1. Introduction

Doubling phenomena where a single occurrence should suffice:
- Double definiteness (in some Scandinavian languages)
- Multiple negation
- Indefinite determiner doubling

We are interested in nominal expressions in which the indefinite article occurs more than once within the same DP, the so called 'indefinite determiner doubling' constructions. These are reported most extensively in varieties of German, such as Swiss German and Bavarian German, but they are found more generally across the Germanic languages:

- Northern Swedish (Delsing 1993:142-145; Delsing 2003; Garbacz 2014)
- Northern Norwegian (Delsing 2003; Garbacz 2014)
- Danish (Wood & Vikner 2011; 2013)
- English (Wood 2002:109; 2013)
As a first approximation we can divide these into two types. (i) The northern Swedish type where more than two articles are permitted and (ii) types where no more than two articles occur, as in (2) and (3) with *such* and the etymologically related *so* and as in (4) with other degree words.

1. **NSw.**  

   *En stor en ful en kar*  
   *a big a ugly a guy*  
   (= 'a big, ugly guy')  
   (Northern Swedish, Delsing 1993:143)

2. **En.**  

   *My rules are to cut down drinking, control my temper if I am drinking, not to drink in a such a large group and not to waste much money.*  
   (BNC; Wood 2002:109)

3. **Da.**  

   *Og jeg vil gerne også kunne lave en så let en film som Frisøsens mand, hvis jeg har lyst til det.*  
   *husband, if I have desire to that.*  
   (KorpusDK, newspaper, 1991)

4. **SGe.**  

   *Ä ganz ä schönä Baum*  
   *a totally a beautiful tree*  
   (= 'a totally beautiful tree')  
   (Swiss German, Leu 2001:63)

- In this paper, we first survey and compare different data collection methods. We argue that the doubling data are too systematic and too frequent to be "performance errors".
- We then compare languages and show that German and English are the least restrictive as to which lexical items within a nominal allow doubling.
- We also take a hypothesis suggested for German as to when article doubling may occur and test it on our Danish and English data.
- Finally, we suggest a derivation of indefinite article doubling inside nominals with *sådan* and *such*, and inside nominals with *så* and *so*.

2. **Data sources**

   Although not considered part of the standard languages, we suggest that indefinite determiner doubling data should be taken seriously since it may be found by a number of data collection methods:

   elicitation; dialect grammars; dictionaries; corpora.

   Internet searches can be useful but should not be taken in isolation. We agree with the decision Kalluli & Rothmayr (2008:107) make about French. They note that although a reviewer provided French examples, “Not having been able to find any literature on this construction in the non-standard varieties of French in which it occurs, nor to locate any informants that speak such a variety, we will however not consider these data in the present paper”.

5. **Fr.**  

   *C’est vrai que j’ai une belle une gueule.*  
   *It is true that I have a beautiful a face*  
   (silencejereve.hautetfort.com/archive/2005/08/index.html)

2.1 **Elicitation**

Syntactic data is more difficult to collect from spontaneous speech data than phonological data and elicitation is often a more efficient method. The disadvantage of elicitation is that people’s conscious judgements are often affected by the standard.

Useful spontaneous and elicitation data on the Scandinavian languages is available from:
The constructions we are interested in that were tested in NSD are:

(6) Sw. Vi såg en svart en häst
We saw a black a horse
(Garbacz 2014:43, (3))

(7) Sw. En så svart en häst har jeg aldrig set förr
A so black a horse have I never seen before
(Garbacz 2014:43, (4))

Such examples are found in Northern Norway and Sweden. It is furthermore reported that the same Norwegian informants who reject the test sentence, (6) do actually produce sentences of that type. (Garbacz 2014:48). This shows that elicitation on its own is not a reliable method.

