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# From impersonal to reflexive verb

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## Abstract

Old Swedish had impersonally construed verbs with an oblique subject(-like) Experiencer argument. Most of them are personally construed verbs today, with nominative Experiencer. Whereas this change for most formerly impersonal verbs just showed up as a change from oblique to nominative, a small number of verbs showed an additional change: a reflexive pronoun became obligatory. In this paper I will discuss two possible analyses of this change. The first possibility is that the reflexive is the spell-out of a trace in the object position, a visible marking that the surface subject is an underlying object. According to the other possible analysis, the reflexive verb is regularly formed from a causative verb, with Agent/Source subject and Experiencer object. As will be shown, the formally impersonal verbs that developed a reflexive are attested as causative transitive verbs.

## 1 Introduction

A number of Experiencer verbs in Swedish have changed from impersonal to personal construction, as illustrated in (1):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a Konugenom drömde ... at hans gudh amon soff när hans hustru (ST 512)  
king.DEF.DAT dreamt that his god Amon slept close his wife  
'The king dreamt that his god Amon slept close to his wife.'
- b Jag drömde att jag flög  
I.NOM dreamt that I flew  
'I dreamt that I flew.'

The topic of this paper is a number of Old Swedish impersonal verbs that developed into reflexive verbs, i.e. verbs obligatorily taking the reflexive pronoun *sig*, as illustrated in (2):<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the English glosses of Old Swedish impersonal verbs I will throughout use a verb or a verb phrase corresponding to the personal construction found in Modern Swedish. Many pronouns in Old Swedish were ambiguous between dative and accusative. These forms will be glossed OBL. Case will be glossed only when relevant for the discussion, i.e. in connection with verbs with experiencer arguments of different types. Morphological case was almost completely lost in Early Modern Swedish. A common object form, distinct from nominative, was preserved for personal pronouns. This form will be glossed OBJ in Early and Late Modern Swedish below. Traditionally, the 1526 translation of The New Testament is considered to be the end of (Late) Old Swedish and the beginning of (Early) Modern Swedish, a custom I follow.

<sup>2</sup> *Sig* will not be glossed. With some verbs, *sig* is obligatory (as with *gruva*), and "reflexive" should be understood as a label of the form, not as denoting coreference with an antecedent. In these cases *sig* cannot be replaced by another NP/DP. With other verbs, *sig* can have reference, e.g. *tvätta sig* 'wash (oneself)'. The distinction between referential and non-referential *sig* is often described as vague. Of relevance in this paper will be a middle interpretation of *sig*, where *sig* turns a transitive verb into an intransitive verb; see further below.

- (2) a ty grwffuar mik encte for these xij (Di 170)  
 therefore feels-distressed me.OBL not for these 12  
 ‘Therefore, I don’t dread these 12 men.’
- b Han gruvar sig för detta  
 he.NOM feels-uneasy REFL about this  
 ‘He feels uneasy about this.’

(2a) shows the Old Swedish construction, where the verb *gruva* is construed with an Experiencer argument in oblique case. In Modern Swedish *gruva* is construed with a nominative subject and an obligatory reflexive *sig*, as in (2b). Other verbs that developed in this way are *ångra sig* ‘repent’ and *nöja sig* ‘be content’, in Early Modern Swedish also *fasa sig* ‘dread’ and *behaga sig* ‘be delighted’.

I will discuss two alternative analyses of the development from impersonal to reflexive verb. According to the first analysis, *sig* (Old Swedish *sik*) is a spell-out of a trace in the object position, a visible marking that the surface subject is an underlying object. According to the other analysis, *sig* is the result of reinterpreting the verb as an ordinary transitive verb, where *sig* denotes a middle reading. Before presenting these two alternatives in more detail, I will briefly sketch the theoretical background I will take as my point of departure.

## 1.1 Theoretical background

Impersonal verbs have gained a lot of attention, both the change illustrated in (1) and the status of the oblique argument in clauses like (1a). The change took place in Germanic languages like English and the Mainland Scandinavian languages (see for instance Allen 1995 on English, Falk 1997 on Swedish), while the impersonal construction was kept in languages like Icelandic and German (see for instance Thráinsson 2007: 158–167). This paper will focus on the special development illustrated in (2), from impersonal to reflexive in Swedish. As for the status of the oblique argument it has been established for Modern Icelandic that the oblique argument is the structural subject (see Thráinsson 2007: 158–167, with references). Its status in older varieties of Germanic is less clear, however. Eythórsson & Barðdal (2003) argue that oblique subjects were found in all varieties of the Old Germanic languages, whereas Falk (1997) proposes that oblique arguments did not have subject status in Old Swedish. This much-debated question will not be addressed in this paper, as the proposed analyses are compatible with either of the analyses. Of importance is instead that the oblique argument was the highest argument of the verb.

The change in Swedish from the impersonal to the personal construction illustrated in (1) above is described in detail by Lindqvist (1912). He argues that the development should be explained in terms of a tendency to identify the “psychological subject” (oblique in impersonal constructions) with the “syntactic subject” (nominative in personal constructions). Sundman (1985) instead argues that the development is the consequence of a semantic change in the verbs, such that an experiencer in no control of the event whatsoever (imper-

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1p and 2p have no distinct reflexive forms; instead, personal pronouns (*mig* ‘me’, *dig* ‘you’, etc.) are used. They will also be glossed REFL.



like *lika* showed the case pattern dative + nominative.<sup>4</sup> The construction change reflects loss of lexical case. The Experiencer of an impersonal verb like *dröma*, *lika*, etc. will then turn up in nominative (visible only on personal pronouns in Modern Swedish).

Old Swedish also had dative Experiencers that did not change to nominative. Just like transitive verbs like *gläpja* they could resemble impersonal verbs on the surface, cf. (3) above:

- (5) thz rækker oss allom ekki at (ST 350)  
 it is-enough us.DAT all.DAT not PRT  
 ‘This is not enough for all of us’

Typically, these datives were optional arguments, i.e., not lexically specified. Thus, the dative case was not lexical but purely semantic (Falk 1997:45–46, 56–60). These optional Experiencers will be called free datives below.

## 1.2 From impersonal to reflexive verb: two possible analyses

The morpheme *-s* is historically derived from the reflexive pronoun Old Swedish *sik*. Its main function in Modern Swedish is to form the passive (*jaga – jagas* ‘hunt – be hunted’). In this paper, another function will be of relevance, namely to turn a transitive verb into a middle verb. Often there is a synonymous reflexive form. For instance, from transitive *samlar* ‘collect (something)’, an *s*-form or *sig*-form is formed, with a middle, non-agentive reading ‘collect’; Note the bold *-s* in (6b), not glossed:

- (6) a Jag samlar damm  
 I collect dust  
 ‘I collect dust.’  
 b Damm samlas/samlar **sig** i hörnen  
 dust collects/collects REFL in corners.DEF  
 ‘Dust collects in the corners’

In Old and Early Modern Swedish a number of intransitive verbs had a synonymous *s*-form. Typically, they were non-agentive, with a Theme(-like) or Experiencer subject. (7a–b) show simple verbs *ängsla* ‘be-anxious’ and *anda* ‘breathe’, (17c) synonymous *s*-forms:

- (7) a änxla ther entke om (MB 2:332)  
 be-anxious.IMP there not about  
 ‘Don’t worry about that’

<sup>4</sup> Alternatively, structural case may be determined by the position of the argument. If so, the lower Source/Cause argument of an impersonal verb is assigned accusative (the case for the V-complement position). A case pattern of dative + accusative has been argued to be an intermediate stage in English, from the impersonal case pattern (dative + nominative) to the personal case pattern (nominative + accusative; Allen 1986). Swedish shows few, if any, clear indications of such an intermediate stage (cf. Falk 1997:76). The Source/Cause argument of impersonal verbs is often ambiguous between accusative or nominative (as e.g. the common *pät* ‘it/this’). These ambiguous forms are not glossed for case.

- b gether anda ey gönom näsburona som annor dywr, uthan heller  
 goats breathe not through nostrils.DEF like other animals but rather  
 gönöm öronen dragha andhan (PMBond 217)  
 through ears.DEF draw breath. DEF  
 ‘Goats don’t breathe through the nostrils like other animals but rather through the ears’
- c hon ängxladhiss mykit thy at hon gat ey andas gynum munnin (Jär 66)  
 she was-anxious much because that she could not breath through mouth. DEF  
 ‘She was very worried since she could not breathe through the mouth’

Falk (1979, 2017) proposes that the *s*-form was an optional overt marker of the surface subject’s status as an underlying object. In this respect, the optional *-s* resembles the middle *-s* in *samlas* (6b), the difference being that the *s*-less form was not a transitive verb (cf (7a)), but a synonymous non-agentive intransitive verb. Falk (1997:161) further proposes that *sig* in *gruva sig*, *ångra sig* has the same function as *-s* in verbs like Old Swedish *ängslas* and *andas*: a visible marking that the surface subject is an underlying object, a spell-out of a trace in the object position. This symmetry of *-s* and *sik* is vital for the following discussion.<sup>5</sup>

A very similar idea is actually articulated already by Lindqvist:

Vid de forna A-verbena [enställiga opersonliga verb] är uppkomsten av dessa *s*-former särskilt lättbegriplig. Med den gamla konstruktionen, A-typen, voro verben transitiva *mik angrar*, *mik gruvar*; genom övergången till D-typ [personlig konstruktion] blevo de intransitiva. Det är naturligt att denna användning till en början var stötande för språkkänslan. Reflexivet fyllde, så att säga, det tomrum, som det försvunna objektet (det psykologiska subjektet) lämnade efter sig, utan att verbets karaktär av intransitivum därigenom ändrades. (Lindqvist 1912:45)

‘As for the former A-verbs [one-place impersonal verbs], the emergence of these *s*-forms is especially easy to understand. In the older construction, the A-type, the verbs were transitive, *mik angrar*, *mik gruvar*; by changing to D-types [the personal construction], they became intransitive. Naturally, this use was initially at odds with the language intuition. The reflexive filled, as it were, the empty space that the lost object (the psychological subject) left, without changing the intransitive character of the verb.’ (My translation)

By saying that the older construction was “transitive” Lindqvist probably means that the oblique case indicated the object status of the Experiencer. The idea that the reflexive “fills the empty space that the lost object (the psychological subject) left” is close to the more theoretical formulation of Falk (1997) and used here, as one of the two possible analyses of former impersonal verbs turning into reflexive verbs.

The other analysis to be presented here is that the verbs in question were reanalysed as transitive causative verbs like *gläpja* (cf. (3a–b) and (4b) above). Whereas impersonal verbs did not have any regularly formed *s*-/*sik*-forms, transitive Experiencer verbs formed intransitive verbs with Experiencer subjects with *-s* and/or *sik*. The transitive *gläpja* was a causative verb ‘make happy’, with its corresponding *s*-/*sik*-verb denoting the resulting change or state

<sup>5</sup> *Sik* and *-s* differ in that *sik* is a free morpheme, whereas *-s* is bound (always the outmost bound morpheme of the verb). I will not discuss the intriguing question of the formation of *s*-forms.

(‘become/ be happy’); see the examples in (8a) below. The examples in (8b) show a more negative experience:

- (8) a þe gläpas af (Leg Bu 24)  
 they.NOM are-happy of  
 ‘They are happy about that’  
 the ... glädde **sik** mot thetta spil (AI 9726)  
 they.NOM were-happy REFL about this devastation  
 ‘They were happy about this devastation’
- b thet dröue manzens hierna (KS 43)  
 this distresses man.GEN.DEF.GEN brain.ACC  
 ‘This distressed one’s brain’  
 Tok constantinus her vm mykit dröuas (Leg Bil 59)  
 began Konstantin.NOM here about much be-distressed  
 ‘Konstantin began to be very distressed about this’

As far as I know, the idea that a reinterpretation of impersonal verbs as transitive causative verbs paved the way for regular formation of reflexive intransitive verbs has not been proposed in the literature before. This reinterpretation will be of a slightly different nature for the one-place verb *gruva* and the two-place verb *angra*, as will be shown in more detail below.

## 2 The different developments

The development of the reflexive Experiencer verbs in Swedish will be discussed in the next three subsections. First I consider formerly impersonal one-place verbs (*gruva*, *fasa*). Second I discuss formerly impersonal two-place verbs (*angra*, *behagha*). In the third subsection I take a look at the more complicated case of *nöghia*.

### 2.1 One-place impersonal verbs: *gruva*, *fasa*

*Gruva* was an uncommon verb in Late Old Swedish. According to Lindqvist (1912:86), it was a loan from Low German, where it was an impersonal verb. The impersonal construction is repeated in (9a) below. Loss of lexical case resulted in the personal construction, with a nominative Experiencer, as in (9b), which is marginally younger. Alongside these construction possibilities, *gruva* had synonymous *s-* and *sik-*forms; note that (9d) is from the same manuscript as the impersonal construction in (9a):

- (9) a ty grwffuar mik encte for these xij (Di 170)  
 therefor feels-distressed me.OBL not for these 12  
 ‘Therefor, I don’t dread these 12 men’
- b wij grwffuade fasth (LRK 270)  
 we.NOM were-distressed much  
 ‘We felt very uneasy’

- c allä grwffwädis ther wedh (FM 337, 1507)  
 all.NOM felt-distressed there with  
 ‘All men felt uneasy about this’
- d järlsens men gröywadhe sik fast (Di 267)<sup>6</sup>  
 jarl.GEN.DEF.GEN men.NOM felt-distressed REFL much  
 ‘The counsellor’s men felt very uneasy’

The personal construction in (9b) reflects loss of the lexical case. The constructions in (9c–d) could be analysed as displaying optional overt marking of the underlying object status of the surface subject.

In almost all examples of *gruva* in Old Swedish, the Experiencer is the only argument. Sdw gives one example with two arguments:

- (10) Her Sten hawer thet ryckte her nedhre thet mik grwar (BSH 5:114, 1506)  
 sir Sten has this reputation here down that me.OBL GRUVAR  
 ‘Sir Sten has this reputation down there, something that I am distressed about/  
 /distresses me’)

As indicated by the translations, (10) could be interpreted in two ways. It could be an instance of an optional **lower** Source/Cause of the impersonal verb (‘be distressed about’). A parallel case would be Old Swedish *dröma*, where one-place constructions alternated with constructions of Experiencer + complement:

- (11) a tha haffde honum oc drömt (MB 1B:74)  
 then had him.DAT also dreamt  
 ‘Then, he had also dreamt’
- b them war badhom thz sama drömt (Leg 3:10)  
 them.DAT was both.DAT the same dreamt  
 ‘Both of them had the same dream’

Alternatively though, (10) could be interpreted as having an additional **higher** argument, such that something (the reputation) distresses somebody (me), i.e. a transitive causative.<sup>7</sup> *S-/sik-*forms could then be regularly formed intransitive verbs, parallel to the alternations exemplified in (8) above.

The two-place construction of *gruva* in (10) is a unique example in preserved Swedish, as far as I know (irrespectively if interpreted as an impersonal or as a causative verb). If we take (10) to be an instance of a causative verb, the only surviving form would be the reflexive *gruva sig*.

<sup>6</sup> The *jarl* was the king’s closest counselor.

<sup>7</sup> If so, the direct object *mik* ‘me’ is stylistically fronted. Stylistic Fronting (SF) involves a non-subject being placed before the finite verb in subordinate clauses without an overt subject (including relativized subjects). On SF in Old Swedish, see Falk (2007) with references.

Like *gruva*, *fasa* was an uncommon verb in Old Swedish. A few examples of the impersonal construction are given in Sdw, see (12a), alongside contemporary examples of the personal construction as in (12b). *S-/sig*-forms are shown in (12c–d):

- (12) a nar människionne fasar fore lästinna hot (SpV 551)  
 when man.DEF.DAT dreads for scripture.DEF.GEN threat  
 ‘When humans dread the threats in the scriptures ...’
- b Alle aff persida fasadho för hans strangheet (MB 2:174)  
 all.NOM from Persia dread for his severity  
 ‘All men from Persia dread his severity’
- c än iak owärdogh all fahas oc forfäras (Mecht 97)  
 even I.NOM unworthy all dread and am-terrified  
 ‘Even the whole of me, unworthy, dreads and is terrified’
- d Hvem kan icke fasa sig här före? (c. 1750, SAOB *fasa* I 3)  
 who can not dreadREFL here for  
 ‘Who cannot get terrified at this?’

Note that the reflexive construction in (12d) is considerably younger than the other alternatives, as opposed to *gruva sik* (see (9d)). *Fasa sig* also seems to be a more occasional alternative than *gruva sik/sig*. Furthermore, there are unambiguous attested examples of *fasa* construed as a transitive causative verb, with the Experiencer as an ordinary direct object. (13a) presents the oldest example (and the only one in Sdw), (13b) Early Modern Swedish examples:

- (13) a thän ondhe ... hwilkin ey kwnna ordhin faasa, ey ythersta  
 the evil who.ACC not may words.DEF.NOM frighten not last  
 timans rädde, ok stranga domarns räuisa (SpV 293)  
 time.DEF.GEN fear.NOM and severe.DEF judge.DEF.GEN justice.NOM  
 ‘The devil, whom no words could frighten, nor the fear of the last day and the severe judge’s justice’
- b Ett Spöke kan rät snart, en swagan Mennskia fasa (1690, SAOB *fasa* II 2)<sup>8</sup>  
 a ghost can quite soon a weak.ACC man frighten  
 ‘A ghost can frighten a weak man quite quickly’
- c Den gula döden ..., som fasat våra fäder. (1916, SAOB *fasa* II 2)  
 the yellow.DEF death.DEF that frightened.PTC our fathers  
 ‘The yellow fever that has frightened our ancestors’

I find it quite plausible that the reflexive in (12d) is formed from the transitive *fasa* in (13) (cf. the regular patterns in (8) above): it is a quite late example, dating from a period where the personal intransitive construction was well established, and the transitive construction seemed to be a productive alternative, if not as common as the intransitive one. Thus, *fasa sig*

<sup>8</sup> Case on the Experiencer is visible on the Old Swedish adjective accusative ending *-an*, only very sporadically used in Early Modern Swedish.

does not seem to be contemporary with the loss of lexical case, as was seen with *gruva*. Perhaps this is the case also with the older *s*-form. Note the coordination with the *s*-verb *forfäras* ‘be terrified’ in (12c), regularly formed from the transitive causative verb *forfära* ‘frighten’.

The reinterpretation of *fasa*, and possibly *gruva*, as a transitive causative verb is a change in the valency of the verb, from a one-place verb to a two-place verb with an added higher argument. Such an alternation between intransitive and transitive use of the same verb had (and still has) parallels, in (14a–b) illustrated by *trösta* ‘trust; console’. (14c) shows the reflexive verb, formed from the causative *trösta* in (14b):

- (14) a hon tröste mera a diäwlen (Leg Bu 135)  
 she trust.SUBJ more on devil.DEF  
 ‘She has to trust more in the Devil’
- b gvz ängel ... tröste han räddan (Leg Bu 4)  
 god.GEN angel console.SUBJ him.ACC afraid.ACC  
 ‘May God’s angel console him while he is afraid’
- c tröst **pik** väl (Leg Bu 102)  
 console.IMP REFL well  
 ‘Feel well consoled!’

In present-day Swedish, both the transitive verb *fasa* ‘frighten’ and the *s*-/*sig*-forms have disappeared, the only surviving option being the simplex intransitive verb *fasa* ‘fear, be frightened’.

## 2.2 Two-place impersonal verbs: *angra*, *behagha*

*Angra* ‘regret, repent’ was a two-place impersonal verb in Old Swedish. The lower argument Source/Cause was a clause or a DP, see (15a–b). An early example of the personal construction is shown in (15c). More generally, the personal construction became more common in texts from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see (15d):

- (15) a honom angradhe at han hafde väl giort (Leg Bil 848)  
 him.DAT regretted that he had well done  
 ‘He regretted that he had done the right thing’
- b Mik angrar thz (Svm 141)  
 me.OBL repents this  
 ‘I regret this’
- c Tha angradhe sorghfullir sina bön (Leg Bil 878)  
 then regretted sorrowing.NOM his.ACC request.ACC  
 ‘Then the sorrowing man regretted his request’
- d Dogh iagh ångrar jagh kom bort så wijda (1611, Lindqvist 1912:91)  
 still I.NOM repent I came away so far  
 ‘Still, I regret that I left to such a distant place’

Reflexive constructions with nominative Experiencers are found from Late Old Swedish and onwards:

- (16) iudas ... angrade **sik** än thot mz ofruitsamlikom angir (Bir 1:160)  
 Judas repented<sub>REFL</sub> even though with unavailing remorse/repentance  
 ‘Judas repented, even though with unavailing remorse/repentance’

Today, *ångra* is construed either as a transitive verb with Experiencer subject as in (15b), or as an intransitive reflexive verb as in (16).

In his account of the emergence of reflexive forms from impersonal constructions, Lindqvist equates *ångra* with *gruva* (see section 1.2 above). However, while *gruva* was a one-place impersonal verb (in Lindqvist’s terminology “A-type”), *ångra* was a two-place impersonal verb, see (15a–b) above. Thus, the reflexive did not preserve “the intransitive character of the verb”. Neither could the reflexive be a trace of a moved (in)direct object – that would give the unattested \**Han ångrar sig detta* (*He regrets REFL this*). Instead, I will propose the alternative analysis, that the reflexive form is the intransitive version of a transitive causative verb. I proposed above that *fasa sig* is formed through a reinterpretation of the intransitive *fasa* ‘feel fear’ to a transitive verb *fasa* ‘frighten’ by adding a higher argument. With *ångra* the reinterpretation does not add a higher argument, but instead reinterprets the lower Source/Cause argument as a higher argument.

The ordering of the arguments is not always visible on the surface. Due to the V2 requirement, any argument can be placed in the first position, followed by the finite verb. Cf. (15b) above with the following example, with topicalised Source/Cause, where the unambiguous dative Experiencer reveals that we have the old impersonal construction:

- (17) thz angrade allom swenskom (PK 234)  
 this repented all.DAT swedes.DAT  
 ‘All Swedes regretted/were remorseful of this’

When both arguments followed the finite verb, the original ordering with Experiencer above Source/Cause is shown in (18a–b). (18c–e) show the reinterpreted hierarchy of the arguments. In (18c), the order of the postverbal arguments is reversed. In (18d) the embedded word order shows the clause-anticipating Source/Cause *det* ‘it’ in the subject position, with the Experiencer as the lower argument. In (18e) the position of the Experiencer argument after the infinitival verb reveals its object status:

- (18) a Sidhan angradhe mik thz mykyt sarlika (ST 46)  
 afterwards regretted me.OBL it much hardly  
 ‘Afterwards, I regretted this very much’  
 b när världen wender sigh annorledes motte honom thetta ångra  
 when world.DEF turn REFL otherwise must him.OBJ this repent  
 (c. 1560, Lindqvist 1912:91)  
 ‘When things change, he will certainly regret this’

- c Också ångrar det mig icke, att jag ... (1829, Lindqvist 1912:91)  
 also makes-repentant it me.OBJ not that I ...  
 ‘Also, it does not make me regretful that I ...’
- d ... at thz ey sidhan angrar han (AI 1332)  
 that this not later makes-repentant him.ACC  
 ‘... that this will not make him repentant later’
- e Herren swoor, thet skal icke ångra honom (1526, Lindqvist 1912:90)  
 lord.DEF swore it will not make-repentant him.OBJ  
 ‘The Lord has sworn and will not repent’

I find it plausible that the reflexive *ångra sig* is formed from this transitive causative *ångra*. A synonymous *s*-form *ångras* is however not found (cf. *glädjas* = *glädja sig* above).

The normal development of two-place impersonal verbs was triggered by the loss of lexical case, cf. above, subsection 1.1. The oblique case, still visible in personal pronouns (e.g. *henne* ‘her’ vs. *hon* ‘she’), was then neglected. Alternatively, the loss of lexical case led to an interpretation of oblique case as an object characteristic, which in turn caused a reinterpretation of the Source/Cause as the subject, i.e. the higher argument. This was much less common, but at least one parallel is found, the Late Old Swedish verb *fortryta*, MSw *förtryta*:

- (19) a Thå thik thz forthrytir, wil thu hafwa höns ... (ST 320)  
 when you.OBL this disapprove want you have hens  
 ‘When you are not content with this, you want to have hens’
- b Sådant förtryter jagh sannerligh (1645, Lindqvist 1912:96)  
 such disapprove I.NOM certainly  
 ‘I certainly disapprove such things’
- c Skeer thet offtere, Dhå skall thet oss fast förtryte (1543, Lindqvist 1912:96)  
 happens this more-often then will it us.OBJ much annoy  
 ‘If this happens more often, it will annoy us very much’
- d Det förtryter dem in i Siälen at andre skola hafva nöije  
 it annoys them.OBJ in to soul.DEF that others shall have pleasure  
 i verlden och de måste vara utan. (1730, SAOB *förtryta* I 2 d)  
 in world.DEF and they must be without  
 ‘It annoys them in the soul, that other should have pleasures in this world, while they must be without’

(19a) shows the impersonal construction, with Experiencer above Source/Cause. (19b) shows loss of lexical case and the preserved interpretation of the hierarchy of arguments, meaning that the Experiencer turns up in nominative. (19c–d) show Experiencer as object, i. e. transitive causative construction with Source/Cause as the higher argument. Compare the ordering (Experiencer + Source/Cause) of the postverbal arguments in (19a) to the shifted ordering Source/Cause + Experiencer in (19c). A transitive analysis of (19d) seems most probable, though the fronting of *det* renders the analysis ambiguous. While the alternative in (19b) was not uncommon, the alternative in (19c–d) became the standard, and still is, to the extent that the verb is still used.

From a transitive causative *förtryta* ‘annoy’ we would expect an intransitive reflexive *förtryta sig* ‘be annoyed’. Such a reflexive is however very uncommon. It is found in a Swedish-Latin dictionary from 1739 (Schenberg; quoted in SAOB, *förtryta* II b); (20a) is the only example we have found in the literature. Somewhat more common was the *s*-form *förtrytas*, see (20b):<sup>9</sup>

- (20) a om du ej ännu vore att anse såsom sjuk, kunde jag riktigt  
 if you not yet were.SUBJ to consider as sick could I.NOM really  
 förtryta **mig** öfver dem. (Flygare-Carlén, *Waldemar Klein* 199, 1838)  
 annoy REFL over them  
 ‘If you were not to be considered as sick, I would really get annoyed at them’
- b Borgaren (kan) aldrig ... förtrytas. (GHT 1924, nr 54, s. 3)  
 bourgeois.DEF can never annoy  
 ‘The bourgeois can never get annoyed’

In other words, *förtryta* showed the opposite pattern of *ångra*, where the reflexive instead became the standard. The *s*-form *förtrytas* is no longer used today.

