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Predicative Adjective Agreement

Where German may be “easy”, but French and Danish are not “easies”

1. Introduction

German is a complicated language. Any speaker of e. g. French or Danish who has ever tried to learn German would agree to this. Coming from languages with only two genders and with no case outside the pronoun system, German, with three genders and with four cases throughout the nominal system, seems unjustifiably complicated, as if it had been specially designed to torment poor students.¹

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 Danish: predicative adjectives. Both gender and number distinctions, (1a,d), disappear when adjectives are used predicatively, (1b,c,e, f):

(1) German

- a. Ein grüner Bus / zwei grüne Busse
a.M.SG.NOM green. M.SG.NOM. bus two green. PL.NOM buses
- b. Ein Bus ist grün, (die anderen sind gelb)
One.M.SG.NOM bus is green, (the others are yellow)
- c. Zwei Busse sind grün, (die anderen sind gelb)
Two buses are green, (the others are yellow)
- d. ein grünes Haus / zwei grüne Häuser
a.N.SG.NOM green. N.SG.NOM house two green. PL.NOM. houses
- e. Ein Haus ist grün, (die anderen sind gelb)
One. N.SG.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 the other Romance languages), where the inflectional differences found in the attributive construction are also found in the predicative construction:

(2) French

- a. un autobus vert / deux autobus verts
a.M bus green.M.SG two buses green.M.PL

¹ For help and native speaker judgments, I would like to thank Norbert Corver (Dutch), Hubert Haider, Marvin Herzog (Yiddish), Eric Hoekstra (Frisian), Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson (Icelandic), Silvia Schlettwein (Afrikaans), Carl Vikner, and Eivind Weyhe (Faroese).

- b. Un autobus est vert₁, (tous les autres sont jaunes)
One.M bus is green.M.SG, (all the others are yellow)
- c. Deux autobus sont vert₂, (tous les autres sont jaunes)
Two buses are green.M.PL, (all the others are yellow)
- d. une maison verte / deux maisons vertes
a.F house green.F.SG two houses green.F.PL
- e. Une maison est verte₁, (toutes les autres sont jaunes)
One.F house is green.F.SG, (all the others are yellow)
- f. Deux maisons sont vertes₂, (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:

(3) Danish

- a. en grøn₁ bus / to grønne busser
a.M/F green.M/F.SG bus two green.PL buses
- b. En bus er grøn₁, (de andre er gule)
One.M/F bus is green.M/F.SG, (the others are yellow)
- c. To busser er grønne₂, (de andre er gule)
Two buses are green.PL, (the others are yellow)
- d. et grønt₁ hus / to grønne huse
a.N green.N.SG house two green.PL houses
- e. Et hus er grønt₁, (de andre er gule)
One.N house is green.N.SG, (the others are yellow)
- f. To huse er grønne₂, (de andre er gule)
Two houses are green.PL (the others are yellow)

Not surprisingly, the situation is no simpler in those Scandinavian languages which have retained a rich inflectional system (cf. Vikner 1997 for an overview of the verbal inflectional systems), namely Faroese and Icelandic:

(4) Faroese

- a. ein grønur bussur / tveir grønir bussar
a.M green.M.NOM.SG bus two.M green.M.NOM.PL buses
- b. Ein bussur er grønur
One.M bus is green.M.NOM.SG
- c. Tveir bussar eru grønir
Two.M buses are green.M.NOM.PL
- d. eitt grønt₁ hús / tvey grøn₁ hús
a.N green.N.NOM.SG house two.N green.N.NOM.PL houses
- e. Eitt hús er grønt₁
One.N house is green.N.NOM.SG
- f. Tvey hús eru grøn₁
Two.N houses are green.N.NOM.PL

(5) Icelandic

- a. grænn strætisvagn / tveir grænir strætisvagnar
 (a) *green. M.NOM.SG bus two. M green. M.NOM.PL buses*
- b. Einn strætisvagn er grænn
One.M bus is green.M.NOM.SG
- c. Tveir strætisvagnar eru grænir
Two.M buses are green.M.NOM.PL
- d. grænt hús / tvö græn hús
 (a) *green.N.NOM.SG house two.N green.N.NOM.PL houses*
- 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 poor one (like Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish).

3. West Germanic

The obvious question now is whether German is unique in not having agreement in predicative adjective constructions. The answer is no. Two situations will 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.