According to Kallulli & Rothmayr (2008:97), Bavarian speakers strongly prefer the doubling construction, whereas only some of the speakers of Standard German that they consulted optionally accept an extra article, as in (8) below, while other standard speakers find it ungrammatical:

(8) Ge. Ein so ein großer Bub
a so a big boy (= 'such a big boy')
(Kallulli & Rothmayr 2008:97, (2b))

We suggest that the German speakers who found the expression unacceptable could have been biased by the fact that the word Bub is dialectal. It is important to know on what basis test sentences are rejected.

### 2.2 Corpora

The results from the Nordic Syntax Database (sentence judgments) and the Nordic Dialect Corpus (spontaneous speech) show the challenges in collecting data. When asked for sentence judgments, some informants may be influenced by the standard, but, although spontaneous speech is more reliable, the data can be sparse or non-existent.

Sentences (6) and (7) above have never been attested in Danish, and therefore they were not tested in Danish in the above projects. Consequently, it is somewhat surprising that we found examples in standard Danish in KorpusDK (56 million words; varied written texts):

- five examples of *en sådan en* (common gender version of 'a such a')
- two examples of *et sådan et* (neuter version of 'a such a')
- three examples of *en så ADJ en* (common gender version of 'a so ADJ a')
- two examples of *et så ADJ et* (neuter version of 'a so ADJ a')

(9) Da. Det modsatte er, at du er en sådan en smart fyr, der er meget ude om natten.
The opposite is that you are a such a smart guy who is much out at night
(KorpusDK, novel, 1999)

(10) Da. Men et så stort et projekt i byens hjerte kræver selvsagt
But a neut so big.neut a.neut project in town-the's heart demands of-course
    en langt højere informationsgrad.
a far higher information-degree.
(KorpusDK, newspaper, 2001)
These data were supplemented with internet data. Although some of the internet examples from Danish are colloquial as in (11), which is from a comments section on a newspaper website, it is evident from examples like (12), which is from a legal periodical, that not all of these examples are colloquial:

(11) Da. Nu er der jo altid 2 parter i en sådan en sag ...  
*Now are there indeed always 2 parties in a such a case ...*  

(12) Da. Man kunne håbe på, at Justitsministeriet i det mindste kunne 
*One could hope on that the-Ministry-of-Justice in the least could*  
komme til en sådan en konklusion, at ...  
*come to a such a conclusion that ...*  
(from the legal periodical *Juristen*, June 30, 2010, p. 153)

Likewise, comprehensive searches in English corpora, which are somewhat larger, reveal the following occurrences (Misspeaking or typos have been filtered out):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>corpus</th>
<th>no. of words</th>
<th>a such a</th>
<th>a quite a</th>
<th>a rather a</th>
<th>a many a</th>
<th>a still a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BNC</td>
<td>100 mill.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COCA</td>
<td>450 mill.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COHA (pre-1950)</td>
<td>400 mill.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COHA (post 1950)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAP</td>
<td>100 mill.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>50 mill.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an unexpectedly large number of written examples in American English compared with spoken examples. In British English the number of spoken examples is greater than written, which is the expected result.

As far as text types go, there is no discernable bias. Academic texts are represented as well as newspapers:

(13) En. During our interview, he ticks off what he believes the daily life of a such a worker would have been like.  
*(COCA, Academic Journal, Archaeology)*

(14) En. He had a such a legendary police career that Hollywood modeled a hard-boiled TV character after him.  
*(COHA, News, Associated Press)*

Most of the spoken examples are from the Public Broadcasting Service. In the example below the speaker is Sir Leon Brittan, educated at Trinity College Cambridge and former Member of the British Parliament:

(15) En. If you are able to break a logjam that's existed for two or three years and achieve agreement on a such a complex detail but important matter as a single market in securities, that says that we're still in business.  
*(COCA, ABC Business Report)*
2.3 Dialect grammars

Indefinite determiner doubling was first reported in German dialect grammars, giving the initial impression that it is somewhat “exotic”. Generally, it is found in southern and western dialects of German:

Austria: Carinthia (Pohl 1989:62)
Czech Republic (Bohemia) (Schiepek, 1989, cited in Kalluuli & Rothmayr 2008:101)
Switzerland: (Weber 1948; Henn-Memmesheimer 1986)