*Behagha* has a somewhat more complex history. Like *ångra*, Late Old Swedish *behagha* was an impersonal two-place verb, see (21a), where loss of lexical case with preserved argument hierarchy resulted in nominative Experiencer subjects as in (21b):

- (21) a thz monde keysarenom wäl behaga (Schack 1143)  
 this might emperor.DEF.DAT well like  
 ‘The emperor may like this’
- b Här hafwa warit ... många hungrige magar ibland, som intet hafwa  
 here have been many hungry stomachs among that not have  
 behagat detta Rådet (1616, SAOB *behaga* 3)  
 liked this advice  
 ‘There have been many hungry stomachs here among them that did not like this advice’

In (21b) the argument hierarchy is preserved, with Experiencer (the people with empty stomachs) above Source/Cause (the advice). But a transitive causative *behagha* is also attested, with Experiencer direct object, see (22a). It seems plausible that this gave rise to reflexive *behagha sig* in (22b):

- (22) a Hwilket och så skedde, oansedt at thet intet synnerligen behagade några  
 which too so happened despite that it not much pleased some  
 rijka Köpmän (1614, SAOB *behaga* 1 e β)  
 rich merchants  
 ‘...something that actually happened, even though it did not please some rich merchants very much’

<sup>9</sup> Searches in Litteraturbanken from the Språkbanken corpora resource (Borin et al 2012).

- b I grefve Brahes hus syntes han mest behaga **sig**  
 in count Brahe's house seemed he.NOM most please REFL  
 (c. 1815, SAOB *behaga* 6 a)  
 'In count Brahe's house he seemed to please himself most'

The two possibilities in (21b) and (22a) coexisted – and still exist, to the extent that the verb is still in use. The reflexive verb in (22b) has disappeared, however, and it did not have a synonymous *s*-form. Instead, *s*-forms of *behagha* have Source/Cause subjects. The oldest attested example is from Late Old Swedish and has an oblique Experiencer. In the Early Modern Swedish example in (23b) the Source/Cause subject is represented by *så* 'so', formally an adverb:

- (23) a göra alt thz illa ther them behaghas (MD 79)  
 do all the bad that them.OBL please  
 '(They) do all the evil things that they want'
- b Innan tre nätter, skall liggia så stark ijs på siön, att mann kan  
 before three nights will lay such strong ice on lake.DEF that man can  
 rijda mäd många hästar thär uppå, om så behagas. (1680, SAOB *behaga* 5 a)  
 ride with many horses there upon if so pleases  
 'Within three nights, the ice will be so thick that you can ride with many horses,  
 if you so desire'

*Behaghas* in (23) is formed from the Experiencer + Source/Cause verb *behagha* in (21), where the Source/Cause argument is promoted to subject, a passive(-like) promotion. The demoted higher Experiencer argument could optionally be realized as a free dative (23a).

In sum, my proposal is that reflexive *ångra sig* and *behaga sig* have a common origin. For both verbs, the loss of lexical case led to two alternative constructions: one with the Experiencer as the preserved highest argument, as a nominative subject, and another with the Experiencer as the lower argument, as an object of a causative verb. The latter construction led to the emergence of reflexive forms. But whereas the reflexive form became the standard way of construing an intransitive *ångra sig* – *ångra* disappeared as a transitive causative verb with a lower object Experiencer – the development of *behaga* is somewhat more complicated: both alternatives survived, and the alternative Experiencer + Source/Cause developed a passive(-like) *s*-form, with Source/Cause as subject and an optional free dative.

### 2.3 *Nöja sig*

Of the five different reflexive verbs in focus in this study, *nöja sig* 'be content' shows the most complicated pattern. The simplex verb Old Swedish verb *nöghia* was an impersonal verb with dative Experiencer, either as its only argument (24a) or with a lower Source/Cause argument in the form of a DP or a clause (24b–c). (24d) shows the reflexive verb, with the Experiencer bearing nominative case:

- (24) a hafdhe en människia alla werldena hänne nögdhe ey än tha (ST 510)  
 had a person whole world.DEF her.DAT was-content not yet then  
 ‘If somebody had the whole world, he would still not be content’
- b ey nögdhe henne thetta (Su 161)  
 not was-content her.DAT this  
 ‘She was not content with this’
- c Nögdhe henne wäl ... at hon haffdhe hona til patronam (Leg 3:13)  
 was-content her.DAT well that she had her as patron-saint’  
 ‘She was well content that she had her as her patron saint’
- d ther at nögdhe sig fasolt well (Di 81)  
 there about was-content REFL Fasolt well  
 ‘Fasolt was well content with this’

So far, *nöghia* resembles the one-place predicate *gruva*, and the later development of *fasa*, or the two-place verb *angra*, and the later development of *behagha*. But as opposed to *gruva* (and *fasa*) and *angra* (and *behagha*), *nöghia* had a synonymous *s*-form, impersonally construed:<sup>10</sup>

- (25) a ... swo at mik wäl nöffdäs (SD 4:585, late 15<sup>th</sup> century)  
 so that me.OBL well was-content  
 ‘... so that I was completely content’
- b nögdhis almoganom thz ey wäl (LRK 224)  
 was-content peasantry.DEF.DAT this not well  
 ‘The peasantry was not very content with this’

Comparing *nöghia* and *nöghias*, with identical meaning and argument structure, it is actually *nöghias* that has the etymologically motivated meaning and argument structure. The verb is derived from an adjective *nog* ‘enough, sufficient’. Impersonal *nöghias* has parallels with two other impersonal verbs in Old Swedish: *þökkias* (from *þakker* ‘pleasant’) and *leþas* (from *leþer* ‘unpleasant’). These verbs are derived from adjectives denoting properties of things or states of affairs that could cause Experiencer-like reactions in humans, a meaning that could be realized as an optional free dative ‘for somebody’:

- (26) a gudhlikir kändombir är gudhi thäkkir (MB 1B:375)  
 godly teaching is god.DAT pleasant  
 ‘Godly teaching is pleasant for God’
- b conungin ... wardh hwariom manne ledher (Leg Bil 230)  
 king.DEF became every.DAT man.DAT unpleasant’  
 ‘The king became unpleasant for every man’

<sup>10</sup> I do not know of any other impersonal verb in Old Swedish with synonymous *s*-forms. Impersonal *þykkia* ‘think’ had an *s*-form, but not completely synonymous, since the dative Experiencer of *þykkias* was optional. Thus, *-s* manipulated the argument structure/valency, as was (and is) the normal. *Þykkias* did not change its construction, but has kept its possibility to be construed with an optional Experiencer *Det tycks (mig) som om ...* ‘It seems (to me) as if ...’

From the adjectives we may assume transitive causative verbs, \**päkkia* and \**lepa*, with the regular reading of ‘make something (un)pleasant (for somebody)’. Causative \**päkkia*, \**lepa* are not attested in Old Swedish, but found in Old Icelandic. *S*-forms *päkkias*, *lepas* would then give the meaning ‘be (un)pleasant (for somebody)’. The verbs found in Old Swedish were impersonal, and the optional Experiencer ‘for somebody’ had been reinterpreted as a lexically case marked higher argument with a lower optional Source/Cause (27a–b). (27c–d) show loss of lexical dative, giving a nominative Experiencer:

- (27) a huru mykyt gudhi thäkkias ödhmiuka manna böne (Bir 2:32)  
 how much god.DAT is-pleased humble.GEN men.GEN prayer.NOM  
 ‘... how much God is pleased by humble men’s prayer’
- b thzta är sorgh at wngom aldre ledhis with lifuit (Leg Bil 476)  
 this is sorrow that young.DAT never feel-weariness with life.DEF  
 ‘It is sad that young people never feel weariness of life’
- c ... hwem the täckäs in tiil siig tagha magä (1524, SAOB *täckas* 1)  
 who they.NOM like in to themselves take may  
 ‘... whoever they want to take into their group’
- d Siälen ledhis with twnga liffuet (Su 108)  
 soul.DEF feels-weariness with hard.DEF life.DEF  
 ‘The soul feels weariness of the hard life’

The meaning and argument structure of *nöghias* is derivable from the adjective *nogh* ‘enough, sufficient’ in a parallel fashion, from ‘be enough (for somebody)’ to Old Swedish impersonal ‘be content (with)’. It remains somewhat mysterious why the simple verb *nöghia* did not have the expected causative meaning ‘make something enough’, but instead ‘be enough’.

Like *päkkias* and *lepas*, *nöghias* lost lexical case, with the effect that the Experiencer showed up with nominative case. In examples with proper names, like (28a–b), case is ambiguous; nevertheless, (28a) is given as an example of a personal construction in Sdw, and in (28b) the agreeing plural form of the verb reveals that the Experiencer is a nominative subject:

- (28) a epte tet at hinrik hyllebrandh nögdas jernit ... (STb 2:312, 1488; Sdw suppl)  
 after that that Hinrik Hyllebrand was-content iron.DEF  
 ‘Since Hinrik Hyllebrand was content with the iron...’
- b Wänner i Nöd, nöyas medh liltet Brödh. (1665, SAOB *nöja* 1 b)  
 friends in need are-content.PL with little bread  
 ‘Friends in need are content with little bread’

So where does the reflexive *nöghia sik/nöja sig* come from? One possibility would be to assume one of the analyses of *gruva* vs. *gruva sik*, as outlined above: in both cases we have a one-place impersonal construction, where the loss of lexical case led to a derived subject with nominative. The reflexive could in both cases be seen as an overt marker of the status of the surface subject as an underlying object. The other possibility outlined for *gruva*

vs. *gruva sik* was an added higher Source/Cause, thus creating a causative. This is a possibility also for *nögha sik*. An example from Late Old Swedish shows a transitive *nöghia*, with Agent subject and Beneficiary object ‘compensate’, and later we find examples of transitive *nöja* ‘please’:

- (29) a fasbiörn olson hadhe honom wel nøkt fore then gardin (ATb 2:261, 1485)  
 FasbjörnOlson had him.OBL well compensated for this estate.DEF  
 ‘Fasbjörn Olsson had payed him fully for this estate’  
 b Om det kan nöija Er, så står Er fritt at giöra’t. (1738, SAOB *nöja* 4)  
 if it can please you.OBJ so stands you.OBJ freely to do-it  
 ‘If it can please you, you are free to do it’

These examples could also be analyzed as a reinterpretation of the arguments of the two-place *nöghia*, from Experiencer + Source/Cause to Source/Cause + Experiencer, i.e. a parallel to *angra* vs. *angra sik*. Perhaps we could even imagine an old unattested causative, cf. the unattested *\*päkkia*, *\*lepa*. I find the option that *nöghia sik* is formed from a transitive causative verb to be the most probable. The Modern Swedish adjective *nöjd* ‘satisfied’ is formally a past participle of this causative. It is attested already in Old Swedish:

- (30) mz honom war hon wäl nögdh (Leg 3:405)  
 with him was she.NOM well content  
 ‘She was very content with him’

The causative no longer exists. It is difficult – maybe even irrelevant – to establish whether the causative was derived by adding a higher Source/Cause argument to one-place *nöghia*, or by rearranging the arguments of two-place *nöghia*.

### 3 Summary and discussion

In this paper I have discussed five formerly impersonal verbs that have attested reflexive forms in the history of Swedish. Three of them, *gruva sig*, *ångra sig* and *nöja sig* are standard intransitive verbs today. As for the other two, *fasa sig* and *behaga sig*, the reflexive forms seem to be more peripheral.

It should be pointed out that the regular development of impersonal verbs involved the loss of lexical case and the subsequent shift of the originally dative Experiencer to a nominative subject. Thus, the verbs in focus here show idiosyncratic developments, or more occasional uses. I do not think we can fully account for such phenomena. What we can do, however, is to understand them, by showing that they followed patterns found elsewhere in the language. One such parallel is found with intransitive unagentive verbs with synonymous *s*-forms. Elsewhere, I have suggested that this *-s* could be an overt marking of an underlying trace in the object position (Falk 1997, 2017). *Sik* could be analyzed in the same way, an analysis close to an idea put forth already by Lindqvist (1912). This is certainly a possible analysis of at least *gruva sik*, which is as old as the other attested construction possibilities of this verb (cf. (9)).

But another alternative is also possible, offering another way of understanding the reflexive forms: they are formed from transitive causative verbs with Experiencer objects. Transitive causative verbs with Experiencer objects were quite a large group of verbs in Old Swedish; Falk lists 44 verbs in her Appendix (“object-oriented Experiencer verbs”; Falk 1997:189–190), and they regularly formed intransitive verbs with Experiencer subjects by adding *-s* or reflexive *sik*. In this paper I have shown that at least four of the verbs in focus have attested causative constructions: *fasa*, *ångra*, *behaga* and *nöja* (MSw spelling). I have also found one possible example of causative *gruva*. As causatives they never became very common – only *behaga* ‘please’ is mentioned in modern lexica. However, the reflexive forms *gruva sig*, *ångra sig* and *nöja sig* have all survived.

The reinterpretation of a (formerly) impersonal verb into a transitive causative verb took different routes, depending on if the verb was a one-place verb or a two-place verb. For one-place verbs (*gruva*, *fasa*), a higher argument was added. Again, parallel patterns existed, with the same verb construed either with the Experiencer as the only argument, or with the Experiencer as a lower object under an Agent/Source subject (=14)). For two-place verbs (*ångra*, *behaga*), the argument hierarchy was instead reinterpreted. This was a much more uncommon way of interpreting the lexical properties of two-place impersonal verbs when lexical case was lost, but there is at least one other impersonal verb that changed into a causative transitive, namely *förtryta*.

Finally, we would expect Old Swedish *nöghia* to be a causative transitive verb given its etymology, being derived from the adjective *nogh* ‘enough, sufficient’, with a free (optional) dative, resulting in the reading ‘make something enough/sufficient for somebody’. We can understand the impersonal construction of the *s*-form *nöghias* through this assumed meaning, with the free dative reinterpreted as a lexical dative. OSw *nöghia* was not, however, a causative verb, but rather an impersonal verb. Its meaning may be opaque, but its further development follows the other verbs discussed here.

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# Revisiting the etymology of the Norse negative enclitic *-a/-at*<sup>1</sup>

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In this paper I present and discuss the etymological hypotheses that have been put forth through the years for Norse *-a/-at* ‘not’, a negative particle suffixed to finite and imperative verbs, found primarily in Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian. The four main etymologies that I will evaluate are: (i) the connector/generalizing particle PGmc *\*(u)h<sup>w</sup>* (cf. Go. *-uh*), (ii) the numeral for ‘one’: PGmc *\*aina/\*ainat-* (cf. Go. *ain, ainata*), (iii) a reinforcer associated with various pronouns: PGmc *\*-ã* (cf. runic *eka, ika*, etc.) or perhaps PGmc *\*-õ* (cf. Go. *þat-a, þan-a, in-a*, OE *þon-e, hin-e*, etc.), and (iv) the (negative) indefinite phrases ‘(n)ever’ and ‘(n)ever a thing’: PGmc *\*(n-)aiwa-/\*(n-)aiwa-weht-*. As we shall see below, each etymology has its share of support from scholars. However, some ideas have aged better than others. Nevertheless, it is useful to discuss all of the proposals in the literature since there are conceptual overlaps and interrelated assumptions weaving their way through the hypotheses in (i-iv). The goal of this paper is to critically assess each of these etymologies, thereby giving an overview of their respective advantages and disadvantages.

## 1 Introduction

NI war die ursprüngliche und wahre negation; in der goth[ischen] sprache hat sie noch den weitesten spielraum, in den übrigen nimmt sie allmählich ab, wiewohl auf verschiedne weise; heutzutage ist sie vor dem verbo überall verschwunden und den partikeln gewichen, die anfangs bloss zu ihrer verstärkung hinter das verbum gestellt wurden und zum theil mit ihr selbst zusammengesetzt sind.<sup>2</sup>

(Grimm 1890 [1831]: 690)

The passage above was written by Jacob Grimm almost a century before Jespersen’s seminal work on the negative cycle (Jespersen 1917). Although Jespersen extended the idea to languages outside of Germanic, such as French, it is clear that Grimm had a good understanding of the phenomenon, despite rarely receiving credit for this in the literature (though see Kock 1879: 18-19 for some discussion).

What we today call Jespersen’s Cycle (as it was dubbed by Östen Dahl) can be illustrated using Old Norse as in (1-4).

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<sup>2</sup> “*Ni* was the original, true negation; in the Gothic language it had the widest range, in the rest [of Germanic] it is narrowed down gradually, though in different ways; these days it has disappeared in its pre-verbal position everywhere and given way to particles that at first were placed post-verbally only for the sake of reinforcement and are in part made up of it [= the original negation *nī*].”

- (1)  $ne V_{fin} \rightarrow ne V_{fin-a/-at} \rightarrow V_{fin-a/-at}$
- (2) mani þat **ne** vissi / hvat hann megins atti  
 moon that neg knew what he power.gen had  
 ‘The moon didn’t know the power he had.’  
 (*Völuspá* 5)
- (3) er þv at grati **ne** fqr-at  
 which you to crying.dat neg say-neg  
 ‘which for crying you cannot say’  
 (*Hamðismál* 8)
- (4) sécc-a ec þann Volvndi / til smiþio borinn.  
 see.1sg-neg I it Volund.dat to smith borne  
 ‘I don’t see it carried to the smith for Volund.’  
 (*Völundarkviða* 18)

In the earliest stage of the cycle, preverbal *ne* (Indo-European \**ne*) was the sole marker of negation; this stage survived here and there in the Old Norse texts, one example being (2). In the next stage of the cycle, a reinforcing particle *-a/-at* with postverbal placement arose, creating a configuration in which the verb was flanked by two negative elements, as seen in (3). In the final stage of the cycle (before it potentially repeats), preverbal *ne* disappears completely and *-a/-at* takes over, as illustrated in (4). Preverbal *ne* was archaic already in the earliest poetry and essentially gone by 800 AD (Eythórsson 2002). As we will see below, Jespersen’s Cycle was completed in Nordic far earlier than in West Germanic.

Before I enter into the etymological discussion, I present some basic facts about *-a/-at* (see also Eythórsson 2002). Firstly, the particle could be suffixed not only to finite verbs but also to imperatives. Infinitives, however, used another negation (*eigi*). Second, the particle appears to be a West Norse innovation, with no convincing evidence of the particle having existed in East Norse varieties (though the material is of course limited).<sup>3</sup> Finally, the vowel

<sup>3</sup> Delbrück (1910: 40) writes: “Es ist merkwürdig, daß dieses *-a* sich nur im Westnordischen findet. Ob es einst auch im Ostnordischen vorhanden war, dort aber durch die synonymen *eigh* und *ekke* verdrängt wurde, wage ich nicht zu entscheiden.” [“It is remarkable that this *-a* is found in West Norse only. Whether it once existed in East Norse also, but was replaced by the synonyms *eigh* and *ekke*, I dare not decide.”] Interestingly, a search on the *Samnordisk runtextdatabas* shows us that all the occurrences of *eigi* and *ekki* from the Viking Age (9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) are found in inscriptions from Denmark and Sweden (i.e. East Norse), while all the occurrences of *eigi* and *ekki* from the Medieval period (11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) are from Norway (i.e. West Norse). As always, it is wise to remember that there is an unequal geographic distribution of Viking Age inscriptions (Norway having fewer than Sweden or Denmark). Nevertheless, the facts as they are suggest that *eigi* and *ekki* took root in East Norse early, at a time when West Norse still had *-a/-at*. As *-a/-at* declined in West Norse, *eigi* and *ekki* spread into this branch from the east.

in *-at* was subject to a simple phonological rule of deletion after a short vowel (e.g. *eigu-t* ‘they didn’t have’ vs. *má-at* ‘shall not’). There are a handful of exceptions to this rule, mostly involving the subjunctive ending *-i* (e.g. *skríði-at*, *renni-a*, *kæmi-a*, etc.) (Cleasby 1874: xxvi).

Four main etymologies have been proposed over the years. I refer to them as the AND, ONE, REINFORCER, and (N)EVER (A THING) etymologies. Each one is described in (5).

(5) Etymologies to be assessed

(i) *AND etymology*

ON *-a* is cognate with Go. *-uh* (< PGmc *-(u)h<sup>w</sup>* < PIE *-k<sup>w</sup>e*), a generalizing/connector particle most easily glossed as ‘and’, while *-at* is cognate with Go. *-upþan* (< *-uh* + *þan*) (Cleasby 1874).

(ii) *ONE etymology*

ON *-at* < *\*ainat-* ‘one’ (neuter singular, long-form) (originally going back to Kock 1879). Some scholars also consider ON *-a* to be derived from the neuter singular (short-form) *\*aina* ‘one’. Cf. Go. *ain*, *ainata*.

(iii) *REINFORCER etymology*

ON *-a* can be identified with the pronominal reinforcer *-a* (e.g. runic **eka**, **ika**, etc. < PGmc *\*-ã*), or perhaps the particle found in Go. *þat-a*, *þan-a*, *in-a*, OE *þon-e*, *hin-e*, etc. < PGmc *\*-ō̃*. See below for etymological references. This is an original hypothesis for the etymology of the Norse enclitic negation, and it hypothesizes that *-at* was derived from *-a* by a specific analogical process that can be tested in various ways.

(iv) *(N)EVER (A THING) etymology*

The (negative) indefinite phrases ‘(n)ever’ (< PGmc *\*(n-)aiwa-*) and ‘(n)ever a thing’ (< PGmc *\*(n-)aiwa-weht-*) give rise to ON *-a* and *-at*, respectively, paralleling West Germanic forms like OE *n-ā* ‘no, not’ and OE *n-ā-wiht* ‘nothing’ > *nāht* ‘nothing, not’ (Grønvik 1997, building on earlier work; see below).

I will take one etymology at a time and discuss its pros and cons. It will be shown that the ONE and (N)EVER (A THING) etymologies are the most plausible options, while the AND and REINFORCER etymologies have serious problems. Importantly, the (N)EVER (A THING) etymology fits coherently with what we know about the negative cycle in the history of Northwest Germanic. The (N)EVER (A THING) etymology also gains a slight edge over the ONE etymology when it comes to the ‘gravity diagnostic’ of Nielsen (1983).

## 2 AND etymology

There can be little doubt of the identity, by way of assimilation, of the Goth. *-uh* or *-uþ-þan* and the Scandin. *-a* or *-aþ (-at)* ... The negative and affirmative frequently take the place of one another in different dialects ... so *eyvit* etymologically = *ought*, but in fact used = *naught*[.] (Cleasby 1874: xxviii)

The Gothic connector/conjunction (and even generalizer) *-uh* is famously cognate with Skt. *ca*, Lat. *-que*, Gk. *te*, etc., all meaning ‘and, also, etc.’ (PGmc *\*(u)h<sup>w</sup>* < PIE *\*-k<sup>w</sup>e*, ultimately part of the indefinite/interrogative pronominal paradigm of PIE *\*k<sup>w</sup>i-/\*k<sup>w</sup>e-/\*k<sup>w</sup>o-*). One obvious similarity between Go. *-uh* and ON *-a/- (a)t* is their tendency to be attached to a clause-initial finite verb: for example, Go. *qepun-uh* ‘And they said...’, *in-uh-sandidedun* ‘And (they) sent in...’. In ON, moreover, it was quite common for *-a/-at* to appear early in the clause too (Eythórsson 2002: 197-198 and earlier work).

However, there are a number of problematic sound correspondences in Cleasby’s hypothesis, as was recognized only a few years later by Kock (1879: 15). First, Cleasby’s chronology for “*-aþ (-at)*” – where the variant *-aþ/-að* is assumed to be the primary or older form, with *-at* being a later, secondary variant of some kind – is wrong: *-at* is the older form, and *-aþ/-að* comes later, which we know from observing quite regular lenition of final *-t* in the course of development of various Scandinavian varieties (e.g. *þat* > *það*, *hús-it* > *hús-ið*, etc.). This means that Go. *-uþþan* (< *-uh-þan* ‘and then’) must be compared not with ON *-aþ/-að* but with ON *-at*, giving the completely unexpected correspondence of Go. *þ* : ON *t*. On top of that, the vowel correspondence Go. *u* : ON *a* can be considered equally as mysterious.

Cleasby also makes an attempt at drawing similarities in the morphosyntactic distribution of *-uh* and *-at*, stating that “further proof” for the cognate status of these two elements is that “neither the Goth. nor the Icel. suffix was used with nouns” (Cleasby 1874: xxviii). This is a decidedly odd way of formulating a generalization, however, and it does not capture the facts in a very satisfactory way. On the one hand, ON *-a/-at* was found *exclusively* on finite verbs and imperatives. In Gothic, on the other hand, Go. *-uh*, in addition to verbs, was also found on pronouns (often forming indefinite pronouns from interrogatives), adverbs, and prepositions, as illustrated in (6) below.

- (6) *hvaz-uh* ‘who(so)ever, every’  
*hvarjiz-uh* ‘every one (of them)’  
*ainhvarjiz-uh* ‘each other’  
*immuh* ‘and to him’  
*sumsuh* ‘and another’  
*þan-uh* ‘and then...’  
*hvan-uh* ‘and when...’  
*fram-uh* ‘and from...’

So even though *-uh* and *-a/-at* both happened to avoid nouns (though not *pronouns* for *-uh*, clearly), this obscures the fact that *-uh* had a significantly wider distribution and more functional uses than *-a/-at*.

It might be relevant at this point to mention Go. *-hun* (e.g. *ni hvas-hun* ‘no one’, *ni hvan-hun* ‘never’, etc.) since it seems to be derived from (some variant of) the PIE pronominal item *\*-k<sup>w</sup>V-* plus the negative particle *\*ne* (cf. Ved. *caná*) (Delbrück 1910: 8-12). Go. *-hun* is cognate with (Vernerized) NWGmc *\*-gen/\*-gin*, which in North Germanic gives *-ge/-gi* (*engi* ‘no one’ < *\*(ne) einn-gi* ‘no one **at all**’; assimilated to *-ki* in *ekki* ‘not’ < *\*(ne) eitt-ki* ‘nothing **at all**’; see Grønvik 1997 for discussion) and in WGmc gives *-gen/-gin* (OE *hwergen*, OS *hwargin*, OHG *iowergin* ‘somewhere’, etc.). See Feist (1939 [1923]: 275 s.v. *-hun*) for examples and references. Interesting as it is, the relation between *-hun* and *-gi(n)* does little, of course, to revive the specific hypothesis that Go. *-uh/-uppan* and ON *-a/-at* are cognate.

