

## *How to become an adjective if you're not strong (enough)? The development of weak "adjectives" in (North) Germanic*

The goal of this talk is to put a new spin on (the emergence of) the so-called weak adjectival inflection, with a particular emphasis on its development into Old Norse. One central claim is that weak "adjectives" started out as noun phrases that are eventually reanalyzed as adjectival phrases. The argument essentially rests on four ideas:

- The adjectival article (*h*)*inn* (ART) in Old Norse, see (4), constitutes an AP with a weakly inflected adjective and is not a determiner in xNP<sup>1</sup> (e.g. Börjars and Payne 2016; Börjars et al. 2016; Pfaff 2019)
- Proto-Indo-European (PIE) did not have adjectives/AP as a distinct lexical class/syntactic category, only a category *nominal* comprising both nouns and adjectives; instead of attribution, PIE employed apposition of two nominals (e.g. Osthoff 1876; Bhat 2000; Viti 2015; Adrados et al. 2016; Rehn 2018)
- The '-n-' element of the PIE n-stems is a derivational (nominalization) suffix (rather than merely a thematic element; e.g. Osthoff 1876; Heinrichs 1954)
- **Phrasal Reanalysis**: a certain type of appositive xNP is reanalyzed – at a phrasal level – as AP (between Proto- and Old Norse, i.e. during the Viking Period)

The element *hinn* is attested as demonstrative in Proto-Norse, cf. (2), but from the Viking period onwards, it systematically (co-)occurs with a weakly inflected adjective in appositive use (accompanying proper names), cf. (3). In Old Norse, (*h*)*inn* occurs as adjectival article and, as mentioned above, I will assume that it is an element of AP.

Modifying the idea, that the '-n-' suffix is a nominalizer in PIE (and Proto-Germanic), I propose that the distinction *strong vs. weak adjectives* is a false dichotomy at an early stage; only the former are genuine adjectives, while the latter are at the center of a nominal projection. In addition to evidence from other IE languages (see esp. Heinrichs 1954), one can point to observations from inflectional morphology and the fact that the oldest attestations of weak "adjectives" in North Germanic are appositions.

In a nutshell, I will argue for a development as sketched in the following table:

	PIE	Germanic	Proto Norse	Viking Period
(1)	[ <i>xNP</i> A]	[ <i>xNP</i> A.WK] [ <i>AP</i> A.STR]	[ <i>xNP</i> (DEM) A.WK] [ <i>AP</i> A.STR]	[ <i>AP</i> ART A.WK] [ <i>AP</i> A.STR]

The relevant step here is *re-analysis at the phrasal level*. This process can be seen as a concerted effort involving several components; reanalysis is operative at several levels. Amongst other things, this view explains how a demonstrative – an immediate component of xNP – can end up in the AP: in the process of phrasal reanalysis, it "gets trapped" inside the AP, and is itself reanalyzed. In other words, the grammaticalization of *hinn* (demonstrative >> "appositive" article >> adjectival article) overlaps/interacts with the categorial reanalysis xNP >> AP.

Besides outlining the development of weakly inflected adjectives as such, I will elaborate on the concept of phrasal reanalysis.

<sup>1</sup>xNP represents some unspecified nominal projection, e.g. NP, nP, DP...

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| <p>(2) a. <b>hali hino</b> (N KJ50 \$U)<br/>stone this</p>                           | <p>b. <b>á hitt land</b> (KJ101 \$U)<br/>on this land</p>  |
| <p>(3) a. <b>kuna harats hins kuþa</b> (DR 55)<br/>wife (of) Haraldr ART good.WK</p> | <p>b. <b>abtír kara faþur sin in malsbaka</b> (U 1146)<br/>after Kári father POSS ART eloquent.WK ('... <u>Kári the eloquent</u>, their father')</p> |
| <p>(4) a. (þessi) <b>(h)inn</b> mikli maðr<br/>(this) ART great.WK man</p>           | <p>d. ormr <b>(h)inn</b> langi<br/>serpent ART long.WK</p>   |
| <p>b. <b>hið</b> mesta illmenni<br/>ART greatest.WK villain</p>                      | <p>e. þín <b>hin</b> mesta gæfa<br/>your ART greatest.WK luck</p>  |
| <p>c. þann vetur <b>hinn</b> næsta<br/>that winter ART next.WK</p>                   | <p>f. ... var <b>hinn</b> reiðasti<br/>... was ART angriest.WK</p>   |

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