(16) SGe. Mer wöischched en rächt en gueten Apitit.  
We wish a real a good appetite.  
(Zürich German, Weber 1948:203)

(17) Ba. A so a großa Buja  
am a so a big boy (= 'such a big boy')  
(Bavarian, Kallulli & Rothmayr 2008:97, (2a))

Also found in Leicestershire English, only with such:

(18) En. Shay's got a sich a tong.  
She's got a such a tongue (= command of abusive language)  
(Evans 1881)

Although earlier reports have focused on non-standard varieties, it is now becoming clear that the indefinite article doubling construction is less exotic than first reported.

2.4 Dictionaries

Although the OED dictionary entry for such does not contain any examples of doubling, dictionaries can still be a useful source. In an advanced text search in the OED, we found examples of 'a such a N' and 'a quite a N' in the definition text of the dictionary, (19) and under the entry for other words, (20) and (21):

(19) En. produced or obtained by a such a process, and therefore unpredictable in detail.  
(OED online, December 2012. Dictionary entry random, definition C.1.b)

(20) En. There is a quite a telling mysticism in the wise men of the east, who are astrologising — studying the heavens—on their mountain, and first behold the wondrous star.  
(OED online, December 2012. Dictionary entry astrologize, 1883 L. Scott’ Renaissance of Art in Italy)

Dictionaries sometimes quote from dialects and the one dialect example below (dictionary entry gurry) led us to search for descriptions of Leicestershire dialect.

(21) En. I had a such a gurry on me as if I hadn't eaten nothink of a fortnit.  
My stomach was so upset, as if hadn’t eaten anything for two weeks.  
Likewise, this example from 1839 is cited in *Ordbog over det Danske sprog* (ODS), the Danish counterpart to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) under the entry for ‘Goliat’:


The compilers of the dictionary were literate, well-educated individuals, yet did not notice the extra article.

As the data in this section show, cases of indefinite article doubling are found across different methods of data collection. We find that they are too frequent or too systematic to be false starts or performance errors.

### 3. What are the relevant cases of indefinite determiner doubling?

Recapitulating the data, we have:

(i) Varieties of the Northern Swedish and Northern Norwegian type, (1), (6) and (7). More than two articles are possible (i.e. not just doubling, but also tripling, etc.), each extra article accompanying an adjective. We suggest that this is a different phenomenon, which has a separate explanation.

(ii) Varieties that permit only doubling (no tripling)

a. Standard Danish, where we have found doubling only with *so* and *such*:

b. German and English, where doubling also occurs with other degree words.

We have found examples of *a rather a* (Adj) N, *a quite a* (Adj) N, *a many a* (Adj) N and *a still a* ((Adv), Adj) N, as well as *an even a* (Adj) N. These have the German equivalents *ziemlich*, *ganz*, *manch*, and *noch* (ambiguous between *even* and *still*).

**Rather:**

(23) En. You realise that accountability is a rather a hot and fashionable word in education these days. (BNC, radio, around 1990)

(24) En. So I believe it is a rather a waste of money. (BNC, radio, around 1990)

(25) SGe. Es esch en ziemlich en fine Tee. *It is a rather a delicate tea.* (Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:104, (24))

**Quite:**

(26) En. I note that there is a quite a demand for snake virus. (OED online, December 2012. Dictionary entry *virus*, 1909 Bedford (Pa.) Gazette)

(27) SGe. Ich wünsche üch en ganz a schöne abe. *I wish you a.MASC quite a nice evening.* (Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:127, (86c))

**Many:**

(28) En. "Done put away a many a friend and relative; ain't none upset me like this." (COCA, Fiction)
(29) SGe. …ein manch **ein** Handball-**Fan aus** der Region.
a many a handball fan from the region. (Zürich German, Weber 1948:203)

