FROM APPOSITION TO CLASSIFICATION: POLISH VS. LITHUANIAN[1]

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Abstract. This paper discusses the diachronic development of the word order of certain adnominal modifiers in Polish and Lithuanian. First, I will try to trace the historical evolution of the syntax of adjectival elements in Polish. In Old Polish, such modifiers invariably appeared in preposition with respect to the head noun. As shown by Brajerski (1963), in the second half of the fifteenth century they started to be commonly placed postnominally. I argue that the structure of this syntactic innovation was as follows: the postnominal adjective was part of an appositive DP, whose function was to specify the denotation of the head noun. This analysis finds support in the phenomenon of preposition doubling: the structure P-N-P-A is well attested in Old Polish, which suggests that the postnominal adjective was syntactically detached from the head noun. In Modern Polish adjectives appear postnominally only if they subclassify the denoted entity as belonging to a certain category/type. I will argue that the Modern Polish classifying construction has evolved from the Old Polish appositive configuration as a result of syntactic reanalysis (which could be viewed as simplification). I will also explore Say's (2004) suggestion that the word order of genitival phrases in Old Lithuanian might have been influenced by the pre- vs. postnominal adjectival contrast in Polish. Ultimately, I will argue against this hypothesis. As shown by Rutkowski and Progovac (2006), the structural difference which in Polish results in the premodification vs. postmodification word order pattern is also present in Lithuanian, but not in the syntax of genitives.

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1. Introduction

In Modern Polish there is a clear-cut syntactic distinction between qualifying and classifying adjectives: the former precede the modified noun, while the latter always appear postnominally, for example:

(1)   a.   szkoła podstawowa[2]
              school elementary
              'elementary school' (a type of school)
         b.   *podstawowa szkoła
              elementary school

(2)   a.   aparat cyfrowy
              camera digital
              'digital camera' (a type of camera)
         b.   *cyfrowy aparat
              digital camera

The present paper investigates the historical origin of the N-A classifying structure. This syntactic configuration is very unusual for Slavic languages. It is often viewed as resulting from the impact of Latin on Old Polish. I argue that the N-A pattern was indeed calqued from Latin, but it was introduced to Old Polish as an appositive construction, and only later was reanalyzed as a single DP. Another goal of this paper is to examine to what extent the classifying structure that emerged in Polish influenced analogous nominal expressions in Lithuanian.

2. N-A structures in Modern Polish

Modern Polish adjectives typically precede the modified noun. However, the construction exemplified in (1a-2a) above is a notable exception. I will refer to this kind of syntactic structure as the "classifying construction." It consists of a noun and a postnominal adjective with a categorizing function. The adjective is used as a classifying term: it subclassifies the entity denoted by the noun as belonging to a certain class/type (Warren 1984).

Rutkowski and Progovac (2005) argue that the N-A word order in the classifying construction is derived from the underlying A-N configuration

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[2] Unless stated otherwise, all examples used in this paper are taken from standard Modern Polish.

by syntactic movement. Namely, the noun is moved from its base position in N° to a higher functional head (which Rutkowski and Progovac (2005) refer to as Class°).[3] This movement is triggered by feature checking needs: a feature that yields the classifying reading is merged in Class° and needs to be checked by the noun. As a result of the N°-to-Class° raising, the adjective, which occupies a fixed syntactic position in the specifier of NP, must surface postnominally.

3.   N-A structures in Old Polish

As noted by Brajerski (1959, 1963), among many others, the postnominal placement of adjectives in the classifying construction must be considered a Latin influence (in Latin, adjectives typically appear in postposition). Brajerski (1963) examines the word order of Old Polish possessive pronouns (which, in terms of morphology and syntax, should be interpreted as adjectival elements). He shows that postnominal modifiers were significantly more common in the second than in the first half of the fifteenth century. This means that sometime around the year 1450, a new syntactic configuration emerged in Polish. This coexistence of two different adjectival structures was conditioned semantically: the A-N word order was used in regular attributive contexts, while the function of the N-A pattern was to clarify or provide further specification of the denotation of the head noun. Brajerski (1963) argues that an Old Polish N-A sequence would be roughly equivalent to the following expression: 'N, that is to say A N' (see example (3)).

(3) Old Polish
     żyto moje
     rye my
     'rye, that is to say my rye'

I interpret such clarification structures as more complex syntactically than their equivalents of the A-N type. The clarifying part should be

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[3] As noted by Rutkowski and Progovac (2005), *ClassP* is merely a tentative label, which could be paraphrased as "a functional layer located immediately above NP, which is targeted by N-raising in classifying structures". Possibly, ClassP might be correlated with another, better established functional layer in the universal nominal structure (such as *nP*). I do not discuss this issue in the present paper because it does not influence the analysis presented below.

analyzed as an appositive DP, attached to the main DP in an adjunctive fashion.[4] This is illustrated in (4).