At least two Germanic languages lack adjectival inflection completely, namely English and Afrikaans:

(6) English

- a. a green_ bus / two green_ buses
- b. One bus is green_
- c. Two buses are green_
- d. a green_ house / two green_ houses
- e. One house is green_
- f. Two houses are green_

(7) Afrikaans

- a. 'n groen_ bus / twee groen_ busse
a green bus two green buses
- b. Een bus is groen_
One bus is green
- c. Twee busse is groen_
Two buses are green
- d. 'n groen_ huis / twee groen_ huise
a green house two green houses

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

The other West Germanic languages all lack adjectival inflection in predicative adjective constructions only, not in attributive adjective constructions. We have already seen the German data in (1) above, and the following examples show that the situation is completely parallel in Dutch, Frisian, and Yiddish:

(8) Dutch

- a. een groen_e bus / twee groen_e bussen
a green.M/F bus two green.PL buses
- b. Een bus is groen_
One bus is green
- c. Twee bussen zijn groen_
Two buses are green
- d. een groen_e huis / twee groen_e huizen
a green.N.SG house two green.PL houses
- e. Een huis is groen_
One house is green
- f. Twee huizen zijn groen_
Two houses are green

(9) Frisian

- a. in grien_e bus / twa grien_e bussen
a green.M/F bus two green.PL buses
- b. Ien bus is grien_
One bus is green
- c. Twa bussen binne grien_
Two buses are green
- d. in grien_e hûs / twa grien_e huzen
a green.N.SG house two green.PL houses
- e. Ien hûs is grien_
One house is green
- f. Twa huzen binne grien_
Two houses are green

(10) Yiddish

- a. a griner oytobus/ tsvey gring oytobusn
a green.M.SG.NOM bus two green.PL buses
- b. Eyn oytobus iz grin_
One bus is green
- c. Tsvey oytobusn zaynen grin_
Two buses are green
- d. a grin_e hoyz / tsvey gring hayzer
a green.N.SG house two green.PL houses
- e. Eyn hoyz iz grin_
One house is green
- f. Tsvey hayzer zaynen grin_
Two houses are green

The possibilities given for Yiddish in (10) above do not give the complete picture. In plural, Yiddish predicative adjectives might seem also to be possible with agreement:

(11) Yiddish

Tsvey oytobusn zaynen grine
Two buses are green.PL

However, I shall follow e. g. Weinreich (1971, 308), Katz (1987, 87), and Lockwood (1995, 112) in taking the agreeing form in (11) to be a nominalisation. Lockwood (1995, 112): "Exceptionally frequently, [Yiddish] adjectives (including participles) in predicative position are nominalisations". In other words, (11) 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:

(12) Yiddish

- 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 Yiddish for "one bus is green" must use an uninflected adjective, cf. (10b), 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 (12b).

Also Afrikaans merits a few more remarks, even though there is no reason to question the picture given in (7) above, that Afrikaans has no predicative adjective agreement. It is the situation concerning attributive adjectives in Afrikaans which is more complex than (7) might indicate.

Like predicative adjectives, attributive adjectives never show agreement in Afrikaans. In some cases, however, e. g. if they are polysyllabic (Donaldson 1993, 163, Ponelis 1993, 366), attributive adjectives have an affix (-e), but although this ending is diachronically derived from an agreement ending (Ponelis 1993, 364), it shows no distinctions of number, gender, or case:²

(13) Afrikaans

- a. 'n reusagtige bus / twee reusagtige busse
a huge.ATT bus two huge.ATT buses
b. Een bus is reusagtig_
One bus is huge
c. Twee busse is reusagtig_
Two buses are huge
d. 'n reusagtige huis / twee reusagtige huise
a huge.ATT house two huge.ATT houses

² Presumably, it is not a coincidence that the remains of an agreement affix is found only on the attributive adjectives in Afrikaans, and not on the predicative adjectives. Unfortunately, the analysis to be suggested below will have nothing to say about this.

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

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

4. Relating the differences to other 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 and 92), although these works merely note the difference and do not try to relate them to other differences between the languages in question.

An important 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.