### 3 ONE etymology

Negationen *-at* torde kunna härledas af *aitt*, yngre *eitt* (ett, något)[.]<sup>4</sup>  
(Kock 1879: 16)

#### 3.1 Basic version

The development hypothesized by Kock for ON *-at* (for Kock’s view on *-a* see below) is uncontroversially attested in Latin *nōn* ‘not’ (< Old Latin *noenum* ‘not one (at all)’), but as we shall see there is some debate about the Germanic evidence. In any case, Kock’s hypothesis from 1879 has since been accepted in some form by a number of scholars over the years (see Kock 1879: 16-19; 1896: 194-196; Jespersen 1917: 8; Noreen 1923: §54,3; de Vries 2000 [1962]: 17; Lundin Åkesson 2005: 238, among others).

One rather common version of the etymology states that short-form (n.acc.sg) PGmc *\*aina* (cf. Go. *ain*) gives ON *-a*, while long-form/pronominal (n.acc.sg) PGmc *\*ainat-* (n.acc.sg) (cf. Go. *ainata*) gives ON *-at* (cf. de Vries 2000 [1962]: 1 s.v. *a*, 17 s.v. *at*). The stages of development are provided in more detail in (7).

- (7) short-form                    *\*aina* > *\*ān* > *\*ā* > ON *-a*  
long/pronominal                *\*ainat-* > *\*ānt* > *\*āt* > ON *-at*

In contrast to Cleasby’s AND etymology, the ONE etymology as sketched in (7) poses no problems as far as sound changes go, as outlined in more detail in (8); see Haugen (1976) as a general reference on the sound changes in (8).

- (8) a.        secondarily stressed *\*ai* > PN *\*ā* (Noreen 1923: §54,3), see below  
b.        syncope of unstressed vowels (*\*dagaz* > ON *dagr*, Gallehus **horna** > *horn*)  
c.        loss of final *n* in unstressed words (*\*an* > ON *á* ‘on’, *\*in* > ON *í* ‘in’)  
d.        nasal assimilates to following stop (*\*ein-t* > ON *eitt*)  
e.        unstr. *\*ā* shortens to *a* (Noreen 1923: §151,1, Brøndum-Nielsen 1950: §104,2)  
f.        reduction of *tt* to *t* is observed in e.g. *eyvétt* > *eyvit* (Kock 1879: 18)

<sup>4</sup> “The negation *-at* could be derived from *aitt*, younger *eitt* (one, something)[.]”

All of the changes in (8) are attested elsewhere in Scandinavian and are (relatively) well understood.

As alluded to above, there is some debate concerning the appropriateness of the AND etymology for Germanic (as opposed to Latin, for instance, where the development *ne oenum* > *noenum* > *nōn* ‘not’ is obvious enough). Ottar Grønvik, discussing de Vries (2000 [1962]: 1) specifically, writes that going back to a pre-Nordic form like the short-form neuter.sg \*ain- in the sense of ‘nicht irgendetwas’...

synes meget betenkelig, da det ikke finnes spor av noen slik bruk av \*aina i andre germanske språk. Delbrück (1910:31) legger også vekt på att heller ikke \*ainata lar seg støtte ved noen tilsvarende bruk i gotisk; han kunne ha tilføyd: heller ikke i vestgermansk.<sup>5</sup>  
(Grønvik 1997: 19)

In a very strict sense, Grønvik is correct. It is true, for instance, that there is no ‘neuter singular’ restriction on *-a* or *-at* (Grønvik 1997: 19). But there are a number of cases throughout Germanic that are relevant enough to bolster the credibility of (at least some version of) the ONE etymology. To take four cases where \*ain- is used to build a negative(-related) element in Germanic:

- (i) the focus/polarity item \***aina**-gaz ‘only’ > Go. *ainaha* (weak m.sg.nom) ‘only’; OE *ānig*, OS *ēnig*, OHG *einīg*, ON *einigr* ‘any’
- (ii) \*ne **ain**- > OHG *ni ein* (later *nein*), OE *nān*, ON *neinn* (and *neitt*)
- (iii) \*neh<sup>w</sup>-**ain**- > OHG *nihein(ig)*, *nehein* > G. *kein* (cf. also Du. *geen*) (cf. Braune & Reiffenstein 2004: 254, 151)
- (iv) Scand. \***einn**-gi / \***eitt**-ki > ON *engi* ‘no one’, *ekki* ‘nothing, not’, OSw. *ængin*, *ækki* (> *icke* ‘not’), *ænkki* (> *inte* ‘not’), etc.

Some forms without a doubt postdate *-a/-at*, but these are still relevant for demonstrating the plausibility of the ONE etymology. *Ekki*, for example, can be considered a renewal of Jespersen’s Cycle. And since *ekki* unquestionably has a ‘one’ etymology (< n.sg \**eitt*-ki), this makes it all the more conceivable that the older negation *-a/-at* could have been based on ‘one’ as well. It is not necessarily the case, of course, that the negative cycle has to reuse the exact same element (such as ‘one’) over and over again, but I think the potential for building ‘one’-based negative elements in Germanic cannot be denied. In other words, the ONE etymology is stronger than Grønvik’s objection. As discussed above, it is also semantically and phonologically credible (though the final word has not yet been said).

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<sup>5</sup> “appears suspicious, since there is no trace of such a use of \**aina* in other Germanic languages. Delbrück (1910:31) also emphasizes that \**ainata* does not support any corresponding use in Gothic; he could have added: not in West Germanic either.”



There are other possibilities not only in the first person (e.g. PIE \*eǵ-oH-ǵe > Gk. ἐγώγε ‘I for my part, as for me’; Fortson 2004: 135) but also the second (2.sg.nom PIE \*tuH-(H)om > Skt. *tvám*, OAv. *tuuām*; 2.sg.acc PIE \*tu-ǵe > Go. *puk*, Hitt. *tuk*; Kroonen 2013: 549). Going back to (11), some relevant items in Germanic are now provided in (12).

- |      |             |   |   |
|------|-------------|---|---|
| (12) | PIE *eǵ(H)  | > | str. *ek > Gallehus <b>ek</b> , unstr. *ik > Go. <i>ik</i>  |
|      | PIE *eǵ-Hóm | > | *ekon > *ekō > PGmc *ekā > Runic (East) Norse <b>-ika</b> ,<br><b>-eka</b> , <b>eka</b> , <b>-ka</b> ‘I’ > East Norse <i>iak</i> (breaking) |
|      | PIE *eǵ-oH  | > | *ekō > WGmc: OHG <i>ihha</i> , Du. <i>ikke</i>  |

Here we might also add the “particle of obscure origin” PGmc \*-ō seen in Go. *þan-a*, *þat-a*, *in-a*, *hvan-a*, OE *þon-e*, *hin-e*, *hwon-e*, etc. (Ringe 2006: 85), perhaps from something like PIE \*-oH-(H)om (also Skt. *id-ám* ‘it’, *iy-ám* ‘she’).

## 4.2 The hypothesis

The original hypothesis to be entertained and tested in this section is that the *-a/-at* enclitic has its origins in one of these reinforcers. If we take PGmc \*ekā > PN \*eka, the idea is that in East Norse the final *-a* triggers breaking (> East Norse *iak*) and then deletes. This much is uncontroversial. In West Norse, on the other hand, the hypothesis to be suggested is that *-a* in \*eka is in some sense ‘morphologized’ rather than being deleted, and it is for this reason that it does not trigger breaking in the 1.sg.nom pronoun (> West Norse *ek*). The development of *-a* as a separate morpheme would, on this hypothesis, be inseparable from the origins of the 1.sg.nom marker *-k* (e.g. ON *em-k-a-k* ‘am-1sg-neg-1sg’). Consider the configuration in which the finite verb takes an enclitic *-(i)ka* as seen in various East Norse runic inscriptions (e.g. Ög KJ59 U **raisidoka** ‘I raised’). The interpretation of *-k* as a 1sg marker would give a morphological partitioning that leaves *-a* on its own (*raisidō-k-a*), followed later by the possibility of a pleonastic *-k* marker, resulting in *-a* being flanked by *-k* markers (*raisidō-k-a-k*, like *em-k-a-k*). Negative force could, moreover, have been imparted to *-a* by a preverbal *ne* which later falls away but leaves the reinforcer particle with a negative meaning (as must be assumed for various other elements in ON, e.g. *ekki* ‘nothing, not’ < pre-Norse \**ne eitt-ki* ‘not one (thing) at all’, *ey/ei* ‘ever, always’ but sometimes ‘not’ < PGmc \**ne aiwa* ‘not ever’; see Grønvik 1997 for discussion).

To be more precise, the development sketched here can be cast only as a one-way generalization with regard to presence/absence of breaking and presence/absence of *-a/-at*. As Eythórsson (2002: 195-196, also fn.11) points out, the particle *-a/-at* is a West Norse innovation: it is found in Old Icelandic texts, and there are two Norwegian runic inscriptions (N284, N171) in which the negative enclitic attested; moreover, the Karlevi inscription, showing **munat** ‘shall not’, is found in East Norse territory (Öland) but assumed to be linguistically West Norse due to its containing a stanza of skaldic *dróttkvætt*. It is equally clear that breaking of ‘I’ did *not* happen in West Norse. However, just because there is no breaking in \*eka does not necessarily entail that *-a/-at* *must* have developed: some East Norse varieties had no breaking of \*eka (Jutland), but also (as far as we can tell) lacked *-a/-at*. The

best we can do, then, is to formulate the generalization as unidirectional: if *\*eka* breaks, then *-a/-at* must be absent (since *-a* gets deleted under breaking and thus has no chance of morphologizing). If *\*eka* does not break, there are no guarantees: on the one hand, *-a* has the possibility of morphologizing into a negative enclitic as sketched above; or, on the other hand, *-a* could end up being lost anyway.<sup>6</sup>

As for *-at*, the hypothesis is that it was formed on the model of *-a* (thus resembling Kock's [1879: 16, 1896: 195-196] idea – *\*mák-at-k* > *\*mák-ak-k* > *mák-a-k* – in reverse). We start with the form *em-k-a-k* 'I am not', with *-a* flanked by two 1sg markers *-k*. Interestingly, Eythórsson (2002: fn.8, citing an MA thesis by Axelsdóttir 2001: 9) mentions that the configuration *\*em-k-at-k* is not attested, possibly suggesting that *-at* is incompatible with dual *-k* marking (though definitely not impossible with one *-k* marker: *em-k-at* (*ek*) and the like are attested). Imagining that this restriction is ancient, we might propose the analogical equation in (13).

$$(13) \quad \begin{array}{l} em-k : em-k-a-k \\ \text{am-1sg-neg-1sg} \end{array} \quad :: \quad \begin{array}{l} er-t : er-t-a-t \\ \text{are-2sg-neg-2sg} \end{array}$$

Crucially, *-t* is the regular 2sg ending in the strong preterite (and in some irregular presents, such as *ert* '(you) are'). If the second *-t* marker is reanalyzed as a part of *-a*, we can then end up seeing phrases like *er-t-at þu*, *er-t-at-tu* (which are attested). Eventually, at a later stage, the *-t* marker on *-at* would lose its association with 2sg and become combinable also with 1<sup>st</sup> person, resulting in *em-k-at ek*, etc.

### 4.3 Testing the hypothesis

One positive aspect of the REINFORCER etymology is that it is highly testable. The list in (14) comprises the oldest poems in the Edda according to Lundin Ákesson's (2005) dating (which is based on a quantitative study of negative elements in the Poetic Edda, making it quite relevant for our purposes).

- (14) *Réginsmál*  
*Brot af Sigurðæqviða*  
*Guðrúnarqviða in fyrsta*  
*Hamðismál*  
*Fáfnismál*  
*Völundarqviða*  
*Hymisqviða*  
*Guðrúnarqviða þriðia*  
*Sigdrífomál*  
*Völuspá*  
*Helgaqviða Hundingsbana 9nnor*

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<sup>6</sup> Or perhaps *-a* was never present, with the *ek* of some varieties just going back to non-reinforced PN *\*ek*.

*Guðrúnarhvöt*  
*Guðrúnarqviða önnor*

The assumption here is that the oldest poetry has the best chance of preserving the hypothetically ancient analogical equation of *-a* : 1sg :: *-at* : 2sg. I searched these poems for negative *-a* and *-at* in Guðni Jónsson's *Eddukvæði (Sæmundar-Edda)* (1949-1954) (online at [heimskringla.no](http://heimskringla.no)), which conveniently separates out the negative enclitic where it appears. Since this text is in normalized spelling, I cross-checked against Bugge's (1867) *Norræn fornkvæði* (online at <http://etext.old.no/Bugge/>) in order to circumvent problematic editorializations. When the two disagree, the Bugge text takes precedence.

Out of the 84 instances of *-a/-at* in the oldest poems, 9 are found on plural or dual verb forms, leaving us with 75 attached to verbs in the singular. These 75 are the ones I focus on here. At first glance, the results are promising for the REINFORCER hypothesis.

Table 1. Use of *-a* vs. *-at* with 1st and 2nd person singular verbs

Verb	<i>-a</i>	<i>-at</i>	Totals
1sg	15 (79%)	4 (21%)	19
2sg	5 (31%)	11 (69%)	16

As seen in Table 1, 1sg verbs with the negative enclitic choose *-a* over *-at* 79% of the time, whereas 2sg verbs with the negative enclitic choose *-at* over *-a* 69% of the time. This tendency might be interpreted as evidence for the analogy component of the REINFORCER hypothesis, where the *-t* in *-at* is originally a 2sg marker.

However, there is a further prediction made by the analogy component of the REINFORCER hypothesis. Consider the partial paradigms in Table 2 below.

Table 2. 2sg *-t* vs. unmarked 1sg/3sg

	'was/were'	'bit'	'won'	Prediction for neg
1sg	<i>var</i>	<i>beit</i>	<i>vann</i>	<i>-a</i>
2sg	<i>var-t</i>	<i>beit-t</i>	<i>vann-t</i>	<i>-a-t</i>
3sg	<i>var</i>	<i>beit</i>	<i>vann</i>	<i>-a</i>

In the strong preterite, *-t* is the regular marker in the 2sg. This was mentioned above. Note, furthermore, that 1sg patterns with 3sg in being unmarked. Thus we would predict – since the analogy hypothesis crucially relies on the strong preterite as the main source of *-t* as a salient marker of 2sg – that 3sg should prefer *-a* over *-at* in the oldest Eddic poems, in the same way that 1sg prefers *-a* over *-at*. This prediction, however, is not borne out, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Use of *-a* vs. *-at* with 3rd person singular verbs

Verb	<i>-a</i>	<i>-at</i>	Total
3sg	17 (42.5%)	23 (57.5%)	40

There does not seem to be any preference for 3sg negated verbs to choose *-a* over *-at*; in fact, 3sg verbs appear more frequently with *-at* than with *-a*, running completely counter to the prediction made in Table 2.

The very small corpus of runic inscriptions with *-a/-at* present further problems for the REINFORCER etymology.

- (15) a.     **sikat**  
*sé-kk-at*  
 ‘I see not’  
 (Trå III, N 284 , c. 900-950)
- b.     **munat : raip:uipur**  
*mun-at Reið-Viðurr*  
 ‘never shall Reið-Viðurr...’  
 (Karlevi, Öl 1, late 900s)
- c.     **era \* fenbra=uhþum \* flahþa \* fa=lnr**  
*er-a feiknbrogðum flagða fallnir*  
 ‘[The ships] are not felled by trickery/sorcery’  
 (Vinje, N171, 1190s)

As seen in (15), two out of three of these inscriptions (and the two older ones, no less) are counterexamples to the hypothesis: (15a) shows 1sg with *-at* (we would expect *-a*) and (15b) 3sg with *-at* (we would expect *-a* again); only (15c) shows expected third person with *-a*, but this inscription from Vinje is at least 200 years younger than the Trå and Karlevi inscriptions, making its relevance as evidence for the REINFORCER etymology dubious.

Finally, recall that the hypothesis presented in this section sets up a parallel between *em-k-a-k* and *er-t-at*. Surprisingly, however, there are no ‘pure’ cases of the latter configuration (i.e. verb-*t-at*) in my sample. Instead, the 2sg verbs I found typically ended with the sequence *-t-at-tu* with enclitic pronoun *-tu* (*-ðu*, *-du*) (e.g. *gaft-at-tu*), or imperatives ending in *-a-þu* (e.g. *lát-a-þu*). In the latter category of cases, of course, the negation *-a* is a counterexample to the REINFORCER hypothesis, since we would expect *-at* in the 2sg imperative. As for the former category, I think it is likely that there is a (stylistic) tendency to use *-at + -tu*, given how common this morphological construction is throughout the Edda. If I am correct about *-at-tu* being a stylistic preference, many of the instances which were counted as evidence in favor of the REINFORCER/2sg-reanalysis etymology are suddenly unclear. That is, it becomes questionable if instances of *-at-tu* (of which there are six, out of a total of 11 cases of *-at* used with a verb in the 2sg) can really be considered evidence pointing to an ancient history implicating 2sg in the emergence of *-at*.

#### 4.4 Addendum to the REINFORCER hypothesis

In the study of OHG and OE, it has become common to assume their 2sg verbal ending *-st* to be derived from a process like the one seen in (16).

- (16) /giloubis+**thu**/ > *giloubistu* → /giloubist+**thu**/  
 (from Fertig 2017)

The pronoun *thu* when cliticized to the 2sg verb with the (older) ending *-s* appears as *-tu*. The sequence *-st-*, moreover, can then potentially be reanalyzed as an underlying */-stþ-/* according to a rule of OHG phonology (i.e. *-stþ-* > *-st-*). This reanalysis allows for an extra, non-etymological *t* to surface, which is then interpreted as part of the verbal ending. See Fertig (2017) for critical discussion.

Using this well-known hypothesis as a model (but also taking Fertig's skeptical stance to heart), we could imagine putting a twist on the REINFORCER etymology that looks something like (17).

- (17) *-a-tu* (e.g. *skal-a-tu*) → */-at-tu/*  
 (e.g. *vilt-tu* > *viltu*, *kannt-tu* > *kanntu*, *reist-tu* > *reistu*)

In other words, much like the hypothesis for OHG and OE, we have a phonologically based reinterpretation of surface *t* as underlying */tt/*, the extra *t* potentially being resegmented with the negation, resulting in *-at* from *-a*. This hypothesis can be easily dismissed, however, considering that the expected form of the enclitic 2sg pronoun after a vowel (as in the first stage in (17)) was *-ðu* (e.g. *slá-ðu*, *boða-ðu*, *fannt-a-ðu*), not *-tu*. The origins of *-a-tu*, then, must look something like (18), with *-tþ-* assimilating to *-tt-* which is then weakened to a single *-t-*.

- (18) *-at-þu* > *-at-tu* > *-a-tu*

In other words, the sequence *-a-tu* (in cases like *skal-a-tu* and the like) already presupposes the existence of *-at*, and therefore it cannot simultaneously serve as the explanation for the genesis of *-at*.

## 5 (N)EVER (A THING) etymology

Die verstärkung der verneinung ist doppelter art. Entweder wird durch anwendung zweier negierender partikeln ein größerer nachdruck hervorgebracht, oder **der negierende sinn durch zufügung eines positiven wortes gehoben, das die negation begleitet. Hierbei ereignet sich dann nicht selten, daß die eigentliche negativ-partikel untergeht und ihre verneinende kraft ganz von dem positiven wort angezogen wird.**<sup>7</sup>

(Grimm [1831] 1890: 701, my bold)

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<sup>7</sup> “The reinforcement of the negative is twofold in nature. Either a greater emphasis is put forth through the use of two negating particles, or the negative sense is elevated by a positive word accompanying the negation. In this way it happens not infrequently that what is actually the negative particle declines and its negating force gets entirely drawn in by the positive word.”

Wie, wenn das suffix, als dessen vollständige form *at* erscheint, selbst aus einem anfänglichen *vätt, vætt* hervorgegangen wäre?<sup>8</sup>  
(Grimm 1890 [1831]: 693)

One theme of this paper is that some incisive insights from Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik* (specifically volume III, chapter 9 on negation) have in more recent years gone unnoticed. Grimm clearly had a good understanding of the negative cycle, minimizers (e.g. *niht ein blat*, compare Fr. *pas* 'not' < Lat. *passus* 'step'), and more. For our specific purposes, we should note that Grimm correctly identified the cognate pair of OHG *niwiht* and ON *vætr* 'nothing', suggesting that he (at least on some level) understood the following process, already mentioned above: ON *vætr* (n.) 'nothing' < \**ne wëttR* (f.) 'not a thing', cf. Go. *ni waiht(s)* (see also Kock 1879: 19, Delbrück 1910: 19-22).<sup>9</sup> Indeed, he specifically mentions "Dem altn. *vætr* kann keine negation praefigiert werden" (Grimm [1831] 1890: 696) while also observing that WGmc does show the possibility of contraction or prefixation with *ne* (e.g. OE *nis* 'is not', *nāt* = *ne wāt* 'know(s) not', ME *willy nilly* 'will he, won't he'; Grimm 1890 [1831]: 687-689). Thus he reasons that *ne* must have fallen away early in Nordic (Grimm 1890 [1831]: 689-690).

As for the precise development of *-at* from "*vätt, vætt*" (where the form with long *â* is pure wishful thinking), Grimm (1890 [1831]: 693) imagines that *v-* can easily drop (providing support from *Norvegr* > *Noregr* 'Norway') and that *-r* is "unwesentlich" (providing *vætt-ki* 'nothing'), thus: *-vætr* > *-æt*. As should be clear at this point, Kock (1879: 14-15) was rightly worried about the vowel correspondence in *væt-* or *vëtt-* : *-at*.

Grønvik (1997: §6.2) has provided the updated, contemporary version of Grimm's etymology. But whereas Grimm supposed that *-a* was just a shortened form of *-at* ("*-at*, oder bloßes *-a* verkürzt" [Grimm 1890 [1831]: 713]), Grønvik provides two separate etymologies, the one for *-a* building on Scherer (1890 [1868]: 476)<sup>10</sup> and the one for *-at* building on the above-mentioned discussion from Grimm. Grønvik's etymologies are summarized in (19) (NB: I write *ne* instead of *ni* and *wehti-* instead of *wihti-*).

- (19) a. \**ne aiwa-* 'not ever'  
> ON *-a* (cf. ON *á* 'always', OE *n-ā* 'never, not, no', Go. *ni aiw*)

<sup>8</sup> "What if the suffix, in its complete form appearing as *at*, itself was derived from an original *vätt, vætt*?"

<sup>9</sup> Even in Gothic, Coombs (1976: 67-68) mentions one clear instance of the indefinite pronoun *ainshun* without the negator *ni* but still in a syntactically negative context: *sai, jau ainshun þize reike galaubidedi imma aiþþau Fareisaie?* 'Lo, has **any** of the rulers or the Pharisees believed him?' (John 7:48, and commented on in the *Skeireins*). Danielsen (1968: 73, fn.) also provides *þata anþar ni wait ei ainnohun daupidedjau* 'on the other hand, I don't know if I baptized **any other**' (Cor.I 1:16). Cf. also Go. *ni in waihtai waninassu* 'no want/lack **at all**' in the *Skeireins* (Coombs 1976: 63).

<sup>10</sup> And later endorsed by Kock (1879: 16) and Delbrück (1910: 23, 38).

- b. \*ne **aiwa-wehti-** ‘not ever a (single) thing’  
 > ON *-at* (cf. OE *n-ā-wiht* ‘nothing’)

Grønvik makes the observation that ON *á* ‘always’ can be considered an unreduced version of the enclitic negation *-a* (though de Vries [2000 [1962]: 1, s.v. *a*] explicitly considers this “weniger wahrscheinlich” than the ONE etymology). For both (19a) and (19b), the negative meaning of both *-a* and *-at* derives from a configuration in which preposed *ne* was still present (i.e. ‘not ever/always’ > ‘never’ > ‘not’ and ‘not ever a single thing’ > ‘never a single thing’ > ‘not’), just as in OE *n-ā* ‘never, not, no’, OE *n-ā-wiht* ‘nothing’ > *nāwht* > *nāht* > PDE *not*, Go. *ni aiw*, where the old negation is still present. Cf. also ON *ei(gi)* ‘not’ < \*ne *æi-gi*, *aldri(gi)* ‘never’ < \*ne *aldre-gi*, etc. (though some cases preserving the older indefinite-generalizing interpretation of \*-k<sup>w</sup>e, e.g. *hvergi* ‘whoever’; Delbrück 1910: 16).

Grønvik’s etymology is in many ways a *tour de force*, but there are, as always, certain refinements that can be made. Consider the development of *-a*, for which Grønvik simply provides \*(ne) *aiwa-* > \*(n)-*ā* > ON *-a*. To fill in some details here myself, we can first assume that secondarily stressed \**ai* monophthongizes to \**ā* (Noreen 1923: §54,3c) quite early,<sup>11</sup> followed by loss of unstressed *-a*. Word-final *-w* in \**āw* is then susceptible to deletion (Kock 1898: 259), giving \**ā* (ON *á* ‘always’) > ON *-a* ‘not’.<sup>12</sup> This development is quite smooth and gradual. As for ON *-at*, however, I do not think we can assume the same kind of gradual phonological development from \*(ne) *aiwa-wehti-*, despite what Grønvik appears to suggest in (20).

- (20) \**-ā-weht-* > \**-ā-(u)ht-* > \**ätt* > ON *-at* (Grønvik 1997: 20)

I would contend that we should be thinking in terms of syncope here, rather than Grønvik’s more gradual, step-wise reduction. Assuming for now that the first component \**-ā-* has the development sketched above for *-a*, we would in fact expect the sequence \**-ā-weht-* to give ON \**ávett* or \**ávit* (cf. *eyvit* ‘nothing’), with retention of the labial, just as in ON *ávalt* ‘always’ < \**āw-allt* (cf. Go. *aiw allata*) or *ævi*, *ævin-* ‘life, age, eternal’ (Kock 1898: 258-261), also *æva* ‘(n)ever’ < \**aiwō-*. Thus (20) should be written instead as (21).<sup>13</sup>

- (21) \**ā-weht-* > \**ätt* > ON *-at*

<sup>11</sup> If Versloot’s (2017) conclusions about the dating of *stressed* \**ai* > \**ā* / \_\_ {h, r} is any indication.

<sup>12</sup> It is worth mentioning that the regular outcome of \**aiwa* (with *stressed* \**ai*) may have been \**øy* (i.e. \**ei* with *u*-mutation from \**w*): \**fraiwa* > \**freiū* > \**frøy* > dialectal Sw. *frøy* ‘seed’, as well as \**aiwa* > \**eiū* > \**øy* > OIcel. *ey* ~ unstressed *ei* ‘ever, always’ (Brøndum-Nielsen 1950 [1928]: §106; see also Noreen 1923: §77,15).