(4) Old Polish

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                        DP
                       /  \
                     DP    DP
                     /\    /\
                    /__\  /__\
                  żyto 'rye'  moje 'my'
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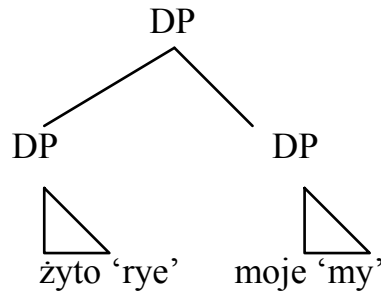
This structural analysis finds confirmation in the phenomenon of preposition doubling. As shown by Brajerski (1963), when Old Polish N-A expressions were used in Prepositional Phrases, the preposition could be optionally doubled:
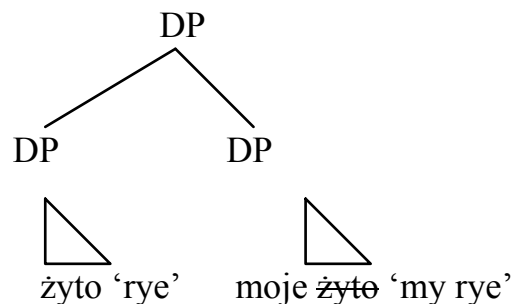
(5) Old Polish
     w życie w mojem
     in rye   in my
     'in rye, that is to say in my rye'

This suggests that the adjective was syntactically detached from the head noun. If we assume that P° always selects a DP complement, the postnominal possessive pronoun in (5) must be interpreted as located in a separate DP. However, despite this syntactic distance, the postnominal modifier agreed with the head noun in number, case, and gender. Thus, the noun must have been present in both DPs. This, in turn, means that one of its occurrences was subject to deletion under identity (see the structures in (6), where the deleted material is crossed out):

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[4] The hypothesis that the postnominal placement of adjectives is derived from an appositive structure seems to find some cross-linguistic motivation. As shown by DeLancey (1994), exactly the same reanalysis has taken place in Tibetan, where structures with postpositional adjectives result from a grammaticalization of an original appositive construction.

(6) Old Polish

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                    DP
                   /  \
                  /    \
                DP      DP
               /|      /|
              / |     / |
             /__|    /__|
         żyto 'rye'   moje ż̶y̶t̶o̶ 'my rye'
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The deletion analysis is confirmed by Brajerski's (1963) observation that postnominal third-person possessive pronouns were significantly less frequent than postnominal first- and second-person possessive pronouns in fifteenth-century Polish. This fact is not surprising because third-person possessive pronouns are genitival forms of corresponding personal pronouns in Polish and, therefore, do not exhibit adjectival morphology. As shown by Lobeck (1995), among others, in many languages ellipsis is impossible unless licensed by adjectival morphology.

4. Diachronic Reanalysis

In Modern Polish preposition doubling is not allowed in N-A sequences:

(7) a.   o   szkole podstawowej
          about school elementary
          'about the elementary school'

     b. *o   szkole o   podstawowej
          about school about elementary

Therefore, there is no reason to assume that postnominal modifiers are attached to the head noun in an appositive manner. They have been integrated into the main DP. It seems that principles of structural economy (cf. e.g. Roberts and Roussou 1999) triggered syntactic simplification along the following lines:

(8) Old Polish bi-phrasal structure

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                        DP
                   ┌─────┴─────┐
                  DP            DP
              ┌────┴────┐    ┌───┴──────────┐
             D°         NP   D°             NP
                        │                 ┌──┴──┐
                        N°                      N°
                        │                       │
                       noun    adjective       n̶o̶u̶n̶
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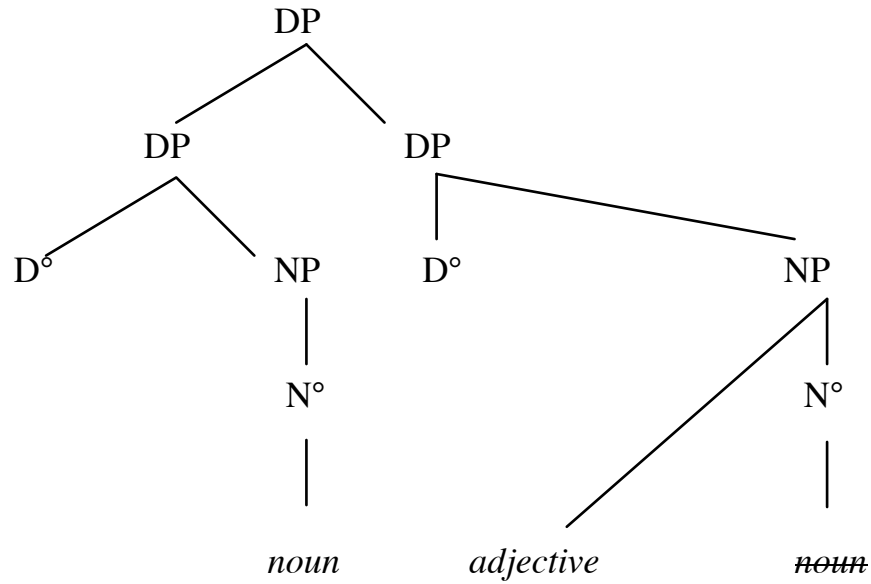
(9) Modern Polish mono-phrasal structure