According to Webelhuth's (1992, 57) analysis of adjectival agreement in German and English, German adjectives are not as such able to be attributive (in Webelhuth's terms: to be a modifier of N-bar), so they have to be inflected in order to acquire this property, which in German is a property of the adjectival inflectional affix. In English, on the other hand, this property is a property of the category adjective as such. Webelhuth (1992, 58): The obligatory agreement on German attributive adjectives "is highly idiosyncratic compared to the English one". However, the situation in German, where attributive adjectives show agreement, is by far the most common situation within the Germanic and Romance languages, whereas the situation in English, where attributive adjectives show no agreement, is comparatively rare (only found in English and Afrikaans). It furthermore remains unclear why in Romance and Scandinavian, even predicative adjectives should obligatorily have an inflectional affix, given that the role of this affix in German is to make it possible for an adjective to be attributive.

Lattewitz (1997, 54) derives the lack of agreement of predicative adjectives in German, Dutch and English from predicative AdjPs not being embedded inside an AgrAdjP: In attributive adjective constructions in German and Dutch, the AdjP is embedded inside an AgrAdjP, but in English, attributive adjectives lack such an AgrAdjP, and so do predicative adjectives in German, Dutch and English. It remains unclear why in Romance and Scandinavian, even predicative adjectives should obligatory have an inflectional AgrAdjP.

As the crucial property (to Webelhuth: the property of being attributive, to Lattewitz: the presence of AgrAdjP) is not related to any other differences between German (and Dutch) on one hand and English on the other, and as no account is given of languages where predicative adjectives agree, Webelhuth's and Lattewitz's analyses make no predictions as to which kind of languages should behave like German and which should not.

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

(14)

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

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

(15)

1. Head-initial VPs and AdjPs: English, Romance, Scandinavian
2. Head-final VPs and AdjPs: Afrikaans, Dutch, Frisian, German, Yiddish

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 would seem to conflict with the above classification include the assumption that Yiddish has a head-final VP. I shall follow e. g. Hall (1979), Geilfuß (1991) and Haider/Rosengren (1998, 78–81), against e. g. Santorini (1993), Diesing (1997), in assuming Yiddish to be an OV-language. This is based on a number of parallels between Yiddish and the (other) Germanic OV-languages, e. g. the possibility of scrambling.

Now English belongs to group (15.1) where it before belonged to group (14.2). This regrouping of English has no empirical consequences, however, as it merely says that English may have predicative adjective agreement, not that it has to have it.

5. The subject originates inside the predicative AdjP

Let us for a moment disregard the absence or presence of adjective agreement, and turn to the general analysis of predicative adjectives. 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, 354, (his example 184)):

(16) English

John is [_{AdjP} t₁ [_{Adj'} t₂ intelligent]]

The subject *John* is base-generated in the position marked t₂, i.e. inside the complement of the Adj° *intelligent*. It then moves to the position marked t₁, i.e. AdjP-spec, where adjectival agreement is "checked". Finally it moves out of the AdjP into the subject position of the clause.

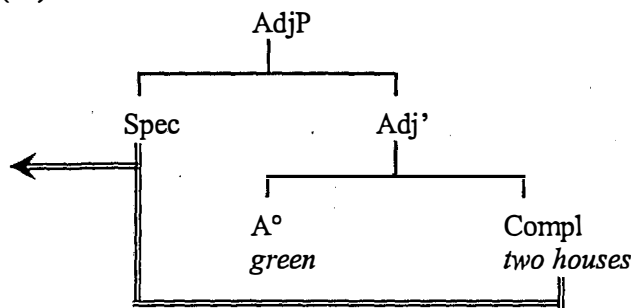
I shall follow this general line of analysis and assume that the subject of a predicative adjective construction has to be linked (presumably by movement) to an empty category inside AP (which represents an empty argument slot in the argument structure of the adjective). If we assume that such a link takes the form of a chain that includes AdjP-spec, the result is adjective agreement. If AdjP-spec is not part of such a chain, there is no adjective agreement.

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* (which do not assign any thematic roles, and which occur to the left of sentential adverbs and 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* (which assign thematic roles, and which occur to the right of sentential adverbs and require *do*-insertion in negated sentences), cf. Vikner (1999, section 5) and references cited there.