<sup>13</sup> Directly relevant to (21) would be \**þew-ern-ōn* > *þerna* ‘maid’ (Kroonen 2013: 585) and Gallehus **tawido** i.e. *tawiðō* > (unattested) ON \**táða*.

This sort of phenomenon is in fact attested nearby: consider modern Sw. *något* ~ *nåt*, *någon* ~ *nån*; the extremely similar alternation in OE *nōwiht* ~ *nōht* ‘nothing’ found in the Vespasian Psalter (c. 750) (Campbell 1959: §393, fn.1); or ON *æ* ‘always’ as a truncated form of *ævi* (i.e. *\*aiwī\**) (Brøndum-Nielsen 1950 [1928]: §106, Anm.2).

Interestingly, once we accept the need for syncope of *-wV-* in *\*āwa-weht-* or *æwi*, it becomes necessary to reconsider the gradual development leading up to *-a*. As Kock (1898: 260-261, especially fn.1) discusses, we might expect *u*-mutation in *\*āw* > *\*ō(w)* ‘always’, which could explain the initial vowel in the variant *ofalt* (which in turn gave way to reanalysis as prepositional phrases of the sort *of(v)alt* → *um alt*) ‘always’. If we assume syncope of the sequence *-wa-* right off the bat, however, then we have a principled explanation for the lack of *u*-umlaut in the old forms *á* and *-a*, as seen in (22).

(22) *\*aiwa-* > *\*āwa-* > *\*ā* > ON *-a*

Not only do we avoid the risk of *u*-mutation this way, but the syncope of the labial-vowel sequence puts *-a* in line with ON *-at* (< *\*ai-weht-* or even *\*aiwa-wehti-*), ON *æ* ‘always’ (< *\*aiwī\**), OE *nōwiht* ~ *nōht*, etc.<sup>14</sup>

The (N)EVER (A THING) etymology makes sense of the larger NWGmc picture. In the NWGmc dialect continuum there were the same raw materials (*\*ne*, *\*aiw-*, *\*wehti-*) to work with, giving a number of different possible combinations, as in (23).

(23) *\*ne* + *\*aiw-* = never  
*\*ne* + *\*wehti-* = nothing  
*\*aiw-* + *\*wehti-* = anything, aught  
*\*ne* + *\*aiw-* + *\*wehti-* = nothing

These compositional, highly transparent forms were then subject to phonological reduction and semantic bleaching (e.g. ‘nothing’ or ‘never’ → ‘not’) over time, but at different rates depending on the (sub-)branch. Nordic, clearly, is first, since we have a completely opaque item *-a/-at* already by 800. In WGmc the process took much longer, as summarized in (24).

(24) OE *nāwiht* > *nāwuht*, *nāwht* (Alfred, 9<sup>th</sup> c.) > *nāht* (Ælfric, 10<sup>th</sup> c.) (Clark Hall 1916)

OS *niowiht*, *neowiht* > ODu. *niewiht* > MDu. *niwet*, *nit*, *niet* (13<sup>th</sup> c.)  
 (Philippa *et al.* 2003-2009 s.v. *niet*)

OHG *niowiht*, *neowiht* > *nieweht* > late OHG *nieht* ‘not’ (11<sup>th</sup> c.)  
 (Braune & Reiffenstein: §299)

<sup>14</sup> It is also worth mentioning that prefixing anything but the completely reduced *\*ā* form to *\*wehti-* would result in unexpected forms: *\*āw-wehti-* with *-ww-* would predict sharpening in ON, and *\*āwa-wehti-* would have the labial-retention problem (see discussion above on *ávalt*) times two. Thus wholesale syncope of the labial-vowel sequence shows itself once again to be the preferable analysis.

After this, moreover, there is evidence that the cycle was seeing a renewal in Nordic, where compositional forms are observed once again: ON *ey-vit* ‘not at all’, *ey-vit eitt* ‘nothing at all’ (Zoëga 2004 [1910]) (unstr. *vit* < *vétt-*), *n-einn*, and the like appearing in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Grønvik 1997: Table 1). Similar redux forms like OE *nān-þing* are seen in WGmc at various stages too.

## 6 Phonological conditioning?

In this section I explore an interesting tendency which has by various scholars (e.g. Cleasby 1874: xxvi, Kock 1879: 14 citing Gislason) been claimed to hold. It is given in (25).

- (25)  $-a / \_ C$   
 $-(a)t / \_ V$

That is, *-a* is preferred when a consonant follows, while *-at* is preferred when a vowel follows (somewhat on a par with English *a ~ an*). I have brought the Eddic data to bear on this point, and my findings, as we will see, indicate that the phonological conditioning in (25) was not always the case, but rather that it gradually developed and became more consistent over time. This strongly suggests that *-a* and *-at* are historically separate (i.e. we need one etymology for *-a* and another etymology for *-at*).

Once again I have made use of Lundin Åkesson’s (2005) negation-based dating of the poems in the Edda.

Table 4. Dating of poems in the Edda according to Lundin Åkesson (2005: 251, Table 5)

Oldest	Medium	Youngest
Gðr.II	Am.	Hlr.
Ghv.	Háv.	Od.
HH.II	Sg.	HHv.
Vsp.	Þrk.	Grm.
Sd.	Ls.	Skm.
Gðr.III	HH.	Hrbl.
Hym.	Grp.	Vm.
Vkv.	Alv.	
Fm.	Akv.	
Hm.		
Gðr.I		
Br.		
Rm.		

Again using Jónsson's and Bugge's editions of the Poetic Edda (with the latter once again taking precedence when forms disagree<sup>15</sup>), I checked all cases of *-a* and *-at* (NB: all instances of *-(a)b* are counted as *-(a)t*, with all of the environments in (26) considered to be in alignment with the alleged tendency/generalization in (25).

- (26) *-a* / \_\_ (#) C  
*-(a)t* / \_\_ (#) V  
*-a* / \_\_ pausa  
*-(a)t* / \_\_ pausa

Any instance of *-a* before a vowel or *-at* before a consonant was counted as a 'violation' of the generalization/tendency.

The results are summarized in Table 5, with three possible scenarios provided (depending on how we want to understand the generalization). The symbol ☑ means 'in line with the phonological conditioning generalization', while ☒ means 'not in line with the generalization'.

Table 5. Three ways of dividing up the data for the conditioning generalization

	☑	☒	
<b>Oldest</b>	36 (43%)	48 (57%)	
<b>Middle</b>	68 (53%)	61 (47%)	<i>Scenario 1 (basic version)</i>
<b>Youngest</b>	19 (63%)	11 (37%)	
<hr/>			
	☑	☒	
<b>Oldest</b>	39 (46%)	45 (54%)	
<b>Middle</b>	75 (58%)	54 (42%)	• <i>-at + hV- or jV- are not considered violations</i>
<b>Youngest</b>	21 (70%)	9 (30%)	
<hr/>			
	☑	☒	
<b>Oldest</b>	45 (54%)	39 (46%)	
<b>Middle</b>	81 (63%)	48 (37%)	• <i>-at + hV- or jV- are not considered violations</i>
<b>Youngest</b>	25 (83%)	5 (17%)	• <i>-at-tu is not considered a violation</i>

In Scenario 1, the data have been divided up according to (26), such that *any* instance of *-at* before a consonant or *-a* before a vowel counts as a violation. In Scenario 2, I have not counted cases of *-at* plus an *h*-vowel sequence or *-at* plus a *j*-vowel sequence as a violation. Since the glottal fricative *h* and the glide *j* are not necessarily 'true' consonants (cf. that the definite article suffix *-inn, -in, -it* in ON is historically a cliticized form of the demonstrative

<sup>15</sup> Pausas, however, are based on the commas, dashes, and periods of Jónsson's edition.

*hinn, hin, hit*, or ‘aitch-dropping in the history of English; the semi-vowel status of *j*, usually written <í> in manuscripts, needs no comment), we can disregard *h* and *j* before a vowel, giving us instances that essentially amount to *-at* plus vowel. In Scenario 3, finally, in addition to the *hV*- and *jV*- exception, I have made an additional exception for the sequence *-at-tu*, since (as discussed above) there seems to be a stylistic tendency for using *-at* (rather than *-a*) with *-tu*, which would suggest that it should not be counted as a violation as such.

Now, as seen in Table 5, no matter how we slice the data (i.e. Scenario 1, 2, or 3), the tendency gets stronger the younger the texts get. If we take Scenario 3 – the most nuanced version of the generalization – then we can see that the phonological conditioning in the oldest poems is not much better than chance (54% in line with conditioning vs. 46% not). The obvious explanation for this fact is that *-a* and *-at* are etymologically distinct, and therefore they started out in competition with one another (rather than in complementary distribution) (see Grønvik 1997: 18-19 for some discussion). As time goes on, however, phonological conditioning gradually increases, to the point where the youngest poems are 83% in line with the generalization. My explanation for this fact is that *-a* and *-at* had developed from separate morphemes into allomorphs of a single morpheme ‘not’. However, before conditioning can run its full course (i.e. before reaching 100% in line with the generalization), *-a* and *-at* are ousted in favor of *eigi, ekki*, etc. Thus phonological conditioning of *-a* vs. *-at* could never be called more than a tendency (though it seems certainly to have been a stronger tendency in the later poems than in the earlier ones).

My findings concerning phonological conditioning lend support most clearly to the (N)EVER (A THING) etymology. Insofar as *\*aina* and *\*ainat-* are considered to be separate forms, the findings could also be construed as support for the ONE etymology of, among others, de Vries (2000 [1962]: 1, 17). It is quite clear, however, that the hypotheses positing only a single etymological source find no support here. Thus neither Kock’s version of the ONE etymology nor the REINFORCER etymology benefits, since they claim that one of the two forms is the original (*-at* for Kock and *-a* for the REINFORCER hypothesis), with the other one derived through some process of analogical resegmentation.

## 7 Concluding remarks

### 7.1 The gravity diagnostic

As the reader will have noticed for the ONE and (N)EVER (A THING) etymologies, scholars have made abundant use of the monophthongization of *\*ai* to PN *\*ā* under secondary stress (Noreen 1923: §54,3). Secondary stress is only one of the environments conditioning the change from *\*ai* to PN *\*ā*. The diphthong *\*ai* monophthongizes to PN *\*ā* also before *\*h* (Noreen 1923: §54,1) and *\*r* (Noreen 1923: §54,2), with examples including *\*taihwō-* (cf. OE *tā(he)*, OHG *zēha*) > ON *tá* ‘toe’ and *airu-* (cf. Go. *airus*, OE *ār*) > ON *árr* ‘messenger’ (examples from Kroonen 2013: 505, 13).

In an attempt to understand how *\*h*, *\*r*, and secondary stress can be understood as a coherent set of conditioning factors for the change *\*ai* > PN *\*ā*, Nielsen (1983: 161, citing Davidsen-Nielsen & Ørum 1978) makes a reasonable case for the Jakobsonian feature

[gravity]. Gravity is defined as low acoustic pitch, essentially amounting to [–coronal] for consonants and [+back] for vowels. According to Nielsen, gravity can be seen as the relevant organizing feature for \*h, \*r, and many of the consonants following long *ā* in Noreen’s examples involving secondary stress (*Ūfāgr*, *Þorlákr*, *Óláfr*, *Monámr*, with only a couple of minor counterexamples):

If in principle we are right in attributing the monophthongization of *ai* in weakly accented syllables to regressive ‘gravity’ assimilation, it is only to be expected that a vowel with less accent should fall more easily prey to the economy of (acoustic) energy than a vowel with a greater amount of accent – this is to explain why the distribution of  $\bar{a} < ai$  is not so restricted in weakly accented syllables as it is in strongly accented ones.

(Nielsen 1983: 161)

Thus, gravity can be used as a diagnostic for judging those etymologies appealing to monophthongization of \*ai to PN \*ā under secondary stress. The reader will recall from above that both the ONE and (N)EVER (A THING) etymologies make use of this sub-rule. These two etymologies also happen to be the strongest explanations for the origins of *-a/-at*, so an additional diagnostic would be useful in deciding between them.<sup>16</sup>

As for the ONE etymology, the forms at stake are the following: \*ain- > ON *-a*, \*ain-t > \*aitt > ON *-at*. The diphthong is followed by the consonants *n* and *t*, which are both coronal and thus [–grave], making this a point *against* the ONE etymology. The (N)EVER (A THING) etymology involves the forms \*aiwa- > ON *-a* and \*aiwa-wehti- > ON *-at*. The diphthong here is followed by the consonant *w*, which is non-coronal and therefore [+grave], satisfying Nielsen’s gravity requirement.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the gravity diagnostic provides us with a subtle quality check that the ONE etymology does not pass but the (N)EVER (A THING) etymology does.

## 7.2 Conclusion

Summing up, I have investigated four main etymologies for the ON negative enclitic *-a/-at*. The first was the AND etymology of Cleasby (1874), the idea being that ON *-a/-at* and Go. *-uh/-uppan* are cognate. This hypothesis is too confused, both phonologically and distributionally, to be true. The second etymology, going back first to Kock (1879), is that ON *-at* can be identified with \*aitt ‘one’ (for many scholars, short-form neuter singular \*ain- > ON *-a*, long-form neuter singular \*ainat- > ON *-at*). The ONE etymology is certainly credible, but it does not satisfy the gravity requirement on \*ai > PN \*ā as set up by Nielsen

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Delbrück (1910: 31, 40) vacillates on *-at* < \*ainata vs. cognate with Go. *waiht*.

<sup>17</sup> It is generally accepted (see e.g. Noreen 1923: §54,3 or Haugen 1976: 157) that ON *nakkwarr* ‘someone’ derives from a phrase like \*ne-wait-ek-hwaz- ‘not-know-I-who’. But whereas Brink (1991/2009: 26) puts monophthongization of \*ai *before* the assimilation of \*tk to \*kk (i.e. \*nwajtk- > \*najtk- > \*nātk-), which violates the gravity rule since *t* is coronal, Brøndum-Nielsen (1950: 147) gives the order \*naitk- > \*naikk- > \*nāk-, where gravity is not violated since monophthongization occurs after assimilation of \*tk > \*kk, putting \*ai before non-coronal *k*.

(1983). The third option, dubbed the REINFORCER etymology, is an original hypothesis with the merit of high testability. When the hypothesis is tested, however, the results come up overwhelmingly negative, giving us quite some certitude that it is wrong. The last etymology has its origins in Grimm (1890 [1831]) and Scherer (1890 [1868]), fairly recently synthesized by Grønvik (1997). The idea here is that ON *-a* and *-at* are the result of the same grammaticalization process that resulted in OE *n-ā* (cf. ON *-a*) < \*(ne) aiwa- ‘not ever’ and OE *n-ā-wiht* (cf. ON *-at*) < \*(ne) aiwa-wehti- ‘not ever a (single) thing’. Not only does the (N)EVER (A THING) etymology place ON *-a/-at* into a coherent picture of Jespersen’s Cycle in NWGmc, but it also – unlike the ONE etymology – fulfills the gravity requirement. This makes the (N)EVER (A THING) etymology the best explanation on the market for the Norse negative enclitic.

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# Constraints on Movement\*

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## Abstract

I argue, contra Chomsky (2013, 2015), that internal merge may not be free. It is shown that the Criterial Position (Rizzi 2006, 2010, 2015) is the position in which a raised category completes the valuation of all of its own unvalued features. The Halting Problem, the Extended Projection Principle, and the Empty Category Principle (as well as the disappearance of that effect) are all fully accounted for in terms of feature valuation. This unified account derives from the corollary of the derivational system of Labeling Algorithm (Chomsky 2013, 2015), in which labeling results from feature valuation. In Scandinavian Object Shift and Icelandic Stylistic Fronting, a category that does not have unvalued features can move from/into the Criterial Position (Hosono 2016). Following Chomsky (2013, 2015), who claims that (both external and internal) merge is free, movement from/into the Criterial Position would be allowed to occur with its legitimacy determined by filtering at the interfaces. If such movement is considered to occur exceptionally in narrow syntax, constraints on movement should exist. The argument that far more constraints on movement are imposed by phonology than have been considered so far (Hosono 2016, Richards 2016) indicates not only that internal merge may not be free, but also that narrow syntax will be *crash-proof* (Frampton and Gutmann 2002): the derivational mechanism will produce only well-formed structures that conform to the requirement by phonology, with no filters assumed.

## 1. Introduction

A sentential element is frozen in some structural positions, the problem called the *Halting Problem* (HP, Rizzi 2006, 2010, 2015). In (1a), the *wh*-object *which dog* moves from its original position to [Spec,(embedded)CP]. When it moves out of that position, the sentence is ungrammatical; see (1b). Such a position as [Spec,(embedded)CP] from where a sentential element cannot move up further is called the *Criterial Position* (CriP).

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- (1) a. You wonder [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>Q</sub> which dog] C<sub>Q</sub> John likes [<sub>Q</sub> ~~which dog~~]].  
 b. \*[[<sub>Q</sub> which dog] do you wonder [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>Q</sub> ~~which dog~~] C<sub>Q</sub> John likes [<sub>Q</sub> ~~which dog~~]]?

Another typical CriP claimed in the literature (Rizzi 2006, 2010, 2015) is the subject position, [Spec,TP] traditionally, which is required to be filled by an overt subject in languages such as English (the *Extended Projection Principle* (EPP), Chomsky 1981, 1986, 1995):

- (2) \*(John) kisses Mary.

An issue related to the EPP is the *Empty Category Principle* (ECP), which requires that a trace be properly linked with its antecedent (Chomsky 1981, 1986, 1995). In languages such as English, when a *wh*-subject moves to sentence-initial position, the overt complementizer *that* cannot appear, since the overt complementizer intervenes between the raised *who* and its trace (the *that-trace effect*, Chomsky 1981, 1986); see (3a). When the complementizer disappears, the ECP effect also disappears and the entire sentence is grammatical; see (3b).

- (3) a. \*Who do you think that [<sub>wh</sub> ~~read the book~~]?  
 b. Who do you think  $\emptyset$  [<sub>wh</sub> ~~read the book~~]?

In this paper, I argue, contra Chomsky (2013, 2015), that *internal merge* (IM) may not be free. It is shown that the CriP is the position in which a raised category completes the valuation of all of its own unvalued features. That is, a category to be raised must have some unvalued feature(s) which is valued by a head in its raised position; after it completes the valuation of all of its unvalued feature(s), it cannot move up further. The HP, the EPP, and the ECP (as well as the disappearance of that effect) are all fully accounted for in terms of feature valuation. This unified account derives from the corollary of the derivational system of *Labeling Algorithm* (LA, Chomsky 2013, 2015), in which labeling results from feature valuation. In Scandinavian *Object Shift* (OS, Holmberg 1986) and Icelandic *Stylistic Fronting* (SF, Holmberg 2000), a category that does not have unvalued features can move from/into the CriP (Hosono 2016). Following Chomsky (2013, 2015), who claims i) that both external merge (EM) and IM are free, and ii) that a *syntactic object* (SO) that is gibberish and not interpreted

appropriately is filtered out at the interfaces, movement from/into the CriP would be allowed to occur with its legitimacy determined by filtering at the interfaces. If such movement is considered to occur exceptionally in *narrow syntax* (NS), constraints on movement should exist. The argument that far more constraints on movement are imposed by *phonology* (PHON) than have been considered so far (Hosono 2016, Richards 2016) indicates not only that IM may not be free, but also that NS will be *crash-proof* (Frampton and Gutmann 2002): the derivational mechanism will produce only well-formed structures that conform to the requirement by PHON, with no filters assumed.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces the LA derivational system (Chomsky 2013, 2015). Section 3 examines the properties of the CriP in detail. Sections 4 presents two movement cases, Scandinavian OS and Icelandic SF. Section 5 discusses constraints on movement. Section 6 concludes this paper.

## 2. Labeling Algorithm and Free Merge

Through the theoretical transition (Chomsky 2004, 2008), Chomsky (2013, 2015) completely eliminates the constraint on movement, contra Chomsky (2001), who claimed that movement occurs when a semantic difference is reflected on the interfaces. Under the long tradition of *X'-bar* theory (Chomsky 1981, 1986, 1995), a head automatically projected itself. Contrary to this tradition, Chomsky (2013, 2015) claims that in configuration [XP, YP], there is no necessity to assume that Y, for instance, always projects. But a SO needs a label so that it can be interpreted at the interfaces. It is labeled in the derivation by LA, which is claimed to be a minimal search of computation.<sup>1</sup>

Labeling of SOs proceeds as follows. First, in configuration [ $v^*/C$ , XP] where the phase head, either  $v^*$  or C, merges to a maximal projection, XP, LA takes the label of that phase head, which results in either [ $\langle v^* \rangle v^*$ , XP] or [ $\langle C \rangle C$ , XP].

Secondly, in configuration [R/T, XP] where either a verbal root R or T, which is not a phase head and weak by assumption, merges to XP, either XP itself or a category inside XP, say YP, moves to the Spec of that head to strengthen the head. The raised category and the head share some features, e.g.  $\phi$ -features. Feature sharing between two categories includes the valuation procedure in which

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<sup>1</sup> See Collins (2002) and Seely (2006), who claim within the *phase* (Chomsky 2000) framework that labels should be eliminated from the syntactic representation.

one's unvalued features are valued by the other's valued counterpart. After feature valuation, LA takes the shared  $\varphi$ -features and labels the entire projection  $\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle$ , which results in either  $[\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle \text{XP}_{[\varphi]} [\text{R}_{[\varphi]}, \text{XP}]]$  or  $[\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle \text{YP}_{[\varphi]} [\text{T}_{[\varphi]} [\text{XP} \dots \text{YP} \dots]]]$ .<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, in configuration  $[\text{XP}, \text{YP}]$  where two maximal projections, XP and YP, merge, one way to label the projection is that either one of them moves out of that configuration, and the remaining maximal projection offers its label. That is, after one of the maximal projections moves out, its copy in the original position becomes part of a discontinuous object. LA is blind to such an element and takes instead the head of the remaining maximal projection as the label of the entire configuration, which results in either  $[\text{XP} [\langle\text{Y}\rangle \text{XP}, \text{YP}]]$  or  $[\text{YP} [\langle\text{X}\rangle \text{XP}, \text{YP}]]$ . The other way is that XP and YP share some features, e.g.  $\varphi$ -features, and feature valuation occurs between them; LA takes the shared features and labels the projection  $\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle$ , which results in  $[\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle \text{XP}_{[\varphi]}, \text{YP}_{[\varphi]}]$ .

On the basis of the labeling procedure introduced above, the derivation of *John kisses Mary* proceeds as illustrated in (4), which is the final representation of the derivation. Following Chomsky (2013, 2015), let us consider the derivational process until when  $\beta\langle\text{v}^*\rangle$  (=  $\text{v}^*\text{P}$ , with the traditional notation) is transferred.

(4)  $\text{C} [\alpha\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle \text{John} [\text{T} [\beta\langle\text{v}^*\rangle \text{John} [\text{kisses}(=\text{R})+\text{v}^* [\gamma\langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle \text{Mary} [\text{kisses}(=\text{R}) [\delta \text{Mary}]]]]]]]]]$ <sup>3</sup>

The verbal root R, *kisses*, merges to its internal argument, *Mary*. Since *kisses*(=R) is not a phase head and weak, *Mary* moves to  $[\text{Spec},\gamma]$  to strengthen it. The phase head  $\text{v}^*$  merges to  $\gamma$ . Phasehood is inherited from  $\text{v}^*$  to R: functional features such as  $\varphi$ -features that are located in  $\text{v}^*$  are inherited to *kisses*(=R). *Kisses*(=R) and *Mary* in its Spec go on to feature valuation and the latter is assigned an Acc(usative Case). LA labels  $\gamma \langle\varphi,\varphi\rangle$ . *Kisses*(=R) moves to  $\text{v}^*$  to become a verbal category.<sup>4</sup> Phasehood is activated in the original position of R.  $\delta$ , the complement of R (, which is now vacuous), is transferred.

Then, the external argument of  $\text{v}^*$ , *John*, and T merge in turn. Since T is

<sup>2</sup> Here, I tentatively notate all  $\varphi$ -features, both unvalued ones and valued ones, as  $[\varphi]$  for explanatory sake. I introduce a detailed derivational process soon below.

<sup>3</sup> R has valued  $\varphi$ -features  $[\varphi]$ , which are inherited from  $\text{v}^*$ , and T has unvalued  $\varphi$ -features  $[\text{u}\varphi]$ , which are inherited from C. *John* and *Mary* each have an unvalued Case,  $[\text{uCase}]$ . I omit them from the notation in (4) for simplicity sake.

<sup>4</sup> After R moves to  $\text{v}^*$ ,  $\text{v}^*$  is claimed to be deleted due to its affixal nature (Chomsky 2015). In this paper, I notate  $\text{R}+\text{v}^*$  in its final transferred position without a deletion line on  $\text{v}^*$ .

not a phase head and weak, DP in its complement, i.e. *John* in [Spec, $\beta$ ], moves to [Spec, $\alpha$ ] to strengthen it. After *John* moves out, LA finds the phase head  $v^*$  and  $\beta$  is labeled  $\langle v^* \rangle$ . The phase head C merges to  $\alpha$ . Phasehood is inherited from C to T, and functional features such as  $\varphi$ -features that are located in C are inherited to T. T and *John* in its Spec go on to feature valuation and the latter is assigned a Nom(inative Case); the unvalued  $\varphi$ -features on T are also valued by the valued counterpart of *John*.<sup>5</sup> LA labels  $\alpha \langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$ . Phasehood is then activated in T.  $\beta \langle v^* \rangle$ , the complement of T, including  $\gamma \langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$ , is transferred.

As can be seen in the demonstration above, movement of a maximal projection does not always produce a new semantic effect such as focus or topic on it in the LA system. A category can of course receive a new interpretation in its raised position. The point here is that in the LA system, there is no constraint on movement that movement occurs when a semantic difference is reflected on the interfaces, contra Chomsky (2001). Eliminating any constraints on movement, Chomsky (2013, 2015) claims that both EM and IM are free. Merge can occur, having no recourse to any triggering features. Among SOs constructed in NS, those which are gibberish and not appropriately interpreted are filtered out at the interfaces (cf. Chomsky et al. 2017).

### 3. The Properties of the Criterial Position

Chomsky (2015) argues that the HP illustrated in (1a-b) is derived as follows. When *which dog* moves to [Spec,(embedded)C], feature valuation occurs between the unvalued [Q], [uQ], of *which dog* and the valued [Q] of  $C_Q$ .<sup>6</sup> As illustrated in (5a), the projection of  $C_Q$ , i.e.  $\beta$ , is labeled  $\langle Q, Q \rangle$ , with the shared feature Q taken. When *which dog* moves out of [Spec, $\beta$ ], LA takes  $C_Q$  as the label of  $\beta$ . This means, according to Chomsky, that the embedded clause is interpreted as a *yes-no* question, a gibberish interpretation, which causes (5b) to be ungrammatical.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Chomsky (2016) revises his claim, saying that after the phase head C and the raised subject go on to feature valuation, functional features such as  $\varphi$ -features located in C are inherited to T. In this claim, it is not clear for what reason  $\varphi$ -features must be inherited after the valuation procedure occurs between C and the subject. In this paper, I assume the system proposed by Chomsky (2013, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> See Cable (2010), who claims that C has a valued [Q] in interrogatives in all languages.