**Even:**
(30) En. it's **an even** a worse problem when the person is somebody you know, right? (COCA, CBS_48Hours)

(31) Ba. a. **ein noch** wärmeres Bier
an even warmer beer
b. **noch ein** wärmeres Bier
even a warmer beer
c. **ein noch ein** wärmeres Bier
an even a warmer beer

(Plank 2003:366, (100), the gloss is ours)

**Still:**
(32) En. It's **a still** a very difficult situation. There are many challenges we have to overcome. (COCA, PBS Newshour 2012; speaker: David Cameron)

(33) En. The New York area is **a still** a hub, and I think it's as good a bet as any. (COCA, 1992, New York Times quoting direct speech)

(34) En. ... but there is **a still** a long uphill battle to go for the cleanup and containment of this stuff. (COCA, Fox Special Report 2010)

(35) Ge. **oder ob** man **für wenig Geld** **ein noch ein** funktionierendes Altgerät erwerben kann
or whether one for little money a still a functioning oldappliance acquire can
(www.helkueb.de/dienstleistung/restauration-und-reparatur)

4. When does indefinite article doubling occur?

(36) **Hypothesis:**
Article doubling occurs only with elements that do not have to be adjacent to an Adjective Phrase (AdjP).

This is suggested by Kalluli & Rothmayr (2008:98), in order to explain why certain degree words like so 'so' and ganz 'quite' occur with doubling in German and Bavarian, whereas other quantifying expressions like sehr 'very' and irrsinnig 'insanely' do not allow for determiner doubling.

Their point is that so and ganz can modify an AdjP even when they are separated from this AdjP by an indefinite article, as shown by (37)b and (38)b. This then is what allows for doubling, as in (37)c and (38)c:

(37) Ge. a. **ein so** großer Bub
b. **so ein** großer Bub
c. **ein so ein** großer Bub
*a so a big boy*
(Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:97-98, (4a), (7a), (2b))

(38) Ge. a. **ein ganz** blöder Fehler
b. **ganz ein** blöder Fehler
c. **ein ganz ein** blöder Fehler
*a quite a stupid mistake*
(Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:97-98, (4b), (7b), (3b))
sehr and irrsinnig, on the other hand, can only modify an AdjP if they are adjacent to it, as shown by (39)a,b and (40)a,b. This then is what blocks determiner doubling, as in (39)c and (40)c:

(39) Ge. a. ein sehr großer Bub
d. * sehr ein großer Bub
c. * ein sehr ein großer Bub
   a very a big boy  (Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:98, (5a), (8a), (6a))

(40) Ge. a. ein irrsinnig blöder Fehler
b. * irrsinnig ein blöder Fehler
c. * ein irrsinnig ein blöder Fehler
   a insanely a stupid mistake  (Kalluli & Rothmayr 2008:98, (5b), (8b), (6c))

However, according to this hypothesis, we would not expect doubling with those degree words that cannot be separated from the AdjP that they modify.

For English and Danish we expect doubling with English *such* and sådan, but not with so and så. This is because, unlike German so, English so and Danish så must be adjacent to the adjective they modify.

This is illustrated in more detail in the tables below, which set out the logical possibilities for word order and modification for English so and Danish så, followed by the logical possibilities for English *such* and Danish sådan (Wood & Vikner 2011:94).

(41) | pre-article | post-article |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a: immediately preceding the whole DP/NP</td>
<td>b: modifying the whole DP/NP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: immediately preceding the AdjP</td>
<td>d: modifying the AdjP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (42) English so

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DP/NP</th>
<th>pre-article</th>
<th>post-article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>so</td>
<td>a. * so a hotel</td>
<td>b. *a so hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. so bad a hotel</td>
<td>d. ?? a SO bad hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (43) Danish så

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DP/NP</th>
<th>pre-article</th>
<th>post-article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>så</td>
<td>a. * så et hotel</td>
<td>b. *et så hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. så dårligt et hotel</td>
<td>d. et så dårligt hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (44) English such

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DP/NP</th>
<th>pre-article</th>
<th>post-article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>such</td>
<td>a. such a hotel</td>
<td>b. *a such hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. *such bad a hotel</td>
<td>d. *a such bad hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under the hypothesis in (36), we would not expect doubling in English and Danish with so and så.