6. Extraction does not always have to go via AdjP-spec

I assume that in languages where the AdjP is head-initial, the subject DP of a predicative adjective construction is base-generated either inside the complement of Adj°, (17a, b), or in AdjP-spec, (17c). 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 (17b) 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°. As the movement in question is an A-movement, it would follow from e.g. Rizzi (1990, 93), which basically says that any particular type of movement may not skip any specifiers of the same type. As both IP-spec and AdjP-spec are potential argument positions, i.e. A-positions, the movement to IP-spec may not skip AdjP-spec, cf. the impossible (17b), in which an attempt is made to skip the specifier:

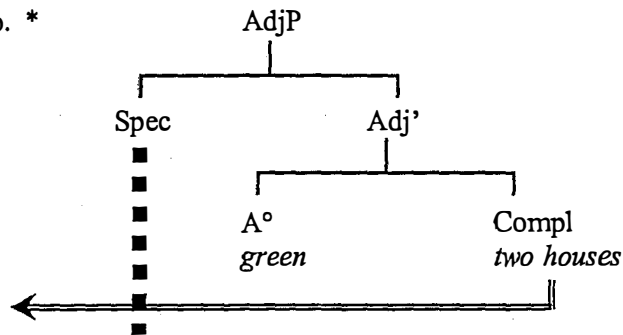
(17) a



The result is adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is part of the chain)

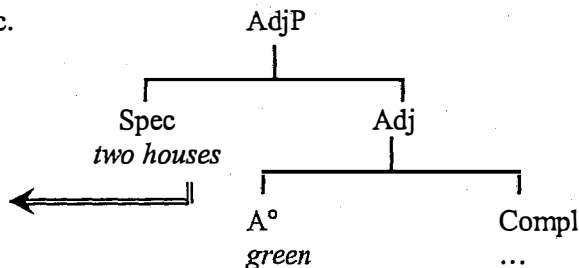
b. *



The result is adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is part of the chain)

c.



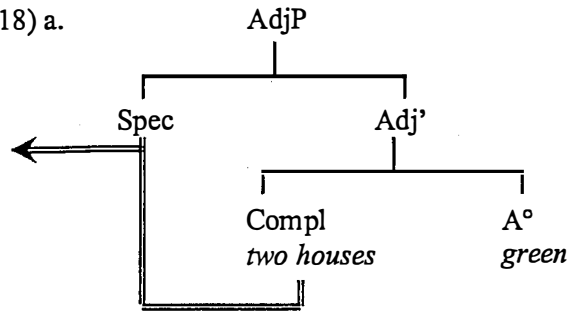
The result is adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is part of the chain)

As the analysis suggested here can account for predicative adjective agreement, both if the subject of the clause is base-generated inside the complement of Adj°, (17a), and if it is base-generated in AdjP-spec, (17c), the analysis has nothing to say about whether ergative (unaccusative) adjectives exist, cf. the debate in e. g. Burzio (1986, 74, n13), Cinque (1990), and Abraham (1995, 268).

Adapting the analysis of head-final VPs in Haider/Rosengren (1998, 48–51), I would like to suggest that in languages where the AdjP is head-final, there is one more option, in addition to base-generation in the complement of Adj°, (18a,b), or in AdjP-spec, (18c): Base-generation in a position left-adjoined to AdjP, (18d). If a DP is generated in this position, movement of the DP out of AdjP does not have to go via AdjP-spec. Leaving the AdjP from the adjoined position without going through AdjP-spec could not be seen as skipping AdjP-spec, (18d), as opposed to the impossible (18b), where leaving the AdjP without going through AdjP-spec counts as skipping:

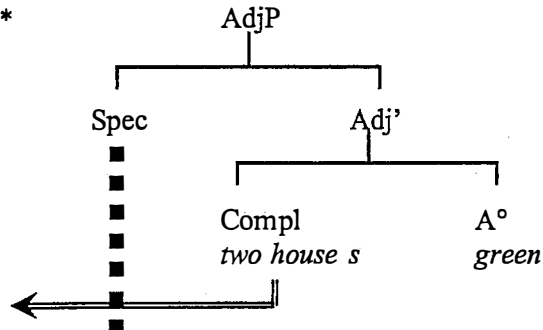
(18) a.



The result is adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is part of the chain)

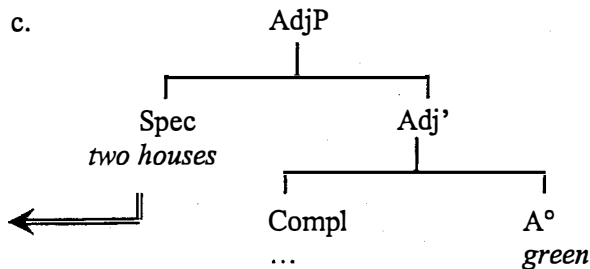
b. *



The result would have been no adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is not part of the chain)