<sup>7</sup> See also Epstein et al. (2015), who claim that since the application of merge is free and ungrammatical cases such as (5b) are derived from their gibberish interpretation at the semantic

- (5) a. You wonder [ $\beta_{\langle Q, Q \rangle}$  [which dog]  $C_Q$  John likes [~~which dog~~]]. (=1a)  
 b. \* $[\alpha$  [which dog] do you wonder [ $\beta_{\langle C_Q \rangle}$  [~~which dog~~]  $C_Q$  John likes [~~which dog~~]]]? (=1b)

Chomsky's account for (5b) is quite odd, however. First, assume that feature valuation does not occur between *which dog* and the embedded  $C_Q$  when the former passes through the latter's Spec. Chomsky's account implies that *which dog* can move from its original position through [Spec, $\beta$ ] up to [Spec, $\alpha$ ], escaping from LA's minimal search. When *which dog* with [uQ] moves to [Spec, $\beta$ ], LA would expect feature valuation to occur between *which dog* and the embedded  $C_Q$  with [Q] and would try to find their shared feature to label the embedded clause as soon as possible. It is quite odd to argue that the raised category LA would definitely target can escape from LA's minimal search and move up further.

Secondly, assume that *which dog* moves out of [Spec, $\beta$ ] after feature valuation occurs between *which dog* and the embedded  $C_Q$ . Chomsky's claim that LA takes  $C_Q$  as the label of  $\beta$  after *which dog* moves out of [Spec, $\beta$ ] indicates that feature valuation between the embedded  $C_Q$  and *which dog* raised to [Spec, $\beta$ ] can be cancelled. After feature valuation between the embedded  $C_Q$  and *which dog*,  $\beta$  is already labeled  $\langle Q, Q \rangle$ , with LA taking their shared features as the label of  $\beta$ . No argument is presented to support the claim that a once labeled SO can be relabeled.

Chomsky (2015) associates the EPP with the ECP, on the other hand. As we saw in section 1, the subject position must be overtly filled in English; see (6a). When the *wh*-subject *who* moves to sentence-initial position, the overt complementizer *that* cannot appear; see (6b). On the contrary, languages such as Italian allow the subject position to be empty; see (7a). When the *wh*-subject *chi* 'who' moves to sentence-initial position, the overt complementizer *che* 'that' can appear; see (7b). Thus, English both has the EPP requirement and obeys the ECP, whereas Italian neither has the EPP requirement nor obeys the ECP. The English case (6c), in which when the overt complementizer disappears, the ECP effect disappears too, is idiosyncratic, according to Chomsky (2015).

- (6) a. \*(John) kisses Mary. (=2)  
 b. \*Who do you think [ $\langle C \rangle$  that [ $\alpha$  ~~who~~ T [ $\beta_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~who~~ read the book]]]? (=3a)  
 c. Who do you think [ $\langle C \rangle$   $\emptyset$  [ $\alpha$  ~~who~~ T [ $\beta_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~who~~ read the book]]]? (=3b)

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interface, the HP in syntax would be an illusion.

- (7) a. (Gianni) *vincerà*. [Ita.]  
 Gianni win-FUT-3sg  
 ‘Gianni will win.’
- b. Chi credi [<sub>C</sub> che [<sub>α<φ></sub> ~~chi~~ *vincerà*+T [<sub>β<v\*></sub> ~~chi~~ *vincerà*]]]?  
 who think-PRES-2sg that win-FUT-3sg  
 ‘Who do you think that will win?’

Chomsky (2015) attributes the difference between Italian and English to the strength of T. Based on his claim, the facts above are accounted for as follows. English has a poor inflectional system and has a weak T, which cannot label itself. It needs an overt subject in its Spec to strengthen itself, as illustrated in (6a). When the *wh*-subject *who* moves to the Spec of the matrix C, its copy in [Spec,α] is invisible to LA. α cannot be labeled, which makes (6b) ungrammatical. On the other hand, Italian has quite a rich inflectional system and has a strong T, which can label itself. It does not need an overt subject in its Spec to strengthen itself, as illustrated in (7a). When the *wh*-subject *chi* moves out of [Spec,α], the strong T can label itself (, regardless of whether the complementizer *che* is overt, actually); see (7b).

The account of the EPP and the ECP above is dependent on many stipulations and assumptions. It is stipulated that Italian has a strong T but English has a weak T. It is assumed that a strong T can label itself, whereas a weak T cannot. Chomsky (2015) claims for (6c) that when the complementizer *that* disappears, T acts as a phase head, though, it is assumed, the embedded clause maintains the label of CP. That is, phasehood is inherited from the embedded C to T and activated in T. After the complementizer disappears, T acts as a phase head, and the complement of T, i.e. β<v\*>, is transferred. The *wh*-subject in [Spec,α], which is now at the edge of the embedded ‘phase’, can be accessed by the syntactic operations carried out in the matrix phase and move up to sentence-initial position. This account of (6c) is ad hoc, obviously.<sup>8</sup>

Rizzi (2006, 2010, 2015) has argued that the properties of the CriP are accounted for in terms of  *criterial Freezing*. A functional head and a sentential

<sup>8</sup> From another perspective, it would appear that Chomsky’s account for (6c), where T acts as a phase head after the complementizer disappears, is simple and elegant (Anders Holmberg, p.c.). But the entire LA system works on the assumption that only C and v\* are phase heads, whereas T and R are not. Chomsky’s account for (6c), in which T can exceptionally be a phasal head, is ad hoc.

element located in its Spec enter a structural, criterial relation; the interpretation of the latter is determined by the features of the functional head, Foc(us), Top(ic), etc. In (5a), the embedded C has Q. The *wh*-object *which dog*, which moves to its Spec, enters the Q-criterial relation with the embedded C and receives the interpretation as a *wh*-operator. In this system, a category raised into the Spec of a head, including the CriP, cannot move up further by definition.

Rizzi (2015) tries to give a unified account for the CriP and the issues related to that position in terms of LA, claiming that when XP and YP have a different label in configuration [ $_{\alpha}$  XP YP], one of them can move up. His argument amounts to claiming that in configuration [ $_{\alpha}$  XP YP] with XP being in the Spec of the head Y, XP can move up when it does not share any features with Y. In the HP (5a-b), *which dog* and the embedded C share a Q-feature; the former stops in [Spec, $\beta$ ] as in (5a) and cannot move up further as in (5b). In the EPP (6a), the subject shares  $\varphi$ -features with T (*Person* in his term); the subject is frozen in the Spec of that head. In the ECP (6b), the raised *wh*-subject *who* shares  $\varphi$ -features with the embedded T (/Person), which prevents the *wh*-subject from moving up further.<sup>9</sup>

Let us consider the properties of the CriP in detail. First, consider the HP and the properties of [Spec,(embedded)CP]. (8) (=1b) is the final representation of the derivation.<sup>10</sup>

(8) \* $[_{\alpha} [_Q \text{ which dog}] \text{ do } [_{\beta < \varphi, \varphi >} \text{ you wonder } [_{\gamma < Q, Q >} \{ \text{ }_{\text{Q}} \text{ which dog} \}] \text{ C}_Q \text{ [John likes } \{ \text{ }_{\text{Q}} \text{ which dog} \}]]]]?$

After feature valuation occurs between the embedded verbal head *likes* and the *wh*-object *which dog*, the latter is assigned an Acc. It still has [uQ] and moves to [Spec, $\gamma$ ]. Since the verb *wonder* subcategorizes a *wh*-clause, the embedded C has

<sup>9</sup> In Rizzi's account, it is actually not necessary to refer to LA, since what he refers to as a label corresponds to the feature shared by a head and the category in its Spec. He also makes several assumptions, e.g. the closeness between heads, the maximality condition on projections, etc, which can all be eliminated. To account for the Italian cases (7a-b), *pro*, an argument *pro* (7a) and an expletive *pro* (7b), is assumed. See his work for the details, and also Holmberg (2005) for a convincing argument against assuming *pro*. (6c) is accounted for by assuming that when C disappears, the entire CP system including CP and TP is omitted (Rizzi 2015:335,ft.16).

<sup>10</sup> I leave aside the internal structure of *wh*-phrases. See Cable (2010) for a detailed discussion of that issue. Recall that the *wh*-object has moved to the Spec of *likes*(=R), which process is eliminated from the notation hereafter.

[Q]. The *wh*-object in [Spec, $\gamma$ ] and  $C_Q$  go on to feature valuation, and  $\gamma$  is labeled  $\langle Q, Q \rangle$ . In [Spec, $\gamma$ ], the *wh*-object completes the valuation of its own unvalued features. It is frozen there and cannot move up further to [Spec, $\alpha$ ].

Next, let us consider the EPP and the properties of the subject position. (9) (=2) is the final representation of the derivation.

(9) C [ $\alpha_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  John [T [ $\beta_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~John~~ [kisses(=R)+ $v^*$  [ $\gamma_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  Mary [kisses(=R) [ $\delta$  Mary]]]]]]]]]

*John* in [Spec, $\beta$ ] moves to [Spec, $\alpha$ ] to strengthen T, which is not a phase head and weak. Feature valuation occurs between T and the raised *John*, and the latter is assigned a Nom;  $\alpha$  is labeled  $\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle$ . In [Spec, $\alpha$ ], the subject *John* completes the valuation of its own [uCase] and stops there.

Finally, let us consider the ECP, which effect does not appear in Italian but appears in English in the unmarked case; see (6-7b). The ECP effect does not appear in English when the overt complementizer disappears; see (6c). Chomsky (2008) proposes the *parallel movement* analysis of *wh*-subjects: a *wh*-subject simultaneously moves from [Spec, $v^*P$ ] to [Spec,TP] on one hand and from [Spec, $v^*P$ ] to [Spec, CP] on the other in a parallel manner.<sup>11</sup> With the parallel movement analysis, the derivation of the ECP proceeds as illustrated in (10a-c), which are the final representations.

- (10) a. [ $\alpha_{\langle Q, Q \rangle}$  chi C<sub>Q</sub> [ $\beta_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  credi [ $\gamma_{\langle C \rangle}$  ~~chi~~ che [ $\delta_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  ~~chi~~ [vincerà+T [ $\epsilon_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~chi~~ *vincerà*]]]]]]]?<sup>12</sup>  
 b. \* [ $\alpha_{\langle Q, Q \rangle}$  who do+C<sub>Q</sub> [ $\beta_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  you think [ $\gamma_{\langle C \rangle}$  ~~who~~ that [ $\delta_{\langle \varphi, \varphi \rangle}$  ~~who~~ [T [ $\epsilon_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~who~~ read the book]]]]]]]?]

<sup>11</sup> Parallel movement as well as other kinds of Merge operations are denied by Chomsky et al. (2017), who claim that merge (or rather, the resulting structure built by merge) should be strictly binary. But the parallel movement analysis must be maintained to label the matrix clause of *wh*-subject interrogatives. Consider the following simple case:

i) \* [ $\alpha_{\langle C \rangle}$  C<sub>[Q,  $\varphi$ ]</sub> [ $\beta_{\langle Q, Q \rangle}$  who T<sub>[Q,  $\varphi$ ]</sub> [ $\gamma_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~who~~ left]]]?]

If Q were inherited from C to T in addition to  $\varphi$ -features as illustrated in (i), [uQ] of *who* would be valued by T (and its Case is also assigned a Nom). But since C does not have Q any longer, the matrix clause is labeled  $\langle C \rangle$ , i.e. as a declarative clause, which leads to a gibberish expression. Thus, Q must not be inherited from C to T. I thank Hisatsugu Kitahara (p.c.) for letting me notice this point. This discussion further concerns the issue on how to tighten feature inheritance, which I leave for future research.

<sup>12</sup> It has been traditionally claimed that a main verb moves to T in the Romance languages (e.g. Emonds 1978, Pollock 1989, Chomsky 1995), which is illustrated in (10a) but irrelevant here.

- c. [ $\alpha_{\langle Q,Q \rangle}$  who do+ $C_Q$  [ $\beta_{\langle \varphi,\varphi \rangle}$  you think [ $\gamma_{\langle C \rangle}$  ~~who~~  $\emptyset$  [ $\delta_{\langle \varphi,\varphi \rangle}$  ~~who~~ [T [ $\epsilon_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~who~~ read the book]]]]]]?]

The *wh*-subject *chi/who* moves from [Spec,  $\epsilon$ ] to [Spec,  $\delta$ ] on one hand, and from [Spec,  $\epsilon$ ] to [Spec,  $\gamma$ ] on the other. Its [uCase] is assigned a Nom in [Spec, $\delta$ ] by feature valuation with T, but it still has [uQ] in [Spec,  $\gamma$ ]. Since the verb *credi/think* subcategorizes a *che/that*-clause, the embedded C does not have [Q] that can be shared by the *wh*-subject. Feature valuation does not occur between the embedded C and *chi/who* in [Spec, $\gamma$ ]. The *wh*-subject with [uQ] continues to move up to the matrix Spec. In [Spec, $\alpha$ ], the *wh*-subject goes on to feature valuation with the matrix  $C_Q$ , and its [uQ] is valued. Completing the valuation of all of its own unvalued features, the *wh*-subject stops there.<sup>13</sup>

Note that a *wh*-subject should in principle be able to move across a declarative complementizer cross-linguistically, regardless of whether it is overt (10a-b) or not (10c): since feature valuation does not occur between the embedded C and the *wh*-subject in [Spec, $\gamma$ ], the latter, still having [uQ], continues to move up to [Spec, $\alpha$ ], where its [uQ] is valued by the matrix  $C_Q$ .<sup>14</sup> There is no difference between Italian (10a), in which an overt complementizer appears, and English (10b), in which an overt complementizer cannot appear. The disappearance of the ECP effect in English as illustrated in (10c) is thus not derived from any

<sup>13</sup>  $\delta$  is labeled  $\langle \varphi,\varphi \rangle$ , after *chi/who* in [Spec, $\delta$ ] and the embedded T go on to feature valuation.  $\gamma$  is labeled  $\langle C \rangle$ , after the *wh*-subject moves out of [Spec, $\gamma$ ].  $\alpha$  is labeled  $\langle Q,Q \rangle$ , after *who* in [Spec, $\alpha$ ] goes on to feature valuation with the matrix  $C_Q$ .

<sup>14</sup> The same argument applies to the  $v^*P$  phase (Chomsky 2015:10,(3')):

- i) [ $\alpha$  who do you [ $\beta$   $v^*$  [ $\gamma$  ~~who~~ expect [ $\delta$  to win]]]]?]

Since the verbal root *expect* does not have Q, [uQ] of *who* is not valued in [Spec, $\gamma$ ]. The *wh*-phrase continues to move up. In the highest Spec, [Spec, $\alpha$ ], its [uQ] is valued by the matrix  $C_Q$  and, *who* stops there.

Recall also the traditional claim (Huang 1982) that when a *wh*-phrase is extracted from the object position, the complementizer can appear overtly; see (ia). (ib) is the final representation of the derivation. In the same way as *wh*-subjects, the *wh*-object in [Spec, $\gamma$ ] does not go on to feature valuation with the embedded C that does not have Q. It still has [uQ] and continues to move up to [Spec, $\alpha$ ]. Its [uQ] is valued in [Spec, $\alpha$ ], and it stops there, completing the valuation of all of its own unvalued features. The derivation is licit, whether the complementizer appears overtly or not.

- i) a. Who do you think (that) John loves?  
 b. [ $\alpha_{\langle Q,Q \rangle}$  who do+ $C_Q$  [ $\beta_{\langle \varphi,\varphi \rangle}$  you think [ $\gamma_{\langle C \rangle}$  ~~who~~ (that) [ $\delta_{\langle \varphi,\varphi \rangle}$  John [T [ $\epsilon_{\langle v^* \rangle}$  ~~John~~ loves ~~who~~]]]]]]?]

constraints in syntax.

Kandybowicz (2006) convincingly argues that the *that*-trace effect is derived from the phonological properties specific to English. According to Kandybowicz, the entire sentence is pronounced with one intonational phrase (iP), when the overt complementizer *that* does not appear; see (11a). When it appears as in (11b), an intermediate phrase (intP) occurs between the matrix verb and the complementizer.

- (11) a. [<sub>iP</sub> Who do you think \_\_ read the book]?  
 b. \* [<sub>iP</sub> Who do you think [<sub>intP</sub> that \_\_ read the book]]?

Kandybowicz claims that the *that*-trace effect occurs when the overt complementizer *that* is adjacent to a trace within a prosodic phrase (i.e. an intP above) and at the boundary of that prosodic phrase. The *that*-trace effect in English is thus attributed to the phonological properties specific to English, which are outside the NS computation.

As we have seen so far, the CriP is the position in which a raised category *completes the valuation of all of its own unvalued features*. In other words, a category stops in the position where all of its unvalued features are valued. Much literature has preceded this claim in the pre-LA frameworks. Epstein (1992) is the first who claims that a *wh*-phrase cannot move out of the Spec of the embedded C that has [+wh]. Chomsky (2000, 2001) and Bošković (2007) argue that a category can move thanks to its own uninterpretable features.<sup>15</sup> Bošković (2011) argues that after a category has its uninterpretable feature valued by a head, it cannot move out of the Spec of that head.<sup>16</sup> Bošković (2008) claims that after an uninterpretable *wh*-feature is checked in the intermediate Spec, it cannot move up further.

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<sup>15</sup> Bošković (2007) claims that in the embedded clause of the C head that does not have [+wh], i.e. the C head that selects a *that*-clause, feature checking does not occur between the C head and a category raised to its Spec. Specifically in (i), feature checking does not occur between *that* and the copy of *what* raised to its Spec:

i) What do you think [<sub>CP</sub> ~~what~~ that [<sub>TP</sub> John bought ~~what~~]]?

<sup>16</sup> In his argument, Bošković (2011) assumes both the distinction between interpretable and uninterpretable features (Chomsky 1995) and the distinction between valued and unvalued features (Chomsky 2000, 2001). The system that assumes both interpretability and valuation contained redundancy, as shown in the theoretical development into the current LA system, which assumes only valuation.

A category will continue to move, as long as it keeps some unvalued features. As illustrated in the ECP (10), the *wh*-subject goes on to feature valuation with the embedded T and is assigned a Nom. But it still has [uQ], which cannot be valued by the embedded C. Thus, it continues to move up to the highest Spec, where its [uQ] is valued by the matrix C<sub>Q</sub>. This argument applies to all intermediate Spec positions. A *wh*-object, for instance, is assigned an Acc in the valuation procedure with a verbal head but still has [uQ]. It moves to [Spec,v\*P] (Chomsky 2000), but its [uQ] cannot be valued by v\*. It continues to move up to the highest Spec, where its [uQ] is valued by the matrix C<sub>Q</sub>.<sup>17</sup>

Chomsky (2013:36,ft.36) poses the question why it is always a subject, not v\*P, that moves out.<sup>18</sup> The reason is that v\*P does not have any unvalued features, contrary to the subject. The subject must move out of [Spec,v\*P], since it moves to [Spec,TP] and its [uCase] is assigned a Nom there.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, v\*P without any unvalued features does not move out in the unmarked case. Thus, it is not the case that any category can move out in an equally free manner: a moved category must have some unvalued feature(s) to enter feature valuation with a head in its raised position.<sup>20</sup>

This unified account derives from the corollary of the LA derivational system: labeling results from feature valuation in all the cases except when LA takes a phase head as the label. In the HP (8), the *wh*-object in [Spec,γ] goes on to feature valuation with C<sub>Q</sub>, and the embedded clause γ is labeled <Q,Q>. In the EPP (9), the subject moves to [Spec,α] and goes on to feature valuation with T. α is labeled <φ,φ>. In the ECP (10), the *wh*-subject in [Spec,γ] continues to move up, since its [uQ] cannot be valued by the embedded C of the verb *credi/think*, which subcategorizes a *che/that*-clause. After the *wh*-subject is raised to [Spec,α],

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<sup>17</sup> The literature has claimed, with various arguments, that there is no Agree in intermediate positions in successive cyclic movement. See, e.g. Bošković (2007, 2008) and Cecchetto and Donati (2015).

<sup>18</sup> Chomsky would argue that both a subject and v\*P could move out. The structure resulting from subject movement is interpreted at the interface, but the structure resulting from v\*P movement would be filtered out at the interface.

<sup>19</sup> It could be argued that after C merges to T and T inherits φ-features from C, feature valuation occurs between T and the subject in [Spec,v\*P]; both unvalued φ-features in T and [uCase] of the subject are valued; the subject then moves to strengthen T. In this account, it is not clear why a subject must move to strengthen T after feature inheritance from C to T. I thank Anders Holmberg (p.c.) for letting me notice this possibility. See also footnote 5.

<sup>20</sup> The same argument should apply to adverbials, which do not seem to have unvalued features in the unmarked case and do not move out, which issue I turn to later.







EPP, and the ECP (as well as the disappearance of its effect) are all fully accounted for in terms of feature valuation. This unified account derives from the corollary of the LA derivational system, in which labeling results from feature valuation. In this argument, Scandinavian OS and Icelandic SF are both exceptionally allowed to occur. That is, Scandinavian OS can occur, though object pronouns could not move from the CriP without any unvalued features; Icelandic SF can occur, though adverbs could not move into the CriP without any unvalued features.

The point is whether we should regard movement from/into the CriP as movement that would be allowed to occur with its legitimacy determined by filtering at the interfaces, or as movement that can exceptionally occur with its application constrained in some way. Contrary to the former, which will be taken by Chomsky, if the latter is in the right directions, constraints on movement should exist. Recall that it is argued by Chomsky that a SO needs to be interpreted at the interfaces. In the LA derivational system, the structure of a SO built in NS is directly interpreted at the semantic interface. Thus, no constraints on movement are imposed by the semantic interface.<sup>25</sup>

According to Hosono (2016), constraints on movement are imposed by PHON. On the basis of Hosono (2013), who shows that *downstep* (cf. Gussenhoven 2004) occurs in simple tense forms in which the object pronoun moves, Hosono (2016) argues that movement of the object pronoun occurs when it is required by PHON: it is only when downstep needs to occur that the object pronoun can move. On the basis of Holmberg (2000), who claims that Icelandic SF occurs due to the requirement that something phonologically visible must occupy the Spec of T, Hosono (2016) also argues that Icelandic SF occurs due to the requirement by PHON. Hosono proposes that movement from/into the CriP in which a raised category does not have any unvalued features (which should be valued by a head in its raised position) can exceptionally occur in NS only when it is required by PHON. This constraint on movement from/into the CriP is formulated as follows:<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The association between the position that a category occupies in NS and the interpretation that it receives in the semantic component is not new: the *phase* framework since Chomsky (2000) was tied up with the *cartographic* system (Rizzi 1997, Cinque 1999), the latter of which exactly claimed that association.

<sup>26</sup> Anders Holmberg (p.c.) suggests that there could be an analogous constraint on movement required by the semantic component. The answer is no, at least within the current theoretical framework. As stated above, the structure of a SO built in NS is directly interpreted at the semantic interface. There is no room for constraints on movement to be imposed by the

- (16) The Constraint on movement from/into the Criterial Position:  
 [XP<sub>[uφ]</sub> ... [[XP<sub>[±φ]</sub>]<sub>CriP</sub> H ... ]] and [[XP<sub>[uφ]</sub>]<sub>CriP</sub> H ... XP<sub>[±φ]</sub> ... ]  
 are allowed in narrow syntax, iff movement is required by phonology.

On the basis of much empirical data that strongly connect syntactic structures with the intonational properties imposed on them, Richards (2016) suggests that the structure that conforms to the requirement by PHON may have already been formed in its syntactic derivation: syntactic derivation can go on so that resulting structures are fit for the requirement by PHON. For instance, in languages such as English in which *wh*-movement is obligatory, a *wh*-phrase moves to [Spec,CP] so that it can compose a phonological phrase with the C head; in languages that have a rich agreement system, agreement morphemes can be part of the prosody of a verbal head, which causes a verb to move to a higher head; and so forth.

Richards' (2016) claim is not incompatible with Chomsky (2013, 2015). Following Chomsky, both EM and IM are free; among SOs constructed in NS, those which do not have a well-formed prosodic structure would be filtered out in PHON. In the same way, on the basis of Richards, NS operations would try to construct SOs that conform to the appropriate phonological properties that they would have in PHON; those which fail in having a well-formed prosodic structure would be filtered out in PHON.

As long as there is evidence that far more constraints on movement are imposed by PHON than have been considered so far, however, IM may not be free, contra Chomsky (2013, 2015). As has been seen so far, the category that does not have unvalued feature(s) cannot move from/into the CriP in the unmarked case. Movement from/into the CriP is exceptionally allowed to occur in NS only when it is required by PHON. Movement in NS is thus constrained by the requirement by PHON.

This argument further indicates that the derivational mechanism will be *crash-proof* (Frampton and Gutmann 2002). Frampton and Gutmann (2002) claim that the derivational mechanism should be constrained within its own system so that only well-formed structures are produced. As has been argued here, the category that does not have unvalued feature(s) cannot move from/into the CriP in the unmarked case. Such movement is allowed to occur in NS only when it is required by PHON, i.e, only when it constructs a SO with a well-formed prosodic structure. The derivational mechanism will then produce only well-formed





from the corollary of the LA derivational system that labeling results from feature valuation. In Scandinavian OS and Icelandic SF, a category that does not have unvalued features can move from/into the CriP (Hosono 2016). Following Chomsky (2013, 2015), who claims that both EM and IM are free, movement from/into the CriP would be allowed to occur with its legitimacy determined by filtering at the interfaces. If such movement is considered to exceptionally occur in NS, constraints on movement should exist. The argument that far more constraints on movement are imposed by PHON than have been considered so far (Hosono 2016, Richards 2016) indicates not only that IM may not be free, but also that NS will be *crash-proof* (Frampton and Gutmann 2002): the derivational mechanism should produce only well-formed structures that conform to the requirement by PHON, with no filters assumed.

