

## The determiner restriction in Romance and Germanic nominalizations

Gianina Iordăchioaia  
University of Stuttgart

It has been noted, at least as early as Lees (1960), that some nominalizations in English are fully flexible with respect to determiner selection, while others are restricted (see (1a) vs. (1b)).

(1) a. **John's/the/that/a** performance of the song                      b. **John's/\*the/\*that/\*a** performing the song  
I take a syntactic approach to nominalization (e.g., van Hout & Roeper 1998, Borsley & Kornfilt 2000, Alexiadou 2001, Borer 2005) and on the basis of Romanian, Spanish and German I show that this contrast correlates with a distinction between nominalizations with full (1a) vs. defective (1b) nominal structure. I take the fully nominal structure to be introduced by the categorizing nP layer and argue that the restriction on determiners is due to unvalued gender and number features on D which can only be valued via Agree with the corresponding features of n (Pesetsky & Torrego 2007). Determiners in defective nominalizations (without an nP) receive a 'default' value just like verbs that agree with CP-subjects. The languages I discuss are particularly instructive, as they mark gender morphologically, thus evidencing syntactic gender features in full nominals, but not in defective ones (Picallo 2006), although the contrast is not a matter of a Romance/non-Romance parameter, but one of microvariation.

**Full vs. defective nominalizations.** The contrast in (1) can be replicated in German, Romanian and Spanish deverbal nominals in (2) and (3), where the fully nominal pattern is flexible, while the more verbal one only allows the definite determiner. Italian displays a similar contrast (see Zucchi 1993), while German also has it with deadjectival nominals.

- |     |  |                                   |
|-----|--|-----------------------------------|
| (2) | a. <b>das/jenes/ein</b> nächtliche(s) Beobachten <i>der Sterne</i><br>the/that/a nightly-adj observe.Inf the.Gen stars                     | <i>German nominal infinitive</i>  |
|     | b. <b>El/ese/aquel/un</b> lamentar <i>de dos pastores</i><br>the/this/that/a lament.Inf of two shepherds                                   | <i>Spanish nominal infinitive</i> |
|     | c. <b>o/acea</b> încălcare(a) (a) drepturilor omului <i>de către ministru</i><br>a/that violate.Inf(the) of rights.Gen man.Gen by minister | <i>Romanian infinitive</i>        |
| (3) | a. <b>das/*jenes/*ein</b> ständig (nachts) <i>die Sterne</i> Beobachten<br>the/that/a constantly at-night the stars observe.Inf            | <i>German verbal infinitive</i>   |
|     | b. <b>El/*ese/*aquel/*un</b> haber <i>él escrito esa carta</i><br>the/this/ that/ a have.Inf he.Nom written that letter                    | <i>Spanish verbal infinitive</i>  |
|     | c. <b>(*un/*acel)</b> spălat( <b>ul</b> ) (al) rufelor<br>a/that wash.Sup(the) of laundry.Gen  | <i>Romanian supine</i>            |

Previous literature argued for a contrast in terms of nominal properties with respect to the above nominalizations (Plann 1981, Picallo 1991, Miguel 1996, Iordachioaia & Soare 2008, AIS 2011), which is best illustrated by modification tests. While nominals in (1a)/(2) allow adjectives, the ones in (1b)/(3) only allow adverbs (see German (2a) vs. (3a) and Spanish (4a) vs. (4b)).

- |     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| (4) | a. el <b>dulce</b> lamentar de dos pastores<br>the sweet lament.Inf of two shepherds  |  |
|     | b. el ( <b>*constante</b> ) escribir ella novelas <b>constantemente/*constante</b><br>the constant write.Inf she novels constantly/constant |  |

German offers additional support for the correlation between adjectival modification and flexibility with determiners in that the verbal infinitive in (3a) builds a minimal pair with a more nominal version solely based on adverbial vs. adjectival modification. The flexibility of determiners shows up with the adjective in (5a) and is blocked with the adverb in (5b).