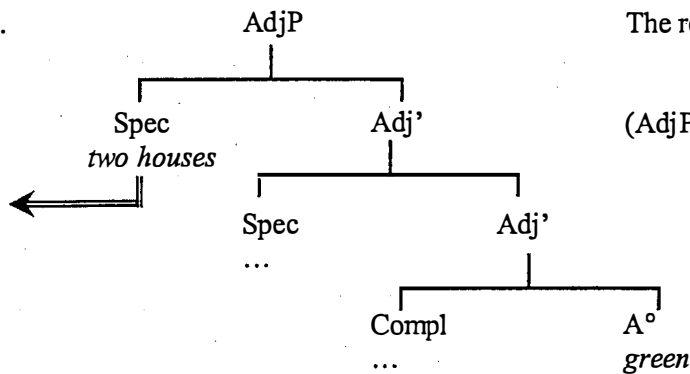
c.



The result is adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is part of the chain)

d.



The result is no adjective agreement

(AdjP-spec is not part of the chain)

Why do head-final AdjPs only base-generate the subject DP in the position adjoined to AdjP, (18d), when it should also be possible to do this in AdjP-spec, (18c), or in the complement of Adj°, (18a)? The reason why (18a,c) need to be ruled out is that they would lead to predicate adjective agreement in precisely those languages where this is not found.

One possible answer to the above question is that the derivation with the subject DP base-generated adjoined to AdjP, (18d), is more economical than derivations with the DP base-generated in AdjP-spec, (18c), or in the complement of Adj°, (18a). (18d) could either be more economical than (18c) (and a fortiori (18a)) because the first step involved in the movement to IP-spec is shorter, as it starts out somewhat higher in the tree, or because the movement to IP-spec involves fewer steps. The latter would only work if all extractions from AdjP have to go via a position adjoined to AdjP, cf. e. g. Chomsky (1986, 76) on A-movement of a DP out of VP having to go via a position adjoined to VP. A potential problem with this particular analysis is that it would be impossible to tell ergative (unaccusative) adjectives apart from unergative ones, and it is thus incompatible with the analysis in Cinque (1990). At any rate, for the analysis to work, not only (18b), but also (18a, c) would have to be ruled out.

Another question that arises in connection with (17) and (18) above is: Why is it only possible to base-generate the subject DP in a position adjoined to AdjP if the AdjP is head-final? In other words, why is there no head-initial version of (18d)?

As stated above, I adopt Haider/Rosengren's (1998, 48–51) assumption that a lexical X° may license any positions inside its maximal projections (i.e. including adjoined positions, cf. e. g. Chomsky 1986, 9), provided the licensing takes place in the specified direction. In head-initial XPs, this direction is rightwards ("progressive licensing"), and in head-final XPs, this direction is leftwards ("regressive licensing").

The reason why there is no well-formed version of (18d) in head-initial AdjPs, i.e. base-generation of the subject DP in a position left-adjoined to AdjP, is thus that any element base-generated in this position would not be licensed by a head-initial Adj°, because a head-initial Adj° is only able to license to the right.³

The question is then, if the licensing direction is so crucial, why is it not possible to base-generate the subject DP in a position right-adjoined to (a head-initial) AdjP? The answer is that it is universally impossible to adjoin to the right. It is only the complement of lexical X°s which may occur either to the left or to the right of this X°. At all other points in the syntax, the sequence is fixed. Here I follow Haider/Rosengren's (1998, 48) Basic Branching Condition (BBC): "The branching node of the projection line is to the right of its sister node" (cf. Haider's 1993, 28 Binary Branching Conjecture and Haider's 1997, 15 Branching Constraint). In other words: According to the BBC, all adjoined positions, all specifiers, and all non-lexical (i.e. functional) heads are exclusively found on left branches.

³ This gives rise to the question of how specifiers are licensed in X°-initial XPs. Haider/Rosengren (1998, 49): By movement of the lexical X° to a higher X°-position. This will, however, also create a new specifier position, which any A-movement extraction would have to pass through, again predicting agreement.