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# Elvis Presley, God and Jane: the Germanic proprial article in a comparative perspective

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## Abstract

In several Germanic languages and dialects (e.g. German, Luxemburgish, Norwegian), definite articles and personal pronouns are not only used with common nouns and independently, respectively (e.g. *the woman, she*), but also with personal proper names (literally *the Jane, she Jane*). In some of the languages which use this marker named *proprial article*, its use is restricted to specific types of persons (e.g. family members), whilst in others, the article can be found in various and even surprising contexts (e.g. *the God, he (Elvis) Presley*). Although at first glance the use of the proprial article seems to be relatively unpredictable as to what is considered grammatical and what is not, varying inside and between dialects, this paper posits the existence of an underlying universal hierarchical structure which determines the possible restrictions of the use of the proprial article.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In modern Germanic languages, definite articles and personal pronouns are used to indicate referentiality and “known-ness”<sup>2</sup> in the discourse (i.e. differentiating rheme from theme): for example, *the woman* and *she* both refer to a supposedly known, unique and/or previously mentioned woman. Definite articles contrast with indefinite articles (*a woman*), which indicate unknown, unspecific or new entities in the discourse. Despite the different views in the literature on the roles of knownness and uniqueness when defining definiteness (see e.g. Jenks 2015: 203f.; Schwarz 2009: 1-4), there is a wide consensus on the fact that definite articles and personal pronouns serve to indicate that the entity referred to has been mentioned earlier in the discourse and is thus already known, or that it is (supposed to be) already known elsewhere to the interlocutors (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 97f.; Schwarz 2009: 3; Werth 2014: 152).

In the earlier stages of Germanic languages, definiteness was only optionally marked morphologically (e.g. in Proto-Norse, see Torp & Vikør 2014: 49, and Old High German, see Stedje 2007: 21f., 95). However, all Germanic languages grammaticalised definite articles, which developed “from a purely deictic element which has come to identify an element as previously mentioned in the discourse” (Greenberg 1978: 252). Furthermore, all Germanic languages developed a more extensive use of these articles with common nouns (compare e.g.

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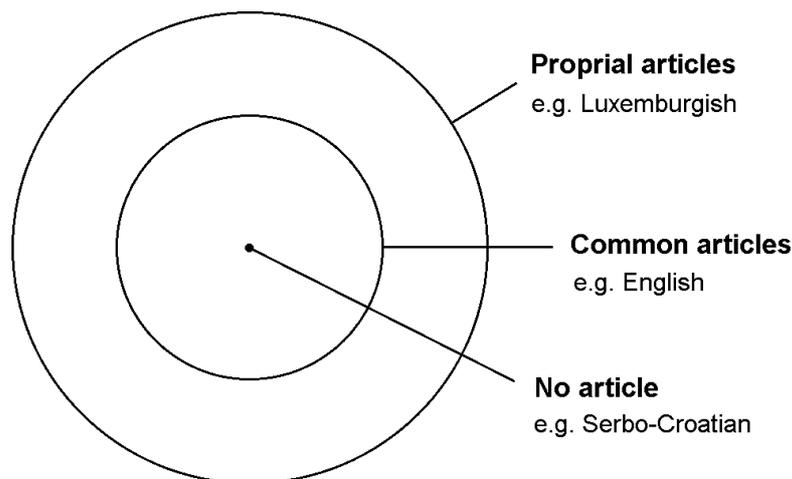
<sup>2</sup> Hereafter written *knownness*, this word will mean in the present paper “the fact of being known [to somebody]”, in this case the fact of being known to the interlocutors taking part in the discourse. The term *familiarity*, used more frequently in the literature, will be avoided because of potential interferences with others of its meanings (e.g. “intimate”, “colloquial”, “informal”) which also play a (different) role concerning proprial articles.

Szczepaniak 2011: 78). In some languages and dialects, the use of articles extended further to proper names, leading to the proprial article, i.e. a definite article or personal pronoun used with a proper name (in Germanic languages, only with personal names). This is exemplified by the Luxemburgish and northern Swedish examples in (1) (vgl.lu: 13; Delsing 2003: 12):

- (1)
- a) Du gesäis de Jean, hien ass de Mann vum Marie.  
 You see *the* John, he is the husband of *the* Mary.
- b) En Erik ha jift sä vä a Lisa.  
*He* Eric has married (himself with) *she* Lisa.

At first, the occurrence of a definite marker can seem redundant, as proper names “appear to be definite by nature” (van Langendonck 2007: 157). However, this extension of the domain of use of the definite article or the personal pronoun, both primarily expressing knownness inside the discourse, can be understood as a means of expressing “social” knownness, outside of the discourse, towards the person named. As Sigurðsson (2006: 219f.) remarks, the proprial article is used to express “familiarity or givenness”, i.e. the fact that the named individual is known to both interlocutors, exactly as they would use a definite article with a common noun to signal that it is already known.

Another important observation is that the use of a definite article with a personal name must be considered as *peripheral* to the use of a definite article with a common noun, as the presence of the former necessarily implicates that of the latter: a language with a definite article for personal names must have one for common nouns as well, but not necessarily inversely (*the Jane* implicates *the woman*, but not inversely). There are thus: 1) languages with no definite article (e.g. Serbo-Croatian), 2) languages with only a common definite article (e.g. standard English), and 3) languages with common and proprial definite articles (e.g. Luxemburgish). Diachronically, these three types can be understood as successive development stages in Greenberg’s universal grammaticalisation path of demonstratives (Greenberg 1978).



I. Hierarchical representation of three possible uses of the definite article in natural languages.

As I will demonstrate below, hierarchies such as in fig. 1 are useful in understanding the structure behind apparently variable and unpredictable restrictions as to which use of the proprial article is possible in a specific language, and which use is not.

In the next subsections, I provide a definition of the proprial article as well as an overview of its possible uses, followed by an overview of its sociolinguistic dimensions. Section 2 accounts for the spread of the proprial article in the modern Germanic languages, and gives examples of the various restrictions which govern its use in different languages. In section 3, I formulate a hypothesis which sheds light on the regular structure behind this variation, and test this hypothesis on several Germanic languages and dialects in section 4. Subsection 4.2 summarises the results, whilst section 5 widens the perspective towards a complete model of restriction hierarchies. Section 6 aims at understanding the diachronic path towards the grammaticalisation and extension of the proprial article, followed by a summary in section 7.

## 1.1. Definition

The term *proprial article* refers to a definite article or a personal pronoun used with a family word<sup>3</sup> or a personal name, denoting an animate being (person or animal) and functioning as a name. The proprial article can be used with the following noun categories (Delsing 2003: 12; Håberg 2010: 60ff.):

- (2)
- a) First names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Jane*)
  - b) First + last names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Johan Brandtler*)
  - c) Last names of personally known individuals (e.g. *the Brandtler*)
  - d) Names of personally known animals, for example domestic animals (e.g. *the Einstein*, a cat; *the Marguerite*, a cow)
  - e) Nouns of personally known family members used as proper names (e.g. *the dad*)
  - f) First names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Elvis*)
  - g) First + last names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Arthur Schopenhauer*)
  - h) Last names of not personally known individuals (e.g. *the Schopenhauer*)
  - i) Names of fictional characters, being human, animal or other kinds of animates (e.g. *the Hulk*, *the Tom & Jerry*, *the Nessie*, *the R2-D2*)
  - j) Biblical figures and sacred individuals (e.g. *the Abraham*, *the Sarah*, *the Jesus*, *the Mary*, *the Joseph*, *the God*, *the Yahweh*)

As Dagsgard (2006: 38) mentions, family words are only used as names with a proprial article if they can refer unambiguously to individuals (i.e. *the sister*, for example, is only possible in families with exactly one sister).

Delsing (2003: 12) remarks that the proprial article does not occur in a vocative use, nor in constructions with the verb *be named/called* or similar naming constructions. However, it is compatible with predicative uses of the verb *to be*, as e.g. in (3c). It is also not used in constructions in which the proper name is not part of a full sentence, as e.g. in headlines of newspaper articles:

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<sup>3</sup> In this paper, I will use the term *family word* instead of *family name* for e.g. *father* or *mum*, this to avoid interferences with European languages (e.g. French) in which *family name* literally means *last name*.

(3)

- a) (\*The) Jane! Where are you?
- b) She is called (\*the) Jane. / Her name is (\*the) Jane. / She was baptised (\*the) Jane.
- c) This is the Jane.
- d) Merkel and Macron in Paris: negotiations to continue until end October.

As Sigurðsson (2006: 220) explains, the proprial article is incompatible with naming constructions because it expresses knownness, whilst naming constructions are typically designed to introduce new information. Additionally, the word *Jane* as used in (3b) does not intrinsically refer to the unique individual bearing this name, but rather to the name itself.

It is important to distinguish between “true” proprial articles on the one hand, and other uses of definite articles preceding a person name on the other. In the latter case, the proper name is used as a common noun rather than as a proper name (as explained by Werth 2014: 164f. and Sigurðsson 2006: 220):

(4)

- a) The Simpsons
- b) A Lannister always pays his debts.
- c) The sufferings of the young Werther / The younger L. Wittgenstein
- d) The Heinrich I knew is long gone.
- e) I know five Bryans, and even two Bryan Smiths.

As shown in (4), person names used as a common noun can be modified with adjectives, indefinite articles and be treated as a countable substantive, whilst proper names per definition imply uniqueness. Such uses are also even possible in languages lacking a proprial article.

Finally, one must make the important distinction between *obligatory* and *optional* proprial articles. Johannessen & Garbacz (2014) argue that it is per definition obligatory, but also admit that its “obligatory status in some dialects can be questioned” (Johannessen & Garbacz 2014: 13). In fact, many languages and dialects display optional proprial articles, as will be shown below.

The definition of obligatory and optional use is as follows. The proprial article is *optional* in a language or a dialect if i) one can find occurrences of the same noun in the same syntactic context, with and without proprial article, and ii) if the occurrences without article are deemed grammatical by native speakers. The proprial article is *obligatory* if its omission is deemed ungrammatical by native speakers.

Werth (2014) shows that in languages with an optional proprial article, its use is determined by several syntactic and pragmatic factors (e.g. topicalisation). Such detailed syntactic analyses fall outside of the scope and purposes of this paper, which will rather consider proprial articles generally as either optional or obligatory.

## 1.2. Sociolinguistic aspects of the proprial article

As will be shown in the next section, the proprial article is far more used in dialects than in standard languages, at least in the European languages. It is therefore traditionally associated with dialectal and informal speech. For example, it is found in many Flemish, Norwegian and Swedish dialects, but not in the Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish standard (written) languages.

In standard German, it is considered informal and is often avoided in formal contexts (Lodder 2012: 89f.; Deutsche Grammatik 2.0). Furthermore, German speakers tend to perceive the use of the proprial article as more acceptable if the person referred to is a child (Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). In Icelandic, it is also associated with informal and/or dialectal speech (Sigurðsson 2006: 219). Luxemburgish, although a standard language, is no exception to this dialectal connotation, for it is closely based on the Luxemburgish dialects and deliberately retains many dialectal features; it was considered a group of dialects until its standardisation in 1984 (Kartheiser 2007: 56). The frequent use of the article with personally known individuals, domestic animals and close family members in the examples above in (2a-e) reinforces its oral, informal and familiar connotation. Especially in dialects in which it is optional and/or restricted to personally known individuals, it expresses proximity and knownness (Håberg 2010: 8), as it accentuates the contrast between familiar persons and unknown or distant individuals. This distinguishes the proprial article from the resembling pronominal psychological demonstrative (see Johannessen 2008b), which expresses unknownness and distance.

Because of its close association with dialects, one could consider that the proprial article so to say stands and falls with their use. As they hitherto have tended to lose ground in favour of standard languages (an indicator for this is the observation that most European endangered languages are dialects; see Moseley 2010: 25), the proprial article has generally been in decline. Johannessen & Garbacz (2014: 13) say that in Norway, “there has been a development towards a narrowing of the geographical distribution of the PPA [JK: i.e. preproprial article] in recent years”, which has led to its disappearance in e.g. Oslo (Johannessen 2008a: 65). This is amongst others confirmed by Håberg’s (2010: 4) remark that the proprial article in the dialect from Voss (western Norway) is more used by elder speakers. In the data from Oppdal (Norway) in the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al. 2009, hereafter ScanDiaSyn), younger informants use it less than elder informants, or do not use it at all.

Nevertheless, the proprial article is not necessarily on the verge of extinction, as its occurrence is not confined to dialects but is also seen in the informal speech of some standard languages. It regains ground by percolating through the informal, spoken regional variants of the standard languages (or: regiolects), which are on the rise (Weiß 2005: 303; Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). By paving its way through the regiolects, the proprial article can thus avoid disappearance through dialect loss (compare Werth 2014: 173).

## 2. The spread of the proprial article in modern Germanic languages<sup>4</sup>

In the continental Germanic languages, the proprial article consists of a definite article preceding the noun (e.g. *the Jane*). In contrast, the proprial article in Scandinavian dialects is formally either a personal pronoun preceding the noun (e.g. *she Jane*) or a definite article appended at its end (e.g. *Jane-the*). Delsing (2003: 12) uses the term *prepropriell artikel*, ‘preproprial article’, for articles preceding the noun, and *postpropriell* for articles following it. Postproprial articles are far rarer than preproprial, and restricted to relatively small areas in

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<sup>4</sup> This section focuses on the proprial article in modern Germanic languages and dialects. For a (non-exhaustive) account of its spread in European languages, see (1) in the appendix.

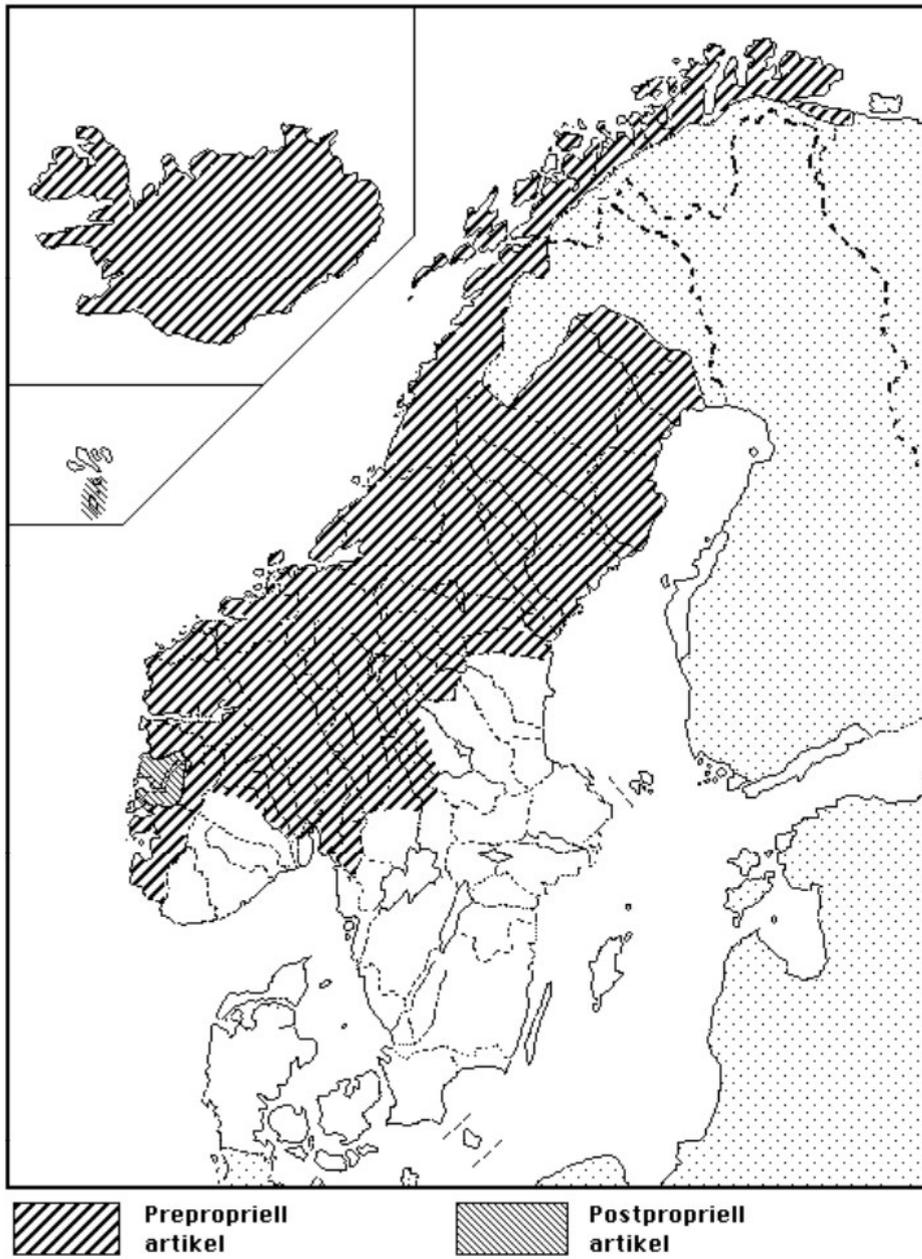
Scandinavia, namely the southern Faroes and Hordaland in western Norway. In standard Swedish, occurrences of the postproprial article are relatively sparse (Delsing 2003: 14ff.). Because of this scarcity, this paper will concentrate predominantly on the preproprial article.

In Scandinavian dialects, the proprial article is relatively widespread, especially in the north (Norway, northern Sweden, Iceland and the Faroes). In Iceland, it is optionally used in informal speech but avoided in written form (Delsing 2003: 12). In the southern Faroes, the postproprial article is sporadically and optionally used (Delsing 2003: 17). In Norway, proprial articles are omnipresent except in some northern varieties in multilingual areas, the southeast and the dialects in and around Oslo (Håberg 2010: 7; Delsing 2003: 13). In Sweden, the proprial article occurs in the north and in regions at the border with Norway.

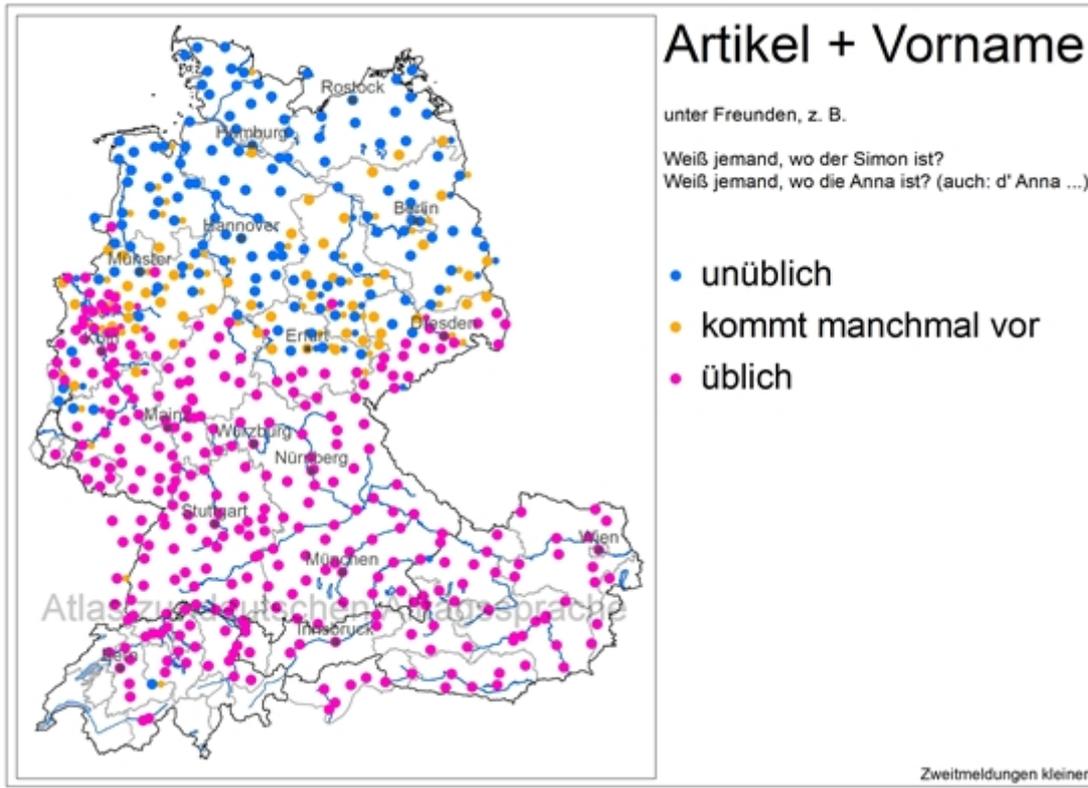
Concerning the British Isles, my research on this subject has not led to any results. As the literature seems not to deal with English proprial articles, I assume that they must be absent from English varieties until proven otherwise.

The preproprial article is found throughout the continental Germanic dialect continuum, which spreads from the Alps to the Netherlands. It is mainly used in the south (Austria, southern Germany and Switzerland) and the west (Alsace, Luxemburg, Limburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Flanders), but is rare in northern Germany (Bellmann 1990: 274), where it is restricted to specific pragmatic uses (see Werth 2014).

KARTA 3. PROPRIELL ARTIKEL



II. *The spread of the proprial article in Scandinavian languages, taken from Delsing (2003: 16).*



III. *The use of the proprial article with first names in Luxemburg and German speaking countries, taken from the atlas of the German colloquial language (Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache). Purple corresponds to “usual”, yellow to “sometimes” and blue to “unusual”.*

Interestingly, the border dividing the regions in Germany where the proprial article is used extensively and those where it is considered unusual roughly corresponds to the border between High and Low German (see Bellmann 1990: 274 and (2) in the appendix). This observation can be correlated with the more extensive use of dialects below this border (see (3) in the appendix). Thus, the regions where the local dialects are most spoken correspond roughly to those regions where the proprial article is most used in informal speech and considered usual, showing again the association of proprial articles with dialectal speech.

The geographic and historic distance between the Scandinavian and the continental Germanic areas using the proprial article, on one hand, and the formal difference between the Scandinavian personal pronoun and the continental definite article, on the other hand, seem to indicate the absence of any influence or relatedness in the use of the proprial article in these areas. Consequently, the proprial article may have originated spontaneously from at least two different sources, especially when considering that it is not used at all in the area between the Scandinavian and the continental Germanic proprial article (i.e. in Denmark and northern Germany). Thus, it seems unlikely that the presence of the proprial article in both language groups be due to language contact. It can also not have been an inherited feature from Proto-Germanic, because the earliest traces of Germanic languages lack any proprial article.

As Delsing (2003: 14) describes, in some Swedish dialects, proprial articles can only be used with names of personally known individuals, whereas *the Jesus* or *the Elvis* are unthinkable. In other Swedish dialects as well as in Luxemburgish, *the Jesus* is attested and considered grammatical (Delsing 2003: 14; Evangelium.lu: 44, *Joh 11, 1-5*), and certain

Limburgish dialects even allow *the God* (own data from a native informant). Some dialects allow only family words and first names to have a proprial article (Håberg 2010: 14f.), others allow it before family names or “historical” names like *Cleopatra* as well (Håberg 2010: 13f.). In other words, considering the many attested uses of the proprial article listed in (2) combined with the fact that different dialects allow different uses, the global pattern of its restrictions can seem at first chaotic and unpredictable. In the next section however, I hypothesise that there is a common and uniform underlying pattern which can explain this variation.

### 3. Hypothesis

When comparing the possible uses of the proprial article, it is clear that some of them, e.g. *the God* or *the Presley*, are perceived as more “deviant”, more marked than others, as e.g. *the Jane*. This means that certain less marked noun categories (e.g. first names of personally known individuals) are generally more likely to have a proprial article, whilst the marked ones (e.g. fictive, distant or unknown individuals) are rarer. In turn, it implies that some uses of the proprial article are *central*, and others more *peripheral*.

In this paper, I posit that this observation is based in human perception, and that there are universal logical constants expressed as underlying rules which can predict what is possible and what is not in each language. In the next section, I compare the different restrictions across several Germanic languages and dialects to set up a hierarchical model which can account for this underlying representation. This model can be visualised as the spheres in fig. 1 in the first section, with central and more peripheral uses, where the presence of a peripheral use implies that of all uses inside that circle (for example, “a language with proprial articles before last names must have a proprial article before first names, but not necessarily inversely”). The hypothesis to be tested in this paper can be summarised as follows:

- (5) There exists a hierarchical structure, reflecting a universal representation, which can predict for any natural language which uses of the proprial article are grammatical in that language based on other possible uses. Such a hierarchy is never violated inside a single language variety.

### 4. A restriction hierarchy for the use of the proprial article

In this section, I analyse four restrictions of the use of the proprial article listed in (2):

1. The social distance of the person referred to (i.e. “personally known” versus “celebrity” and “fictional character”)
2. The person’s potential status as a sacred figure (either “profane” or “sacred”)
3. The type of name used (i.e. “first name”, “last name” or “family word”)
4. The gender of the person referred to

I investigate each restriction in several Scandinavian dialects before comparing it to the same restriction in continental Germanic languages. Considering that the continental and the Scandinavian proprial articles are historically unrelated (as explained in section 2), a comparison of distant and unrelated dialects allows us to gain a deeper insight into the rules which are valid in any of these dialects, avoiding the risk of being influenced by the “fallacy of

relatedness”<sup>5</sup>. A map showing the dialects and languages mentioned in this paper is to be found in the appendix (1a).

#### 4.1. Personally known vs. celebrity or fictional character

The first use that will be tested here is the knownness, or social distance, between the interlocutors in the discourse and the person about whom they speak. As Delsing (2003: 14) remarks, many Swedish dialects do not allow the proprial article to be used with persons who are not personally known to the speakers. Thus, expressions as *the Jane* are authorised (if and only if the interlocutors know Jane personally), but “expressions as the Jesus or the Elvis (Presley) are unthinkable in many dialects” (own translation from Delsing 2003: 14). Similarly, Wood (2009) observes that the Icelandic proprial article “presupposes that the speaker and the addressee are both familiar with the person named” (Wood 2009: 8).