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                DP
                 └────┐
                    ClassP
                   ┌──┴──────────┐
                 Class°          NP
                   │           ┌──┴──┐
                 noun_i             N°
                   ▲                 │
                   ┆    adjective   t_i
                   ┆                 ┆
                   └─────────────────┘
```
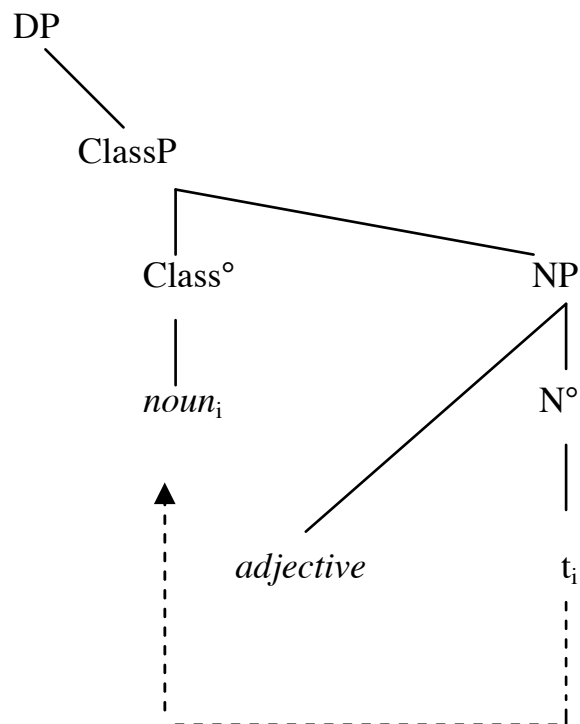
This reanalysis was possible thanks to the activation of a functional projection (ClassP), associated with a specific semantic function. Note that the Old Polish N-A structures tended to be definite (therefore, they are very well attested in the syntax of possessive pronouns). However, in the

development of Polish, the definite reading has been narrowed to classification.[5] We might hypothesize that the appositive structure of Old Polish must have been used frequently in classifying contexts (where the denotation of the noun was specified by being classified—'school, that is to say the elementary school' or 'school, the elementary one'), and that at some point the classifying function dominated other uses. The pre-adjectival placement of the noun was reinterpreted as derived by movement, whereas the modifier lost its appositive characteristics: it was not an additional comment/clarification any more. The whole structure became just a regular DP, although with a specific reading.

The structural simplification illustrated in (8) and (9) made the ellipsis of one of the occurrences of the head noun redundant. In Modern Polish, the head noun can both agree with the classifying adjective and appear before that adjective, because part of its covert raising to D° (which could be stipulated independently for theoretical reasons, as related to the mechanism of feature checking) has been made overt. Therefore, there is no need for the complicated appositive base generation: the postnominal word order that at some point became associated with classification could now be derived in a more economical way.

5.   Genitives and the Lithuanian ClassP

This section confronts the evolution of the ClassP model in Polish (as outlined above) with certain facts about the historical development of the word order of genitival phrases in Lithuanian. In Modern Lithuanian, such phrases usually appear preposed with respect to the head noun (with the notable exception of pseudo-partitive constructions (Rutkowski 2007a), (2007b), for example:

(10) Modern Lithuanian
    a. Adomo brolis
       Adam-GEN brother
       'Adam's brother'

    b. *brolis Adomo
       brother Adam-GEN

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[5] Interestingly, as shown by Rutkowski and Progovac (2005), classifying adjectival structures in Serbian also resemble morphologically definite constructions, suggesting a more general correlation between the notions of definiteness and classification.

(11) Modern Lithuanian
    a.   Lenkijos valdžia
        Poland-GEN government
       'government of Poland'

    b. *valdžia Lenkijos
        government Poland-GEN

Say (2004) shows that in Old Lithuanian the distribution of genitives was different, namely that they were placed either pre- or post-nominally, depending on their interpretation. Possessive, objective, and subjective genitives were located after the head noun. This is illustrated in (12-14) below.[6]

(12) Old Lithuanian
     isz   akiu Aniutes
     from eyes Aniute-GEN
     'from Aniute's eyes'

(13) Old Lithuanian
    pasamdimas kutias
    renting sty-GEN
    'the renting of the sty'

(14) Old Lithuanian
    unt kłausima karalos
    on question king-GEN
    'to the question of the king'

On the other hand, genitives which referred to various characterizing qualities of the head noun appeared preposed:

(15) Old Lithuanian
    sidobro blizguczai
    silver-GEN spangles
    'silver spangles'

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[6] Examples (12-16) are cited after Say (2004) but they originally come from Vasiliauskienė (1998).

(16) Old Lithuanian
     ape   sanowas   gadyni
     about old.times-GEN days
     'about (the) days of yore'

The above distinction correlated with referentiality: the prenominal genitives were usually devoid of a particular referent, while the postnominal ones were highly referential.