- |     |  |               |
|-----|--|---------------|
| (5) | a. das/*jenes/*ein <b>ständig</b> (die) Sterne Beobachten<br>the/that/a constantly the stars observe.Inf | <i>German</i> |
|     | b. das/jenes/ein <b>ständige(s)</b> (die) Sterne Beobachten<br>the/that/a constant the stars observe.Inf |               |

Since adjectival modification is a property intrinsic to nominal categories, I follow AIS (2011) and take it to indicate the presence of the categorizer level nP, which must be missing in nominalizations that disallow adjectives. The relevant levels of structure in the two kinds of nominalizations are given in (6). All nominals have external nominal syntax (introduced by DP), but only the fully nominal ones also have an internal nominal syntax (introduced by nP). In addition, various (external) projections can be inherited from the original category:

- (6) a. [DP ... **nP** (... ExtP...)] [orig-catP [Root] *full nominals* ((1a), (2), (4a), (5b))  
 b. [DP [... ExtP...]] [orig-catP [Root] *defective nominals* ((1b), (3), (4b), (5a))

**Gender valuation between DP and nP.** I explain the determiner restriction in (6b) via the lack of the nP layer. Determiners have unvalued gender and number features that are valued by the corresponding valued features on n, via Agree (see Pesetsky & Torrego 2007). This happens in lexical nouns and full nominalizations. But languages also have a (grammaticalized) 'default' determiner that they use as in (3) to adapt a non-nominal category to a nominal syntactic context. This determiner (i.e., English 's, German *das*, Spanish *el*, Romanian *-l* 'the'), I propose, has unvalued gender and number features that receive a default value. Similar default values for gender and number are at play with CP-anaphora in (7a) and when a CP subject agrees with the verb as in (7b).

- (7) a. [John lost my book]<sub>i</sub>. **It**<sub>i</sub> bothers me.  
 b. [That John lost my book] **bothers** me.

As a confirmation that defective nominalizations in (6b) receive a default gender feature I show that in Spanish, Romanian and German, they are anaphorically referred to by means of a CP-anaphor, while the fully nominal ones in (6a) are referred to by gender-marked anaphors (see Plann 1981, Miguel 1996 for Spanish, Iordachioaia & Soare 2008 for Romanian and AIS 2011 for German).

**'Default'/Expletive determiners.** A further question that arises is why languages differ as to the determiner that appears in defective nominalizations: English possessive vs. German/Spanish/Romanian definite determiner. First, possessives in German, Spanish and Romanian display a non-unitary behavior, but are more restricted by comparison to the English one, which may stand for a wide variety of semantic relations between the possessor and the nominal (see, e.g., *yesterday's/John's destruction of the city*, Marantz 1998). Second, I show that the definite determiner in English is more restricted than in German/Romanian/Spanish, where it can act expletively (cf. Brugger 1993, Longobardi 1994). Thus in German/Romanian/Spanish, the expletive definite determiner allows a Q-adverb to take scope over the nominal (German (8a), Romanian (8b)). English *the* cannot be used expletively, it is fully referential, so the Q-adverb in (8c) has no free variable to quantify over in the presence of an i-level predicate.

- (8) a. **Die Biber/Biber** sind **oft** intelligent.  
 b. **Castori-i/\*Castori** sunt adesea inteligenți.  
 c. **Beavers/\*The beavers** are **often** intelligent.

This contrast can also be observed in English nominalizations, where the definite determiner in (9a) blocks the Q-adverb on a generic reading (like in (8c)), while the possessive in (9b) allows the Q-adverb (like in (8a) and (8b)). This confirms that the possessive in English behaves like expletive definite determiners in the other languages, while the definite determiner is referential. The expletive definite determiner appearing on nominalizations in the other languages allows the Q-adverb, as illustrated for the Romanian translation of (9) in (10).

- (9) a. **The** performance of the Traviata by John (**\*often**) guarantees the attention of the others.  
 b. **John's** performing/(performance of) the T. **often** guarantees the attention of the others.  
 (10) a. **Interpretarea** Traviatei de catre Ion **adesea** garanteaza atentia totala a celor din jur.  
 b. **Interpretatul** Traviatei de catre Ion **adesea** garanteaza atentia totala a celor din jur.

**Selected references:** Alexiadou, Iordachioaia & Schäfer (AIS). 2011. Scaling the variation in Romance and Germanic nominalizations. *The Noun Phrase in Romance and Germanic*. Iordachioaia & Soare. 2008. Two kinds of event plurals. *EISS* 7. Picallo. 2006. Some notes on grammatical gender and *l*-pronouns. "Specificity and the evolution/emergence of nominal determination in Romance", Konstanz.