In her study on the preproprial article in three Norwegian dialects (Voss in Hordaland, Gausdal in Oppland and Kvæfjord in Troms) based on the Nordic Dialect Corpus (ScanDiaSyn), Håberg (2010) compared the possibility of using the article with the name of a personally known individual, a celebrity or a fictional character. In Kvæfjord, the use of the preproprial article seems to be most extended, as it is attested before personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters (Håberg 2010: 60f., 73). Concerning Gausdal, she explains that she lacks sufficient material, but mentions that all four informants judged sentences containing “han Elvis (Presley)” as being grammatical (Håberg 2010: 74). In Voss, however, only two of four informants accepted these sentences as grammatical utterances (Håberg 2010: 89f.). Interestingly, one of the informants from Voss declared the sentence with Elvis Presley to be ungrammatical, but uses himself the preproprial article with famous Norwegians as Arne Hjeltnes, Ivar Kvåle and Johan Fjellby (Håberg 2010: 91f.). According to Håberg, the informant could know the two first named personally, as both have been living in Voss, whilst the third comes from Sogn og Fjordane (another region in western Norway). This suggests that the informant makes a distinction between *near* celebrities, from his own cultural and geographical zone (i.e. Western Norway), and *distant* celebrities, as e.g. Elvis Presley. This would imply that the opposition “personally known” - “celebrity” is not a pure dichotomy, but rather a continuum ranging from close to distant, as judged individually by the speaker. The speaker can mark distance towards individuals he or she considers as strangers by not using the article, and mark closeness towards individuals considered as close or familiar persons, even if he or she doesn’t know them personally, by using the article. Individuals could therefore be placed on a scale from near to distant, as represented in table IV, which is based on the data of four informants from the ScanDiaSyn corpus (see appendix for examples):

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<sup>5</sup> I.e. believing a recurrent pattern in some languages to be universal whilst the similarities observed are only due to language contact and/or historical relatedness.

	a personally known individual	the mayor of this town	a celebrity born and raised in this region	distant celebrities, e.g. Elvis Presley
<i>roemskog_02uk</i>	V	-	-	X
<i>oppdal_10</i>	V	-	X	-
<i>oppdal_31</i>	V	V	X	-
<i>voss_03gm</i>	V	-	V	X
<i>oppdal_03gm</i>	V	-	V	-
<i>kvaefjord_01um</i>	V	-	-	V

IV. *The use of the preproprial article in the speech of four Norwegian informants, on a scale from near to distant individuals (own research in ScanDiaSyn). NB: “V” stands for “found with proprial article”, “X” for “found without proprial article”, and “-” for “no data”.*

I also searched myself in detail in the ScanDiaSyn corpus concerning the dialect from Oppdal (Trøndelag). There, one elder informant (*oppdal\_03gm*) uses the preproprial article consistently before personally known individuals as well as celebrities; another elder informant (*oppdal\_31*) does before personally known individuals and the mayor of the town, but not celebrities; and a younger informant (*oppdal\_10*) uses it only for personally known individuals.

As one informant from Kvæfjord demonstrates by using the preproprial article with the Incredible Hulk and Lara Croft, fictional characters can also have proprial articles. Concerning Icelandic, Sigurðsson (2006: 219) mentions the possibility of using the proprial article in front of the name of the Icelandic president, but mentions no more distant celebrity. The restrictions in the Norwegian dialects in Håberg (2010), Oppdal in Trøndelag (ScanDiaSyn) and Icelandic (Sigurðsson 2006) are summarised in table V:

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
Oppdal (elder informants)	V	V/X	V/X	-
Icelandic	V	V	-	-
Voss	V	V	V/X	-
Gausdal	V	V	V	-
Kvæfjord	V	V	V	V

V. *The use of the preproprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters in four Norwegian dialects and Icelandic (Håberg 2010, Sigurðsson 2006 and ScanDiaSyn). NB: “V/X” stands for “variation amongst speakers” or “optional”.*

If one finds some language in which distant celebrities consistently have an article but fictional characters don't (or the other way around), it must be concluded that “distant celebrity” and “fictional character” are two different categories in the hierarchy, otherwise not<sup>6</sup>. From the actual data, it is not possible to determine if there is a difference between these categories, and they must thus be considered as one, until a language is found in which a distinction is made. From the data in tables IV and V above, one can observe firstly that no dialect has a proprial article before the name of a celebrity but not before the name of a personally known individual, i.e. that “celebrity” necessarily implies “personally known”. Peripheral uses (towards the right end of the tables) imply, as predicted and confirmed here, central ones (at the left end): this also holds for gradations on the closeness scale (i.e. “distant celebrity” implies “near celebrity”). Secondly, another important observation is that variation (marked “V/X” in the tables) is found at the border, i.e. in the most peripheral amongst the possible uses, whilst central uses as e.g. “personally known” are more stable and consistent.

Continental Germanic languages and dialects seem to confirm the pattern found in Scandinavian dialects. Luxemburgish uses proprial articles consistently with names of personally known individuals as well as of all celebrities, e.g. “*d'Angela Merkel*” (RTL.lu: 18.08.2017). In the dialect from Eys, a town situated in the Dutch province of Limburg, personally known individuals and celebrities also have proprial articles (own data from a native informant). In *Kölsch*, the dialect from the nearby city Cologne, the article is used less stably and varies in the domain of celebrities, similarly to the dialect from Voss (Western Norway). Due to intense language contact between standard German (where celebrities normally have no proprial article<sup>7</sup>) and the original dialects from Cologne (where celebrities have one, compare Herrwegen 2017: 23), many speakers who are exposed to both influences will solve this conflict by deeming only close celebrities worthy of the article. For example, speaking about *the* Lukas Podolski (who is “*ene kölsche Jung*”, a Colognean) will be associated with familiarity and informal speech, whilst speaking of a Romanian ruler of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century will be associated with formal speech and result in the lack of the article. In this case, it is obvious that each speaker evaluates the closeness of the evoked person based on primarily subjective views. Therefore, its use with celebrities varies strongly amongst speakers, for it is only determined by the individual evaluation of the speaker instead of being a consistent rule. For example, one can find on the Colognean Wikipedia page for the South African writer Olive Schreiner the following sentence, which makes a clear distinction between this distant, less known celebrity and two well-known German celebrities from the Rhine region (Wikipedia):

(6) *Olive Schreiner woohr en Feminißßtin, en Sozjilißßtin, un woohr jääjen de Kirrasch. Se wooh orr en Fruünndin fum Eleanor Marx, däm Karl Marx sing Doochter.*

Olive Schreiner was a feminist, a socialist, and was against the Church. She was also a friend of *the* Eleanor Marx, the daughter of *the* Karl Marx.

In the article about Johannes Kepler, he is consistently deemed worthy of an article (5 out of 5 occurrences in full sentences), but not Leibniz and Newton (Wikipedia):

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<sup>6</sup> In table V and VI, they have been presented as two distinct columns inside one in order to give examples of both uses, but they must be considered as one category until proven otherwise.

<sup>7</sup> Except for some celebrities as e.g. Marlene Dietrich (Lodder 2012: 90), in which case the construction has an affective connotation (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 99).

(7) *Dä Johannes Kepler wohr enne Weßbeschafflo. (...) Däm Kepler sing Jesätz fun de Planetebewääjung wohr de Jrundlaach, op dä shpääder Leibnitz un Isaac Newton et alljemäijne Jesätz fun de Jravitazjuhn jefonge un opjeshtallt han.*

*The Johannes Kepler was a scientist. (...) The law of planet movements of the Kepler was the basis upon which Leibnitz and Isaac Newton later found and built the general law of gravitation.*

In some other texts (e.g. about Adolf von Egmond), occurrences with and without article vary freely, something which reflects the conflict in the writer's mental representation as to whether a certain celebrity is distant or close enough to have a proprial article. Here again, variation and inconsistency characterise "border cases", at the border of possible uses, whilst the uses with closer celebrities and individuals are more likely to be stable and consistent.

I also searched in the Database of spoken German (*Datenbank für gesprochenes Deutsch*, abbreviated DGD) for occurrences in the speech of individuals. Furthermore, the dialect from Beveren (East Flanders, Belgium) provided additional data for the comparison (based on own data from Flemish informants). The combined results are summed up in table VI:

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
ZW--_E_00260 (Northern Alemannic, DGD)	-	V	X	-
Beveren	V	V	X	X
Cologne	V	V	V/X	-
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	V
Eys	V	V	V	V

VI. *The use of the proprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities and fictional characters in five continental Germanic languages and dialects (own data, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017 and DGD).*

## 4.2. Profane vs. sacred

In the previous section, it has been shown that the proprial article may express not only knownness, but also social closeness and familiarity, in varieties in which it is optional<sup>8</sup>. Inversely, in these same varieties, the absence of the article either expresses distance towards the person named, accentuating the fact that the person is not known or close, or respect, accentuating the fact that the person is too noble or revered to be considered familiar. Whilst

<sup>8</sup> It is obvious that in dialects in which the article is obligatory in combination with all possible names (i.e. all uses listed in (2)), it cannot express closeness and familiarity, as anyone has a proprial article and nobody could be marked as a familiar individual in contrast to others.

the previous section dealt with the former case, this section focuses on the latter, i.e. on sacred figures as e.g. *Jesus*, *Mary* and *God*<sup>9</sup>. Vocative and lexicalised constructions such as “*Oh God!*”, “*Gott sei Dank*”, “*God knows how many...*” etc. were excluded.

A look into the Scandinavian languages in the ScanDiaSyn corpus reveals that sacred figures can also have proprial articles, e.g. *she holy Mary* in the dialect from Målselv (Troms). When combining this restriction with the previous one in 4.1, it becomes apparent that the use of a proprial article with a sacred figure implies its use with celebrities and personally known individuals. This is illustrated in table VII:

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Ål (Buskerud)	V	V	-	X
Målselv (Troms)	V	-	V	-

VII. *The use of the preproprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities or fictional characters and sacred figures in two Norwegian dialects (own research in ScanDiaSyn).*

As will be shown below, the distinction between “secondary” sacred figures (e.g. Jesus and Mary) and God himself is needed, as some dialects allow only the former to have a preproprial article, and have none in front of the name of God. Therefore, God is the most peripheral use, and if God has a proprial article, all other categories must have one as well.

This hierarchy coincides with the one found in continental Germanic languages. In the Luxemburgish Bible for example, all apostles and holy figures as e.g. Jesus and his mother Mary consistently have a proprial article (Evangelium.lu: *Rom 1, 1-7; 16, 1-7*). However, God has no article, distinguishing him from the other biblical figures. Jesus only has a proprial article if mentioned with his first name (e.g. “dem Jesus Christus”, *Rom 1, 1*), but not when solely mentioned as *Christ* (e.g. “zu Christus bekéiert”, *Rom 16, 7*). This distinction is perhaps to be linked with the fact that *Christ*, being originally a common noun, does not behave as an ordinary proper name in many languages (from Ancient Greek *χριστός*, ‘the anointed one’). In the Limburgish dialect from Eys (own data), which is also traditionally Christian, all biblical figures and even God have proprial articles. The results are summarised in table VIII below:

<sup>9</sup> This section accounts for sacred figures in Germanic languages and dialects, which are predominantly and/or historically Christian. However, the status of sacred individuals as e.g. *Jesus* is certainly not universal, for other religious views may consider him a historical figure. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the restriction hierarchy for sacred persons doesn’t stand universally: whilst other individuals (or none) may hold the place held by sacred figures, the structure of the hierarchy remains identical.

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Beveren	V	V/X	X	X
Cologne	V	V/X	V/X	X
ZW--_E_01748 (Southwestern German, DGD)	V	V	X	-
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	X
Eys	V	V	V	V

VIII. *The use of the proprial article with personally known individuals, celebrities or fictional characters and sacred figures in five continental Germanic varieties (DGD, Wikipedia (Jesus Christus, Ave Maria), evangelium.lu and own data).*

In Beveren, informants mention that using a proprial article with a sacred figure is considered as offensive or even sacrilegious. In Eys however, *der God* is considered a normal use. The assumption that God is the most peripheral use is confirmed by Luxemburgish and the dialect from Eys, showing that varieties exist in which secondary sacred figures have an article but not God, and others in which God has one and therefore also all uses inside the hierarchy.

### 4.3. Family word vs. first name vs. last name

This third section compares uses of a proprial article with family words (e.g. *the father* or *the mommy*), first names and last names. As to occurrences of the construction “first name + last name” (e.g. *Elvis Presley*), they will be considered as belonging to a category between “first name” and “last name”, for there are languages in which a distinction is made between this construction and the construction with a first or a last name (e.g. the Norwegian dialect from Lom og Sjøk and Icelandic, see Håberg 2010: 77 and Sigurðsson 2006: 219 respectively).

In Kvæfjord, the Scandinavian preproprial article is used with all three categories, whilst in the ScanDiaSyn data from Voss and Gausdal, only family words and first names are attested with an article. In both cases, the data concerning last names is insufficient to judge (Håberg 2010: 73, 87, 98). Johannessen & Garbacz (2014: 16) mention that “in many Norwegian dialects, (...) the preproprial article is used with given names and family relations and not surnames”. This observation is confirmed by Håberg (2010: 77) for the dialects from Toten and Lom og Sjøk. In Lom og Sjøk, she observes that the proprial article can be used with a single first name and a first name followed by a last name (e.g. *hon Live Håberg*), but not with a bare last name. Thus, last names are more peripheral in the hierarchy, as shown in table IX.

Sigurðsson (2006: 219) mentions that the proprial article in Icelandic is considered natural with family words and first names, but not full names (“first name” + “last name”), for it seems to contradict the familiarity with which the article is associated. When speaking about individuals such as the president, it can yet be perceived as normal. Although Sigurðsson says nothing about the use with a bare last name in Icelandic, it must be presumed that its patronymic naming

system makes it hard to compare with non-patronymic systems (as *Presley* refers to few individuals, whilst *Jónsson* can refer to all Icelanders whose father is named Jón).

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
Icelandic	V	V	??	-
Toten	V	V	-	X
Voss	V	V	-	-
Gausdal	V	V	-	-
Lom og Sjøk	V	V	V	X
Kvæfjord	V	V	V	V

IX. *The use of the preproprial article with family words, first names and last names in five Norwegian dialects and Icelandic (Håberg 2010, ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson 2006). NB: “??” stands for “unusual or doubtful”.*

Håberg (2010: 15) cites also a dialect description from Norderhov (Buskerud) in which only family words are mentioned as being used with a proprial article, indicating their potentially more central location in the hierarchy.

Continental Germanic varieties corroborate the data in table IX: last names are more peripheral and family words are more central than first names. In Luxemburg and Eys, all three categories have proprial articles. Dialect interviews of individuals in the DGD have also been considered, which confirm the hierarchy:

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
ZW--_E_02861 (Hattingen, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	X	-	-
ZW--_E_05826 (Herford, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	X	X	X
ZW--_E_05655 (Enger, Nordrh.-W., DGD)	V	V/X	V/X	X
Luxemburgish	V	V	V	V
Eys	V	V	V	V

X. *The use of the proprial article with family words, first names and last names in five continental Germanic varieties (DGD, RTL.lu, vdl.lu: 13, own data).*

#### 4.4. Woman vs. man

Although a vast majority of languages and dialects makes no distinction between women and men with regards to the proprial article, some differences related to the gender of the person named exist in some varieties.

In Hordaland (Norway), in the region around Bergen, the postproprial article is only used with male names (Håberg 2010: 9). In northern Sweden, the postproprial article also occurs mainly with male names (Delsing 2003: 17).

Eastern Flemish regiolects also only allow male first names to be preceded by an article (based on own data from informants):

(8)

- a) K'eb        den     Dirk    nog    nie    gezien.  
 I have     *the*    Dirk    yet    not    seen.  
 I haven't seen Dirk yet.
- b) (\*De)      Lisa    heeft    hare    verjaardag    gevierd.  
 (\**The*)     Lisa    has     her     birthday      celebrated.  
 Lisa has celebrated her birthday.

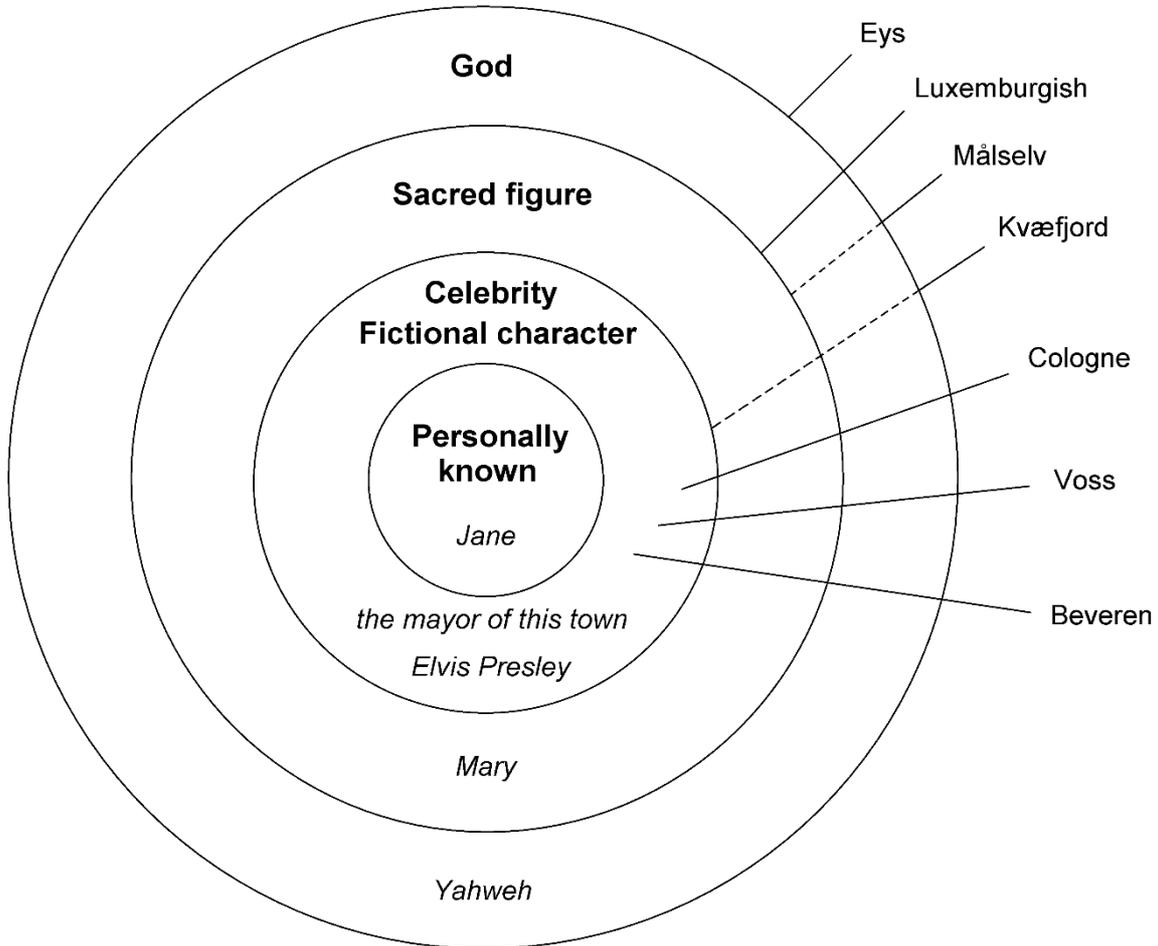
This trend is confirmed by the following quote in van Langendonck (2007: 158): “In Dutch (Flemish) dialects the article *de* ‘the’ is used before men’s names and sometimes before women’s names to express familiarity with respect to the name bearer”. Such a formulation clearly assumes that the use with male names is far more obvious and widespread than the use with female names. In these Germanic varieties, the proprial article seems thus to prefer male names.

These observations still leave us with many questions. Whilst it is not hard to imagine why the use of a proprial article with God might be more peripheral and “marked” than that with a familiar person, it remains very hard to understand why the use with women could be more peripheral. The universality of these observations becomes even more doubtful when considering other language families, e.g. Romance: in northern Italian, the situation is exactly opposite, as the proprial article is used more extensively with female names than male names (Viviani 2011; own data). Viviani also adds that the proprial article for women can have a pejorative meaning, and is even considered to have a sexist connotation. Differences between men and women seem thus to reflect cultural peculiarities rather than the underlying structure of a common human representation of the world.

To conclude, gender does not play an absolute and universal role in the use of the proprial article, but is rather subject to cultural variations. As much as e.g. sexism is not an absolute universal in the world’s cultures, it is not an absolute universal in the world’s languages either.

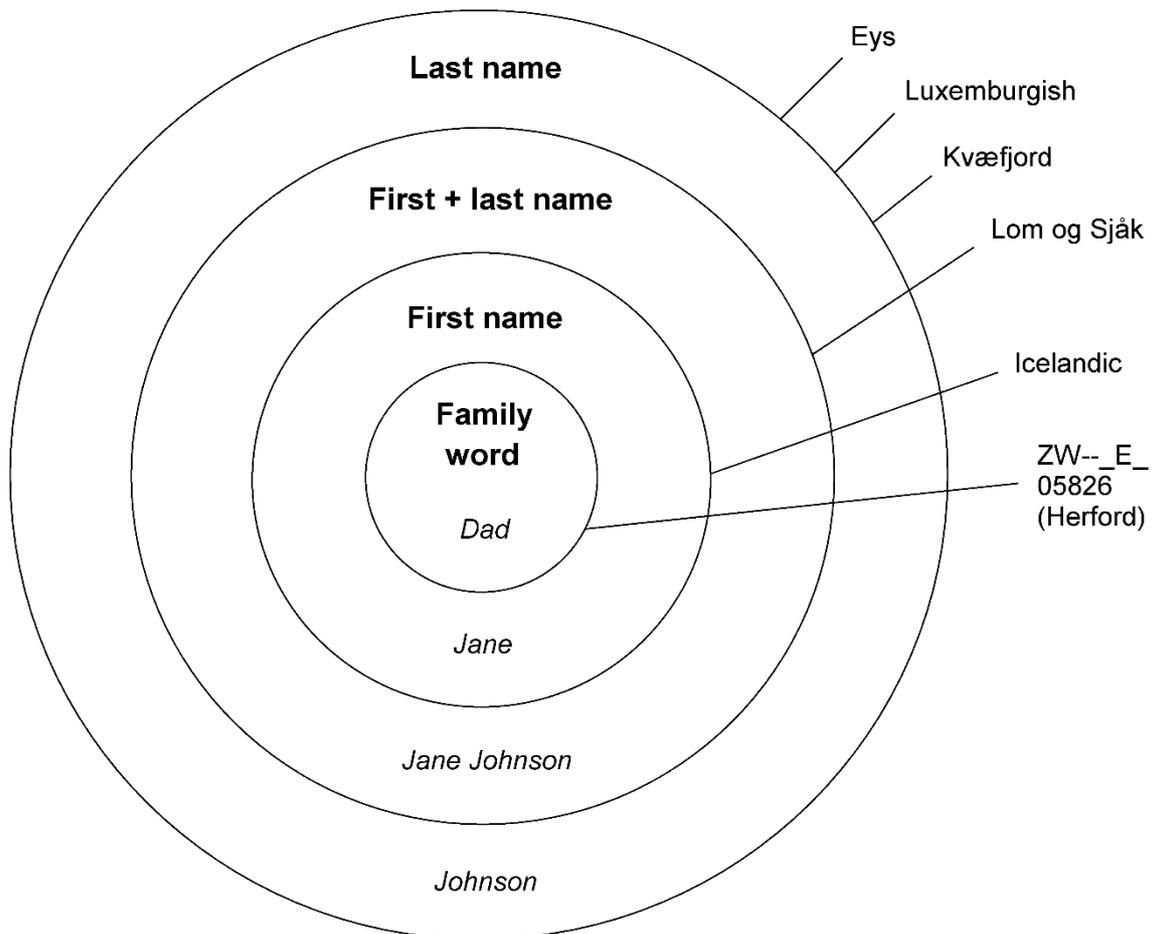
#### 4.5. The results: two models of restriction hierarchies

As has been demonstrated in 4.1 and 4.2, it is possible to set up a model of restriction hierarchies for the proprial article corresponding to social distance, starting from “personally known” and going as far as “God”. This is illustrated in the following figure:



XI. Representation of the restriction hierarchy “personally known” vs. “celebrity/fictional character” vs. “sacred figure”, with examples from Scandinavian and continental Germanic varieties. The dotted lines for Kvæfjord and Målselv indicate a lack of data concerning sacred figures and/or God.

The restriction hierarchy according to noun type, corresponding to section 4.3, is as follows:



XII. *Representation of the restriction hierarchy “family word” vs. “first name” vs. “last name”, with examples from Scandinavian and continental Germanic varieties.*

A question which still needs to be answered is how both hierarchies relate to each other inside a language. As there are numerous possible combinations of all categories, and perhaps a lack of dialect data to evaluate them all, this task can be assisted and simplified by logical deduction. I will turn to this issue in the next section.

## 5. Towards a complete model of restriction hierarchies

Some interactions of the two restriction hierarchies (fig. XI and XII) can be deduced from *a priori* logic, to obtain a (near-)complete model of restriction hierarchies.

Firstly, one must consider that “family word” implies “personally known” (because one necessarily knows one’s own family members personally), and that “first name” also implies “personally known” (because one calls personally known individuals by their first name). Inversely, “personally known” implies “family word” and “first name” for the same reasons. Secondly, the use with celebrities must imply the use with last names, for they are almost all

referred to by their last name<sup>10</sup>. If “celebrity” implies “last name”, it also implies everything which “last name” implies (i.e. “family word”, “first name”, and “first + last name”).

The (near-)complete restriction hierarchy of the proprial article thus looks as follows:

- (9) Family word > First name of personally known individual > First + last name of near celebrity > Last name of near celebrity > Last name of distant celebrity or fictional character > Secondary sacred figure > God

<i>noun type</i>	Family word	First name	First + last name	Last name		Secondary sacred figure	God
<i>social proximity</i>	Personally known		Near celebrity		Distant/fictional		
English	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ZW-- _E_05826	V	X	X	X	X	X	X
?	V	V	X	X	X	X	X
Lom og Sjåk	V	V	V	X	X	X	X
Beveren	V	V	V	V	X	X	X
ZW-- _E_01748	V	V	V	V	V	X	X
Luxemb.	V	V	V	V	V	V	X
Eys	V	V	V	V	V	V	V

XIII. Complete model of the restriction hierarchies presented in this paper<sup>11</sup>, with posited (!) values for eight languages (not all categories for each dialect/language could be verified empirically).

Considering that (9) and table XIII are purely theoretical projections of the restriction hierarchy, further research is needed to verify the validity of this model in other natural languages.

The restriction hierarchy presented in this paper fits strikingly well into the extended animacy hierarchy in Villalba (2016: 179):

- (10) Extended animacy Hierarchy (Dixon 1979: 85 in Croft 1990: 130)

First/second person pronouns > Third person pronoun > Proper names > Human common noun > Nonhuman animate common noun > Inanimate common noun

<sup>10</sup> “Elvis” is a rare exception, which is only permitted by the fact that he is the only world-famous person with this first name. “Richard” is e.g. completely ambiguous, since it could refer to Wagner, Strauss, Lionheart...

<sup>11</sup> A complete model should also consider the use with names of domestic animals, which could not be studied here by lack of material. The use with names of domestic animals should imply the use with humans, something which is supported by the ranking in Caro Reina (2014: 200) of the similar onymic marker for animals in Catalan, half-way between human and inanimate.

Nicknames should also have their own place in this model, left from “first name”. In colloquial French as spoken in Brussels (own data), first names cannot have a proprial article, but nicknames can (optionally) have one (e.g. *le Bern* for *Bernard*, *le Jo* for *Joachim*). Their relationship with respect to family names remains however unclear, since family names can also optionally have a proprial article. More research is needed to clarify this question.