A definite weakness of the present analysis is that it does not tie predicative adjective agreement to attributive adjective agreement, i.e. I have nothing new to say about why attributives agree in almost all the Germanic and Romance languages (the only exceptions that I am aware of are English and Afrikaans). This weakness, however, is one that this analysis shares with all other analyses that I know of. Not that there is a scarcity of analysis of attributive adjective agreement (cf. also the discussion in section 4 of Webelhuth 1992 and Lattewitz 1997), it is just that none of them connect the two kinds of adjective agreement to each other. Furthermore, there seems to be very little consensus about attributive adjective agreement in the literature, cf. the summary in Delsing (1993, 78–93). Cf. also the following remark from Chomsky (1995, 382, n22): “We still have no good phrase structure theory of such simple matters as attributive adjectives, [...]”.

7. Predictions

The analysis presented above predicts that languages with head-final AdjPs never have predicative adjective agreement. However, there is not much agreement in the literature as to what might count as a reliable independent indication of whether a given language has head-final 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 it is additionally assumed, as was done in section 4 above, that head-finality in the AdjP cooccurs with head-finality in the VP (at least in the Germanic and Romance languages), the analysis yields predictions that are much easier to test, namely that no OV-languages have predicative adjective agreement. As outlined in section 4 above, this turns out to be correct for all the Germanic languages, that is, for all the Germanic languages spoken today. For one of these languages, namely Yiddish, the situation with respect to head-finality in the VP and in the AdjP is not clear. In so far as the analysis here is on the right track, it 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), cf. the discussion of (15) at the end of section 4 above.

Testing the prediction for earlier stages of the Germanic languages is made difficult both by the scarcity of evidence (for many of the older Germanic languages only few or no texts have survived) 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 variants/dialects of the three languages did have predicative adjective agreement, then this is unexpected, in that at least for Old and Middle High German, it is not commonly assumed that they had any variants/dialects which were VO.

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 an 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, 34) and references cited there are right that Gothic was 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 always show predicative adjective agreement. However, given that all the present-day languages are accounted for by the analysis, I am tempted to not take Old and Middle High German to be problematic, since the unexpected cases are in the minority, which leaves only Gothic. Notice that it is of course possible to take some of the older languages, e. g. Gothic, to have head-final VPs and head-initial AdjPs, but such an assumption would raise the question of why this kind of combination is not possible in the modern languages, and thus completely undermine the predictive abilities of the analysis.

The analysis also makes another prediction, still 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 constructions are those where a non-finite verb in V° shows agreement with an argument extracted to the subject position, e. g. passive and unaccusative (ergative) constructions, as the following French examples show (based on Kayne 1985, 77 (his example 31), 84 (his example 74)):

(19) French

- 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 repeinte t_i]
 This table has been repainted.F.SG

(20) French

- a. Les soldats_i sont [_{VP} t_i morts t_i] il y a des années
 The soldier are died.M.PL it there has of years
 "The soldiers have died years ago"
- b. Les victimes_i sont [_{VP} t_i mortes t_i] il y a des années
 The victims are died.F.PL it there has of years
 "The victims have died years ago"

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. Under the present analysis, such agreement should never occur in the OV-languages, as here there would be no need to move through VP-spec, cf. the argumentation above why A-movement out of AdjP does not have to go via AdjP-spec in head-final AdjPs. 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 (19) and (20), even though the same participles might show agreement used in other constructions, e. g. used attributively.⁴

Notice that no predictions are made about subject-verb agreement, since this is agreement between the subject and not the lexical head, V^o, but a functional one, the name of which vary between different analyses, namely Infl^o (I^o) or AgrS^o or, according to Chomsky (1995, 377), T^o.

8. Conclusion

In this paper, 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^o or V^o under A-extraction, because in these languages such extraction may not go via the AdjP-spec or VP-spec. This analysis accounts for facts which, as far as I am aware, have not been accounted for so far. The predictions made for the modern languages seem to hold (none of the OV-languages have predicative adjective agreement), even if the predictions made for the older languages are not quite as impressive (here the main problem case would seem to be Gothic).

The paper 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 a language with so little agreement morphology as Danish. This analysis thus re-

⁴ Of course, such agreement may also be missing in VO-languages. The prediction is only that such agreement cannot exist in OV-languages, but that it may exist in VO-languages. Many VO-languages nevertheless do not have agreement with the participles in constructions like (19) and (20), e. g. English or Spanish. Also in Danish, agreement is not complete, there is a difference between verbal passives (without agreement) and adjectival passives (with agreement), cf. the examples in Allan et al. (1995, 321-22).

solves 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.

This allows us to keep the general view that both German and Icelandic are languages which tend to express agreements with respect to many categories (person, number, gender, case, ...) , whenever they have the chance, whereas 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.

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