb in V° shows agreement with an argument extracted to the subject position, e.g. in passive and unaccusative (ergative) constructions. The following examples show how this looks in VO-languages like French and Italian where agreement is possible:

(37) Fr. a. Ce   bureau$_i$ a   été [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ repeint_   t$_i$]
               This desk   has been   repainted.M.SG

      b. Cette table$_i$ a   été [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ repeint<u>e</u>   t$_i$]
               This table has been   repainted.F.SG

(based on Kayne 1985:77, (31))

(38) It. a. I   bambini$_i$ erano [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ fotografat<u>i</u>   t$_i$ insieme]
               The children were   photographed.M.PL   together

      b. Le donne$_i$ erano [$_{VP}$ t$_i$ fotografat<u>e</u>   t$_i$ insieme]
               The women   were   photographed.F.PL   together

The subjects are base-generated in the object position, i.e. following the main verb, then moved to VP-spec, and from there to the subject position in IP-spec. Agreement with the participles is triggered when the subjects move through VP-spec.

(39)

```
                        VP
                        |
        Spec                   V'
   <------┐             ┌──────────────┐
          |             V°           Compl
          |          painted         table
          |         photographed     children
          └═══════════════════════════════┘
```

The result is
verbal/participial agreement

(VP-spec is part of the chain,
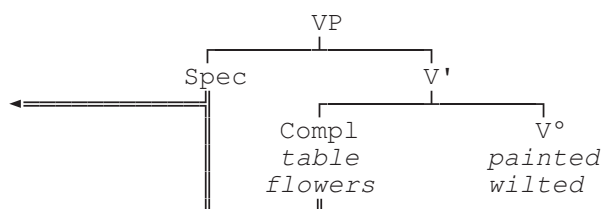and the language is VO, i.e. the specifier
requires spec-X° agrement.

Under the present analysis, such agreement should never occur in the OV-languages, as here there would be no spec-X° agreement inside the (head-final) VPs, as it would not be necessary, as the specifier is on the "right" side of the head (verb/adjective), i.e. on the same side as the complement .

This prediction seems to be correct, at least for the Germanic OV-languages spoken today, which never show agreement with the participles in constructions like (37) and (38), even though the same participles might show agreement used in other constructions, e.g. used attributively.

(40) Ge. a. Dieser Schreibtisch   ist wieder gestrichen_ worden
               This   desk   is   again painted   been

      b. Diese Schreibtische sind wieder gestrichen_ worden
               These desks   are again painted   been

      c. Ein   gestrichen<u>er</u>   Schreibtisch
               One.M.NOM painted.M.SG.NOM desk

      d. Zwei   gestrichen<u>e</u>   Schreibtische
               Two   painted.PL.NOM   desks

```
(41)  Ge. a.  Dieser Blumenstrauß    ist  verwelkt_
              This    flower-bouquet is   wilted

      b.  Diese  Blumen          sind verwelkt_
          These  flowers         are  wilted

      c.  Ein        verwelkter      Blumenstrauß
          One.M.NOM  wilted.M.SG.NOM flower-bouquet

      d.  Vier       verwelkte       Blumen
          Four       wilted.PL.NOM   flowers
```

(42)

```
                        VP                          The result is
              ┌─────────┴─────────┐                 no verbal/participial agreement
            Spec               V'
    ◄───────────┐         ┌─────┴─────┐             (Although VP-spec is part of the chain,
                │       Compl         V°             the language is OV, i.e. the specifier
                │       table      painted          does not spec-X° agrement.
                │       flowers    wilted
                └────────┘
```

Notice that no predictions are made about subject-verb agreement, since this is agreement between the subject and not the lexical head, V°, but a functional one, I°/AgrS°/Tense°/Person°.

A potential problem here is that unexpectedly, Danish (and also Norwegian) participles in such constructions do not show agreement:

```
(43)  Da. a.  Hver kamp  blev overstået på godt  en halv time
              Each match was  overstood in about  a  half hour
              (They got through each match in about half an hour)

      b.  Alle kampe    blev overstået på et par     dage
          All  matches were overstood in a  couple days
          (They got through all matches in a couple of days)
```

although past particples have to show agreement e.g. in attributive constructions:

```
(44)  Da. a.  en overstået    kamp
              an overstood.SG match

      b.  to overståede   kampe
          an overstood.PL match
```

This lack of agreement in passive constructions is apparently not at all new, cf.

```
(45)  MD.  Breffue bleffue them røffuet   oc  tagne    fra
           Letters were    them stolen.SG and taken.PL from
```
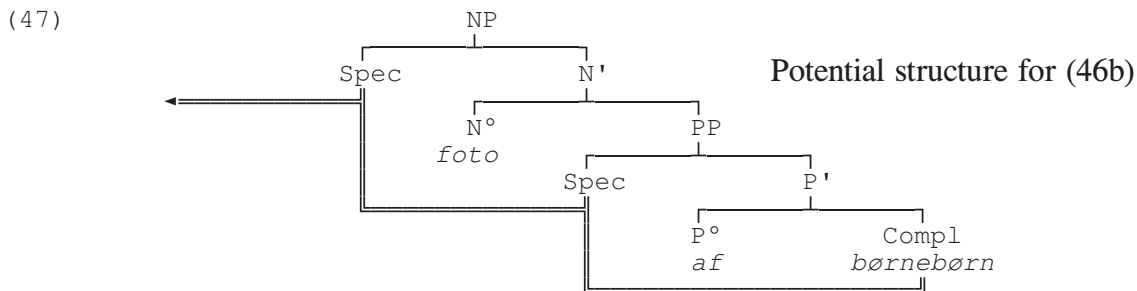
(1497, Falk & Torp 1900:168)