     According to Say (2004), the postnominal placement of referential genitives in Old Lithuanian is an example of a syntactic borrowing from Polish (see also Zinkevičius 1996: 181-182). Such a contact-induced influence was possible due to the common use of Polish by the Lithuanian elite and the translation of early Lithuanian written texts from Polish. Say (2004:372) states his hypothesis in the following way:

> Polish influence could have indeed initiated (or at least strengthened) the tendency to express referential/non-referential distinction by the position of the genitive in Old Lithuanian.…The Polish system of nominal modifiers could have triggered or strengthened the differentiation of the two types of genitives in Lithuanian. In other words, the source and target systems have been assimilated, even though the morphosyntactic patterns of the two languages were different.

To phrase it differently, Say (2004) suggests that the distinction between prenominal and postnominal adjectives in Polish was calqued onto the syntax of genitives in Old Lithuanian. In principle, this is a conceivable scenario because there is nothing in the structure of the ClassP model (as proposed by Rutkowski and Progovac (2005)) that would prevent genitival phrases from occurring in the classifying position (similarly to APs). Note that characterizing genitival expressions in Lithuanian (such as *sidobro* 'silver-GEN' in (15)) correspond to adjectives in Polish, for example:

(17) srebrne błyskotki
     silver-ADJ spangles
     'silver spangles'

     However, Say's (2004) analysis is called into question by the fact that another syntactic phenomenon in Lithuanian corresponds to the Polish pre-/postposition adjectival contrast. Note that when a Lithuanian nominal expression contains both a qualifying adjective and a genitival phrase, the latter is always placed closer to the head noun (Rutkowski 2007a):

(18) Modern Lithuanian
    a. žalia Reginos   suknelė
      green Regina-GEN dress
      'Regina's green dress'

    b.*Reginos   žalia suknelė
      Regina-GEN green dress

This generalization does not cover examples such as (19a), however, in which the adjective is bracketed by the genitival phrase and the noun.

(19) Modern Lithuanian
    a.   Reginos   žalioji arbata
       Regina-GEN green   tea
       'Regina's green tea'

    b.   *žalioji Reginos   arbata
       green Regina-GEN tea

Schmalstieg (1988) points out that the GEN-A-N word order is possible only if the A-N sequence forms a terminological unit. Rutkowski and Progovac (2006) account for this phenomenon by postulating that the adjective *žalioji* 'green' in (19a) is a classifying modifier, which means that it is located below Class°. Their analysis implies that the ClassP configuration, which results in the pre-/postposition contrast in Polish, is also syntactically active in Lithuanian. However, in Lithuanian classifying structures such as (19a), the noun moves to Class° covertly, not overtly. The trace of the moved noun is licensed by the so-called "long" adjectival morphology: therefore, the example (19a) is grammatical only if the long form *žalioji*, and not the short form *žalia,* is used. The covert movement in question is illustrated in (20).

(20) Modern Lithuanian classifying structure

DP
                ClassP
        Class°   NP
          |
        noun$_i$ N°
                    long   t$_i$
                    adjective

covert movement   - - - - - ▶
morphological licensing ━━━━━▶

    As such, I conclude that the ClassP pattern in Lithuanian is unlikely to
accommodate both classifying adjectives and postnominal genitives at the
same time. Therefore, Say's (2004) hypothesis does not find
straightforward confirmation, unless it can be proven that the structural
configuration underlying the word order of genitives in Old Lithuanian
was later reanalyzed in a way similar to the Polish ClassP pattern in
classifying adjectival expressions.

    Interestingly, although the influence of the Polish ClassP pattern on the
nominal syntax of Lithuanian is uncertain, in some dialects of Polish
spoken in present-day Lithuania, such an influence is well-attested but in
the opposite direction. As pointed out by Karaś (2002) and Masojć (2001),
among others, Polish dialects spoken around Vilnius and Kaunas do not
place the classifying adjective in postposition. Thus, similar to Lithuanian,
they do not have overt N-raising in classifying structures.

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