The leftmost objects on this scale are the most definite, and are therefore more likely not to have any article. In English for example, personal pronouns and proper names have no definite article, since they are considered “sufficiently definite” (compare *\*the I* or *\*the Mendelssohn*), whilst other objects on the scale have definite or indefinite articles. In English, the border between the use and non-use of the article is thus drawn between proper names and human common nouns. In Luxemburgish, the border is drawn more on the left, between third person pronouns and personal names. In Serbo-Croatian, the border is located at the rightmost corner, since nouns have no articles (recall fig. 1). The parallel between the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article and this animacy hierarchy is as follows: both scales start from entities which are not unique and therefore more likely to have definiteness markers (i.e. inanimate and animate common nouns and family words used as common nouns) towards individuals which are less numerous (e.g. first names), and finally reaching completely unique individuals (e.g. “I”, “God”). The most unique and peripheral entities are also the most definite, which is why they are less likely to have definiteness markers. It is thus possible to integrate the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article into the category “proper names” inside the animacy hierarchy:

- (11) Inanimate common noun > Nonhuman animate common noun > Human common noun > Family word used as a common noun > Family word used as a proper name > First name of personally known individual > First + last name of near celebrity > Last name of near celebrity > Last name of distant celebrity or fictional character > Secondary sacred figure > God > Third person pronoun > First/second person pronouns

### 5.1. Apparent violations of the restriction hierarchy

Interferences between conflicting varieties (e.g. in Cologne) as well as sociolinguistic factors and variation amongst speakers can influence the regularity of the use of the proprial article, and even lead to apparent violations of the restriction hierarchy. Yet, even in languages with a strong variation, the most central uses are generally the most stable, whilst uses at the border between the presence and the absence of the proprial article are most subject to variation. As posited in section 3, “[the restriction hierarchy] is never violated inside a single language variety”, or better: is never *systematically* violated inside a single language variety<sup>12</sup>, because apparent violations either occur in the conflict between coexisting varieties and registers, or in “artificial” loans of the proprial article in languages which have none<sup>13</sup>.

Optional and less extensive uses are found mostly in varieties characterised by their liminality, lying at the border with varieties which have more restricted uses. Such is e.g. the case for Colongian and other dialects from Nordrhein-Westfalen, or for regiolects of standard languages

<sup>12</sup> The observation made in Schmuck & Szczepaniak (2014) that proprial articles occur more often in front of last names than in front of first names in German witch trial protocols of the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century (implying a more central use for last names) does not contradict the hierarchy, because this article expresses distance from the perspective of the writer towards the person named (Schmuck & Szczepaniak 2014: 126). Therefore, it is rather a pronominal psychological demonstrative (Johannessen 2008b), which often looks like the proprial article but expresses distance instead of knownness, and can be used with common nouns.

<sup>13</sup> An example of this phenomenon is the use of proprial articles in French movies or songs. In Jean Girault’s movie *La soupe aux choux*, which takes place in rural France, Louis de Funès and other protagonists use the proprial article as vocative (“*le Glaude*”, “*la Francine*”), something which goes against a basic rule of the proprial article. Another example is the vocative use “*l’Émile*” in Jacques Brel’s song *Le Moribond*. Such violations show the will to imitate artificially (and in fact, incorrectly) French dialects from the perspective of the standard language.

such as French, which has itself no proprial article but has dialects with proprial articles. Inversely, dialects which are less or not exposed to neighbouring varieties with more restricted uses of the proprial article (e.g. Eys and Kvæfjord) are characterised by consistence and its obligatory use. Starting from this observation that optionality and less extensive uses of the proprial article occur at the intersection between several conflicting varieties or style registers, one can posit that proprial articles naturally tend to become obligatory, i.e. strive towards more extensive uses, when not hampered in their growth by the influence of varieties with less extensive uses. This could clarify the observation made in Johannessen & Garbacz (2014) that proprial articles are simultaneously meant to be obligatory, and yet optional in many dialects. For this purpose, a study that could chart dialects with a proprial article whilst taking its extension into account would be able to test the hypothesis that dialects exempt from heterogenous influence strive towards an obligatory and extensive use of the article, as opposed to contact varieties.

## 6. On the origin and evolution of the proprial article

Having presented in fig. XIII a near-complete model of restriction hierarchies which describes languages from a synchronic perspective, the diachronic question of the origin and evolution of the proprial article still needs to be addressed.

Concerning its evolution, the claim that the restriction hierarchy is never systematically violated inside a single language variety implies that diachronic change must also respect the restriction hierarchy. The global use of the proprial article must therefore spread from central to peripheral uses progressively, without skipping a stage, and reduce itself in the same way, from peripheral to central uses.

Concerning its origin, I want to furnish here an explanation for possible grammaticalisation paths of the proprial article (see also Werth 2014: 165-173 for an analysis of this grammaticalisation according to syntactic and pragmatic functions).

As mentioned in the introduction and in Sigurðsson (2006: 219), “the proprial article [JK: is] a marker of familiarity or givenness”. Be it in the form of a definite article or of a personal pronoun, it originates as a marker of knownness in languages in which it is not yet established as an obligatory marker. Its appearance in a language should therefore take place as follows:

(12)

- a) Initially, definite articles and personal pronouns mark knownness towards the entity referred to inside the discourse. They refer to an individual who was previously mentioned and/or whose identity is clear to both interlocutors, functioning as markers of *grammatical* knownness.
- b) They get reinterpreted as markers of *social* knownness, whilst their use expands from pure grammar to the pragmatic and social domains. This originates in the tendency to distinguish morphosyntactically between known individuals and strangers (compare e.g. nicknames). Family words used as proper names for family members first contrast with family words used as common nouns (see next paragraph). Subsequently, the first names of family members and friends are distinguished from the first names of other individuals.
- c) This “closeness-marking” gets extended so far as to get reinterpreted as a rule whereby individuals automatically get a proprial article, be it close or distant persons. This happens

by progressively extending the scope from near individuals to e.g. the pastor and the mayor of the town, local celebrities, all celebrities and fictional characters, then sacred figures.

- d) As a consequence of this expansion, the proprial article loses its “affective” connotation and its function as a knownness marker, and becomes an obligatory marker used with nearly any animate being.

As the model of restriction hierarchies in fig. XIII shows, the first step towards the extension of the proprial article is its use with family words, which have the crucial particularity that they can function as common nouns and as proper names. Contrarily to e.g. first names, their use with definite articles is well-established in languages without proprial articles. Compare the following English sentence:

- (13) Sara and her family are very kind and friendly. The father is relatively calm, and the mother rather dynamic.

Such contexts in which family words are unambiguously used as common nouns can coexist with contexts in which it is rather ambiguous if they still are common nouns or already used as proper names, as illustrated by these French lyrics from Jacques Brel (*Jef; Ces gens-là*):

- (14)
- a) Viens! Il me reste trois sous, on va aller se les boire chez la mère Françoise.  
Come! I’ve got three pennies left, let’s drink them away at *the* mother Françoise’s tavern.
- b) Et dans son cadre en bois, il y a la moustache du père, qui est mort d’une glissade, et qui regarde son troupeau bouffer la soupe froide.  
And in his wooden frame, there is the moustache of *the* father, who died of a slide, and is watching his flock [JK: pejorative for “children”] eat the cold soup.

In the first example, it is not obvious at all if *mother* is a pure common noun, or is fully part of her (colloquial) name. In the second example, *the father* can either mean “the father of the children”, or be understood as a proper name with *the* as a proprial article used by his family members, something which frequently occurs in Brel’s songs (compare *l’Émile, la Denise*). The border between family words as common nouns and as proper names is often blurred to such an extent that it is not surprising to find constructions of “definite article + family word” reanalysed as a proprial article construction. Such constructions are thus a fertile pathway for definite articles to be grammaticalised as proprial articles.

The grammaticalisation of the personal pronoun as a proprial article, on the other hand, is likely to originate in the tendency, in colloquial speech, to topicalise noun phrases and replace them with a personal pronoun:

- (15) Men Far, han er ikkje komen.  
But Dad, he did not come.

Further topicalisation of the personal pronoun can followingly lead to this construction:

- (16) Men han, Far, han er ikkje komen.  
But he, Dad, he did not come.

Similar topicalisation phenomena are generally attested for the SOV to SVO word order shift in all Germanic languages (Gerritsen 1984: 118), whereby topics and especially subjects are frequently shifted towards the beginning of the utterance, similarly to (16). This leaves the door open for the reanalysis of a topicalised third person pronoun as a proprial article.

## 7. Summary

By comparing the restrictions which determine the use of the proprial article in Germanic languages, this paper has shed light on a recurrent and regular pattern common to all varieties. This pattern reveals how human beings, by means of the proprial article, categorise other human beings on a scale of “social closeness,” and express proximity or distance towards individuals.

To test the universality of the restriction hierarchy of the proprial article, further studies could compare its use in other, non-Germanic languages. For instance, many Romance varieties (e.g. French and Italian dialects and/or regiolects, Catalan, European Portuguese) allow the use of a definite article with a personal name (see (1) in the appendix). In the Slavic language family, some Czech dialects are reported to use proprial articles in the form of personal pronouns, exactly as in Scandinavia (“ona Vera ‘she Vera’”, in van Langendonck 2007: 158).

Based on the results presented in this paper, one can conclude that the deeper logical structure which lies behind different restrictions of the use of the proprial article reflects an essential and universal property of human thought and, consequently, of human language: a highly anthropocentric view and the subsequent mental categorisation of living things according to this perspective. Exactly as humans order lexical entities into categories with prototypical (central) and peripheral elements (compare for example Prototype Theory), humans classify humans from their own perspective using the proprial article. Therefore, the proprial article fits in the larger frame of the grammatical structures which reflect human perception and social structure.

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*Joachim Kokkelmans*

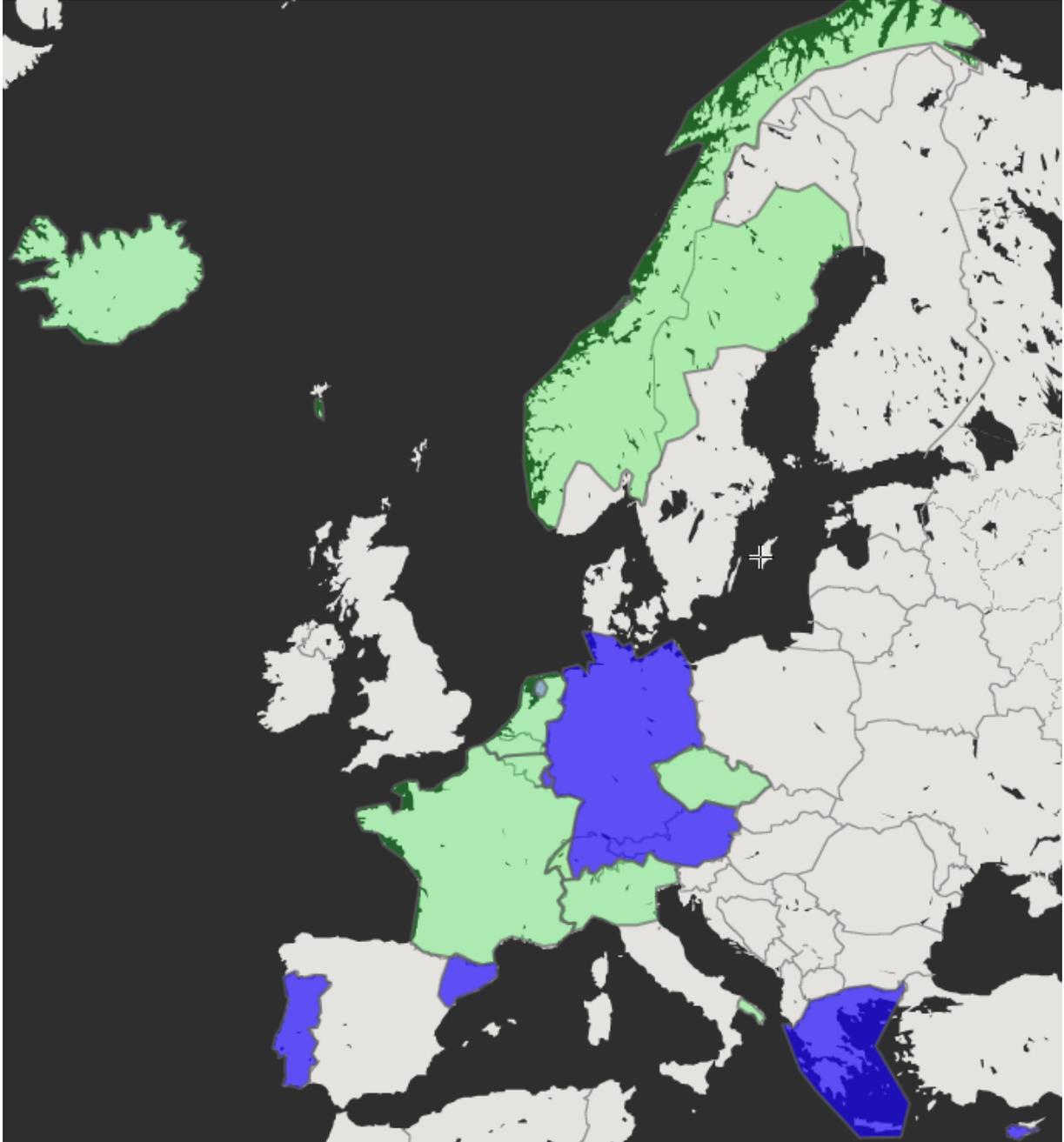
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## Appendix

This section contains additional material to represent the spread of the proprial article in Europe, followed by the examples used in the tables in section 4.

1a)

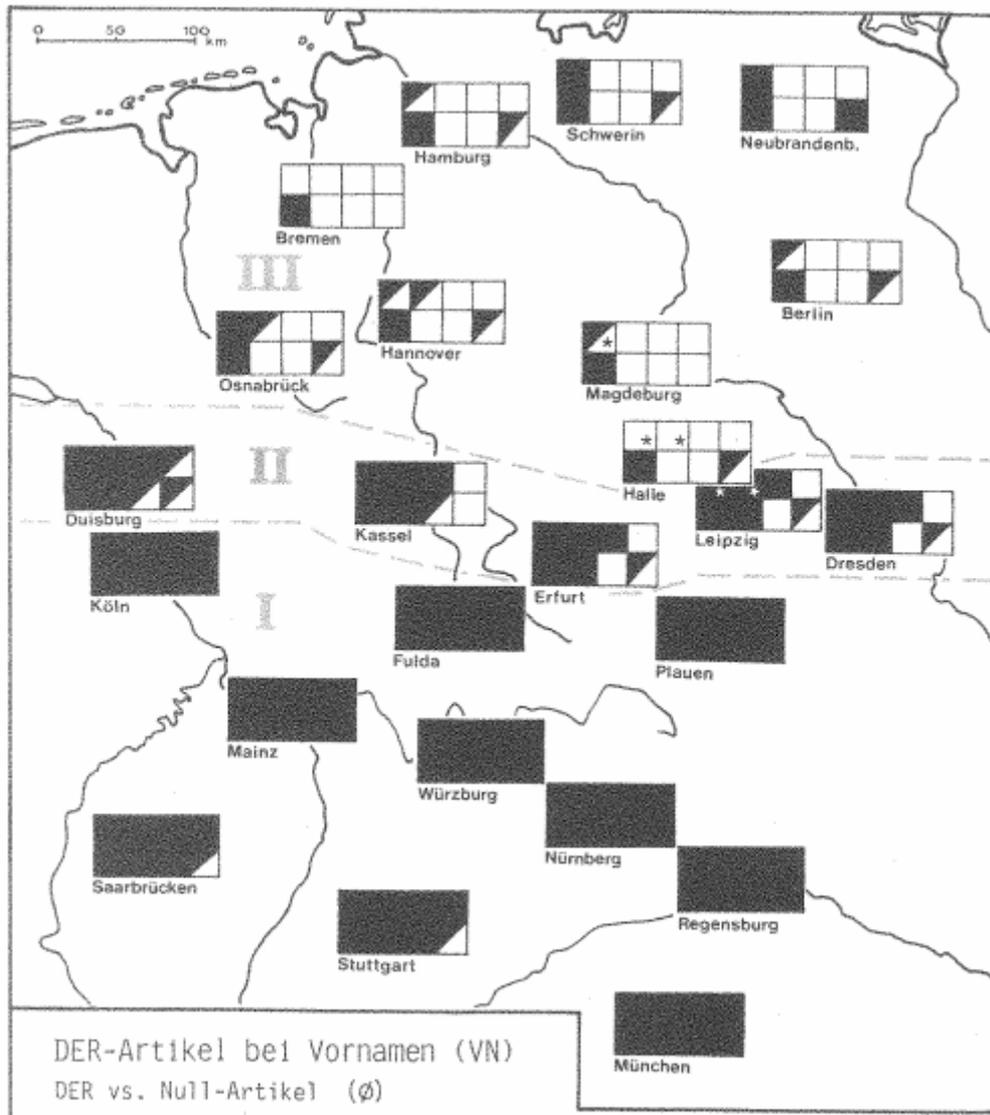


Non-exhaustive map of European languages which have proprial articles (created using Scribble Maps). Blue indicates standard languages with proprial articles, green indicates dialects and/or regiolects but no standard languages with proprial articles.

1b) Non-exhaustive list of European languages with proprial articles (Håberg 2010: 6f.; Delsing 2003: 12-16; Matushansky 2006: 285, 303, 579-582; van Langendonck 2007: 158; Viviani 2011; own data):

- Greek (Ancient and Modern)
- Catalan
- French speaking dialects and regiolects (Belgium, France and Switzerland)
- Italian dialects and regiolects (Northern Italy and Salento)
- European Portuguese
- Icelandic dialects (informal)
- Faroese (informal)
- Norwegian dialects
- Swedish dialects
- German speaking dialects and regiolects (Austria, Germany and Switzerland)
- Luxemburgish dialects and standard language
- Dutch speaking dialects and regiolects (Belgium, the Netherlands)
- Frisian (Germany, the Netherlands)
- Czech

2)



Map of the use of the proprial article in German according to different contexts, with the three zones corresponding roughly to Upper, Middle and Low German, in Bellmann (1990: 274).

3)

## Standard oder Dialekt?

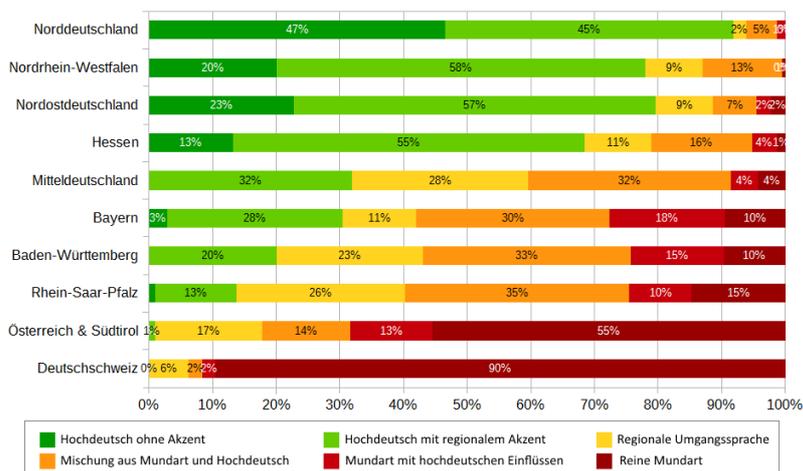
In einer aktuell noch laufenden Umfrage zum regionalen Sprachgebrauch wurde zusätzlich zu den Bezeichnungen für diverse Getränke auch folgende Frage gestellt:

"Was ist die normale Umgangssprache in Ihrem Ort?"

Zum 26. Dezember 2014 konnten 1136 Antworten aus dem gesamten deutschen Sprachgebiet berücksichtigt werden, welche in 10 Regionen eingeteilt wurden:

Die Ergebnisse zeigen klare nationale Unterschiede: In der Schweiz, Österreich und Italien dominiert der Gebrauch der Mundarten, in Deutschland dagegen Standarddeutsch oder Mischformen zwischen Standarddeutsch und Mundart.

Auch innerhalb Deutschlands gibt es klare regionale Unterschiede: Von Süden nach Norden nimmt der Gebrauch der Standardsprache immer mehr zu und der Gebrauch der Mundarten immer mehr ab. Auffällig ist Mitteldeutschland, was zwar wenige Meldungen für Mundart, aber auch keine Meldungen für "Hochdeutsch ohne Akzent" aufweist.



<http://kristianmitk.wordpress.com>

Map of dialect/standard language use and fluency in German speaking countries. Source: kristianmitk.wordpress.com.

### Examples

– Table IV

	a personally known individual	the mayor of this town	a celebrity born and raised in this region	distant celebrities, e.g. Elvis Presley
<i>roemskog_02uk</i>	han M2 <sup>14</sup>	-	-	Max Manus
<i>oppdal_10</i>	han M2, han stefaren min	-	Ole Gunnar Solskjær	-
<i>oppdal_31</i>	han M3 og han M4	han ordføreren vår	Erik Håker, Håkon Mjøen, Ola Mæle	-
<i>voss_03gm</i>	han M1, hun F1	-	han Johan Fjellby, han Ivar	Elvis Presley

<sup>14</sup> In the ScanDiaSyn corpus, names of individuals (but not celebrities) are anonymised. "M2" stands e.g. for "man no. 2".

			Knipo Kvåle, han Arne Hjeltnes	
<i>oppdal_03gm</i>	han M3	-	han Johan Schönheyder, han Erik Håker	-
<i>kvaefjord_01um</i>	han M1, hun F2	-	-	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft

Sources: ScanDiaSyn, Håberg (2010).

– Table V

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
Oppdal (elder informants)	han M3 og han M4	han ordføreren vår, han Erik Håker, Erik Håker, Håkon Mjøen, Ola Mæle, han Erik Schöneheyder, han Trulsen		-
Icelandic	hún María	hún Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, hann Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson	-	-
Voss	han M1, hun F1	han Johan Fjellby, han Ivar Knipo Kvåle, han Arne Hjeltnes	(han) Elvis Presley	-
Gausdal	hun F2	han Elvis Presley		-
Kvæfjord	han M1, hun F2	-	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft	han Hulken, han Aragorn, han Frodo, hon Lara Croft

Sources: ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson (2006).

– Table VI

	personally known	near celebrity	distant celebrities and fictional characters	
			distant celebrity	fictional character
ZW--_E_00260 (Northern Alemannic, DGD)	-	der Karl May, die Annemirl Bucher	Hitler	-
Beveren	de Lisa, de Sebastiaan	den Filip (Belgian king), de Mathilde (Belgian queen), den Elvis (Presley)	Vlad Țepeș, Seneca, Manfred von Richthofen	Yoda, Luke Skywalker
Cologne	dä Bäätes	dä Lukas Podolski (dä Poldi), dä Hennes <sup>15</sup> , vum Fritz Hönig, der Willi Ostermann, der Karl Berbuer	Obama, dä Obama	-
Luxemburgish	de Jean	de Xavier Bettel	d'Angela Merkel	den Darth Vader
Eys	der Joachim	der André Rieu	der Julius Caesar	der Faust

Sources: own data, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017, Wikipedia, Herrwegen (2017: 23), Kölsch-Akademie (Kölsche Liedersammlung).

– Table VII

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Ål (Buskerud)	han M1, hun F2	han Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, han Harald Hårfagre	-	Gud
Målselv (Troms)	hun F1, hun F2	-	hun sankta Maria	-

Source: ScanDiaSyn.

<sup>15</sup> Mascot of the local football team F.C. Köln (a he-goat).

– Table VIII

	personally known	celebrities and fictional characters	secondary sacred figures	God
Beveren	de Sebastiaan	den Filip (Belgian king), Vlad Țepeș	Maria, Jezus	God
Cologne	dä Bäätes	der Poldi, (dä) Obama, vum Franz Schubert	Et Elisabeth, mem Johannes, dä Jesus, (de) Maria	Jott
ZW--_E_01748 (Southwestern German, DGD)	der Jub, der Matz, der Kosmitzki, der Nammich	der Kajaphas	Jesus <sup>16</sup>	-
Luxemburgish	de Jean	de Xavier Bettel	de Paulus, de Jesus	Gott
Eys	et Marie	et Marie Curie	der Jezus, de Maria <sup>17</sup>	der God

Sources: DGD, Wikipedia (Jesus Christus, Ave Maria), evangelium.lu, vdl.lu: 13, own data.

– Table IX

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
Icelandic	hann faðir minn	hún María	??hann Jón Sigurðsson	-
Toten	han far	han M1	-	X
Voss	hun mor, han far	hun F3, han M1	-	-
Gausdal	han far	han M1, han M2	-	-
Lom og Sjøk	V	V	V	X
Kvæfjord	hun mor	han M1, hun F2	han M34, han Harry Potter	han E1

Sources: Håberg (2010), ScanDiaSyn, Sigurðsson (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Two occurrences of “*Jesus*” and one of “*der Jesus*” are found, the latter being yet explained by the context: the informant is speaking in a humorous anecdote of a young boy playing Jesus in a role play, and refers by using *the Jesus* to the boy and not to the sacred figure. When referring to the “true” and “sacred” Jesus, the informant uses no article.

<sup>17</sup> Anecdotically, one can observe that Mary, the mother of Jesus, has a feminine article in Eys contrarily to all other women, who have neuter definite articles.

– Table X

	family word	first name	first name + last name	last name
ZW--_E_02861 (Hattingen, Nordrhein-W., DGD)	zur Mutter, der Vater, die Mutter	Oswald	_18	-
ZW--_E_05826 (Herford, Nordrhein-W., DGD)	der Vater	Hans, Guste	Heinrich Franzmeier	Franzmeier
ZW--_E_05655 (Enger, Nordrhein- W., DGD)	der Vater, die Mutter, dem Onkel, der Opa	Laura, Ida, Paul, Wilhelm, Heinrich, Guste	Hermann Meier, Wilhelm Stuke	Pauck, Puhlmann, Heckewert, Köcker, Brunning etc.
		-	den August Gröppel, vom Heinrich Gröppel	
Luxemburgish	d'Mamm, de Papp	de Jean	d'Angela Merkel	d'Merkel
Eys	der Papp	der Jo	der André Rieu	der Rieu

Sources: DGD, RTL.lu: 18.08.2017, vdl.lu: 13, RTL.lu: 12.09.2017, own data.

<sup>18</sup> In the transcript, one occurrence of “*den Wilhelm Hein*” with article is present, but one cannot hear any article when playing the audio part, something which is perhaps a transcription error.

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