10. Nominal (predicate) agreement

Looking for similar extractions in the nominal domain, we run into the problem that the complement of an N° is never a DP but a PP. Therefore we can either extract the PP, (46a), (in which case it would be impossible to tell whether there is agreement), or we can extract the DP inside this PP, (46b):

```
(46)  a. It.  Di quali nipoti        hai      una foto _ sulla tua  scrivania?
              Of which grandchildren have-you a   photo  on    your desk    ?
```
<div align="right">(adapted from Giusti 1997:111, (44a))</div>

```
      b. Da.  Hvilke børnebørn       har du  et foto af _ på dit  skrivebord?
              Which  grandchildren have you a  photo of   on your desk      ?
```

(47)

```
                    NP
             ┌──────┴──────┐
           Spec           N'
     ◄══════════════┐ ┌────┴────┐
                    │ N°        PP
                    │ foto   ┌──┴──────┐
                    │      Spec        P'
                    └───────┐       ┌──┴──────┐
                            │      P°         Compl
                            │      af         børnebørn
                            └────────────────────┘
```
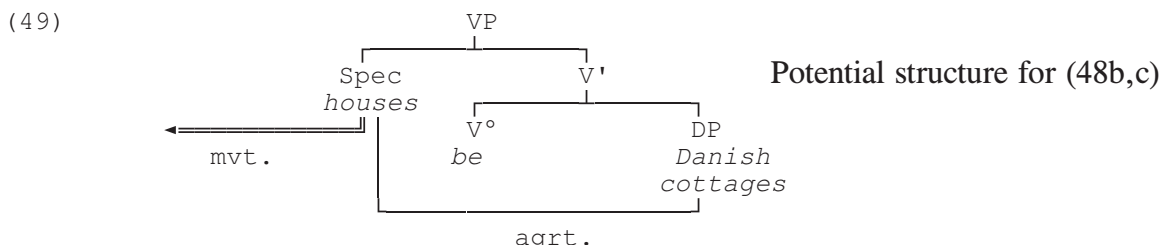Potential structure for (46b)

But even in the latter case, where the DP *hvilke børnebørn* 'which grandchildren' may have been extracted via the NP-spec of *foto*, it would be completely impossible for *foto* to show agreement with *hvilke børnebørn*, simply because *foto* has its own gender and number features, namely neuter and singular, and therefore it could not possibly also display agreement with the features common gender and plural of *hvilke børnebørn*.

There is one situation, however, where agreement is found in the nominal domain: Agreement with a predicate DP. This is very different from the agreement types described so far, in that it is agreement between phrases, not between a head and a phrase, and therefore it is not surprising that such predicative nominal agreement is very different from predicative adjective agreement and verbal participial agreement in that it is also found in the Germanic SOV-languages, (48a) (Examples repeated from (2) above):

```
(48)  a. Ge.  Die Häuser   sind dänische Ferienhäuser
      b. Da.  Husene       er   danske sommerhuse
      c. Fr.  Les maisons sont des maisons de campagne danoises
              The houses   are  Danish holiday cottages
```

The struture here is presumably something like

(49)

```
                    VP
             ┌──────┴──────┐
           Spec           V'
           houses    ┌─────┴─────┐
     ◄════════┐     V°          DP
              │     be          Danish
      mvt.    │                 cottages
              └──────────────────┘
                    agrt.
```
Potential structure for (48b,c)

11. Conclusion

In this talk, I have tried to argue that languages with head-final AdjPs and VPs do not show predicative adjective agreement (nor any other kind of agreement with Adj° or V° under A-extraction), because in these languages such extraction may not go via AdjP-spec or VP-spec. The following predictions are made:

(50) 1. Languages with head-final AdjPs do not have agreement on predicative adjectives.
      2. Languages with head-initial AdjPs do not have agreement only on attributive adjectives.
      3. No languages have agreement only on predicative adjectives.

These predictions seem to hold for the modern languages (with the exception noted above of the southernmost varieties of Swiss German, none of the present-day OV-languages have predicative adjective agreement), even if the predictions made for the older languages are less impressive (here the main problem case would seem to be Gothic).

The talk started out by noting a paradox, namely how unexpected it is that a language with so much agreement morphology as German lacks predicative adjective agreement, when predicative adjective agreement is found in languages with so little agreement morphology as Danish or French. The analysis presented resolves this paradox by setting the lack of predicative adjective agreement in the OV-languages apart from other kinds of lack (or loss) of agreement, in attributing it to a particular structural cause, head-finality in AdjP.

This allows us to keep the general view that both German and Icelandic are languages which tend to express agreement with respect to many categories (person, number, gender, case, …) , whenever they have the chance, whereas e.g. Danish, Dutch, and English are languages which tend to either not express agreement at all or only express agreement with respect to very few categories.

I also very briefly considered the possiblity of similar kinds of agreement in the nominal domain, and reached the conclusion that it was not possible, and that in so far as agreement is found here, it is between two DPs, and thus very different from the adjectival and verbal agreement which is between a phrase (DP) and a head (Adj°/V°).

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