In Danish we found three examples of en så ADJ en N and two of et så ADJ et N. In these examples, the article agrees with the noun in gender and the adjective shows agreement morphology with the neuter noun (e.g. et så stort et N).

The Danish data are thus counter-examples to the hypothesis in (36), as they show that doubling occurs even with degree words that do have to be adjacent to an AdjP (like Danish så).

Searches in the above mentioned English corpora failed to find any examples of a so ADJ a. We did find one example on the web:

We therefore suggest revising the hypothesis:

In order to get indefinite article doubling, there needs to be something to the left of an article (because then there can be another article left of that something.)

A frequently heard comment on our standard Danish and English data is that speakers must just have been confused. If it is possible for an element to occur both to the left of an article in one case and to the right of an article in another case, then speakers might get these two options mixed up.

This could perhaps be maintained for Danish where both e.g. så dårligt et hotel and et så dårligt hotel are possible, (43), but it will not work for English, where doubling is possible with such, (13)-(15), even though such only occurs left of the article, and not right of the article:

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This could perhaps be maintained for Danish where both e.g. så dårligt et hotel and et så dårligt hotel are possible, (43), but it will not work for English, where doubling is possible with such, (13)-(15), even though such only occurs left of the article, and not right of the article:
b. *... which are a such big part of the present system.

(adapted from Wood & Vikner 2011:90, (4b))

In other words, when there is something "to the left of an indefinite article" (e.g. *such a legendary police career*), then this something (*such*) is still inside the DP, which means that it is still to the right of the $D^0$ itself, which again makes doubling possible (e.g. *a such a legendary police career*, (14)).

5. Structural analysis

Wood & Vikner (2011:104) derive pre-article sådan and such from a predicate raising construction as in (51). Post-article sådan is base-generated as in (52). The arguments are based on adjectival agreement morphology in Danish (and German). Post-article base-generated sådan always shows agreement with the (neuter) noun. Pre-article sådan on the other hand rarely shows agreement with the (neuter) noun.

(51)

The derivation in (51) allows for the inclusion of a double article. The prediction is that indefinite determiner doubling constructions derived from (51) are not likely to show agreement morphology. Although the data are sparse, this is actually borne out:

(52)
(53) Da. Som tidligere ansvarshavende chefredaktør på ugebladet, Se og Hør, ved han ...
   As former executive editor of magazine-the, Se og Hør, knows he ...
   ... hvordan et sådan et blad skal skrues sammen.
   ... how a.NEUT such.COM a.NEUT magazine should be-put together (KorpusDK)

(54) Da. Psychologen benyttede lejligheden til at undersøge hvad det egentlig er ...
   Psychologist took opportunity-the to to examin what it actually is ...
   ... der får folk til at protestere imod et sådan et projekt.
   ... that makes people to to protest against a.NEUT such.COM a.NEUT project (KorpusDK)

This structure also allows constructions with no such a and any such a like the following:

(55) En. ... and there was no, no such a thing as bales in those days, duckie. No such a thing as
   bales of straw, it was loose hay stacked. (oral history, BNC; Wood 2002:110)

(56) En. Japanese kinship had no such a rule, except for a very top echelon of the samurai class.
   (academic writing, COCA)

(57) En. ... on the basis of any such a proposal or application form ... (BNC; Wood 2002:110)

6. Conclusion

• We first surveyed and compared different data collection methods. We argued that the doubling
  data were too systematic and too frequent to be "performance errors".
• We then compared languages and showed that German and English were the least restrictive as to
  which lexical items within a nominal allow doubling.
• We also tested a hypothesis as to when article doubling may occur in German and tested it and
  revised it, based on our Danish and English data.
• Finally, we showed that the data were compatible with the analyses suggested in Wood & Vikner
  (2011:104)

Sources

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