

ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION


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M. RIESSLER

INTRODUCTION  
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## AGREEMENT AND GOVERNMENT IN ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION MARKING

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## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

- Typology of adjective attribution marking (Riebler 2011) is the formal licensing of the syntactic relation between adjectival modifier and head noun

### QUESTION

- Do the known ontologies of morphosyntactic features (cf. Kibort and Corbett 2010) cover all adjective attribution marking devices?

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS MORPHOSYNTAX?

- Morphosyntax is here understood as *morphology licensing syntactic structure*.
- Note different definitions of *morphosyntax*, e.g. as “grammar” (simply including any morphological and syntactic marking).

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## TYPOLGY

### ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION

#### Juxtaposition in KOMI (Permic < Uralic)

[*NP* **bur** mort ] || [*NP* **bur** mort-*jas* ]  
good man good man-PL  
'a good man' || 'good men'

No morphological device licensing syntactic structure (pure adjacency) → *Morphosyntax is irrelevant*.

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## TYPOLGY

### ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION

#### Nominalization in MANDARIN (Chinese < Sinotibetan)

[*NP* [*NP'* xīn **de**] shū]  
new NMLZ book  
'a new book'

No morphological device licensing syntactic structure (added constituent) → *Morphosyntax is irrelevant*.

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## TYPOLGY

### ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION

#### Head-driven agreement in BULGARIAN (S-Slavic < IE)

[*NP* **krasiv-o** sel-o ]  
pretty-N:SG village-N:SG  
'a pretty village'

[*NP* **krasiv-i** sel-a ]  
pretty-N:PL village-N:PL  
'pretty villages'

- Morphological device licensing syntactic structure = Dep-marking **AGR-inflection**
- Features: |gender (F, M, N)|, |number (SG, PL)|

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## ONTOLOGY (TO BE EXTENDED...)

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Adjective attribution

```

graph TD
    AA[Adjective attribution] --> NF[no formative]
    AA --> SD[syntactic device]
    AA --> MD[morphological device]
    NF --> J[juxtaposition]
    J --> J1["(Komi)"]
    SD --> N[nominalization]
    N --> N1["(Mandarin)"]
    MD --> A[agreement]
    A --> A1["(Bulgarian)"]
  
```

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Construct ("attributive") state in PERSIAN (SW-Iranian < IE)

xane-ye **bozorg** || xane-ha-ye **bozorg**  
house-ATTR big house-PL-ATTR big  
'a big house' || 'big houses'

cf. Absolute ("predicative") state

xane **bozorg** ast  
house big is  
'the house is big'

The demand for Construct vs. Absolute state comes from the syntactic configuration.

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Construct ("attributive") state in PERSIAN (SW-Iranian < IE)

[*NP* xane-ye **bozorg**] 'a big house'  
house-MOD big

[*AdP* tu-ye ašpæzxune] 'in the kitchen'  
in-MOD kitchen

- Morphosyntactic device = head-marking **CONSTRUCT**
- Feature: |state (MOD)|

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"Attributive state" in SKOLT SAAMI (E-Saamic < Uralic)

**moožž'-es'** pōrtt || **moožž'-es'** pōört  
pretty-ATTR house pretty-ATTR house\PL  
'a pretty house' || 'pretty houses'

cf. "predicative state"

taht pōrtt lij **moočč-ād**  
this house is pretty-PRED  
'this house is pretty'

The demand for attributive vs. predicative forms comes from the syntactic configuration.

- Morphosyntactic device = dep-marking **CONSTRUCT**
- Feature: |state (ATTR)|

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## DISCUSSION

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PERSIAN: "Construct state" on-head

xane-ye **bozorg** [*NP* N:MOD A]

SKOLT SAAMI: "Anti-Construct state" on-dependent

**moožž'-es'** pōrtt [*NP* A:ATTR N]

- Source of morphological modification/attribution marking in PERSIAN and SKOLT SAAMI is purely syntactic government
- The feature |state (MOD/ATTR)| is morphosyntactic

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## DISCUSSION

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Agreement i BULGARIAN

**krasiv-o** sel-o || **krasiv-i** sel-a  
pretty-N:SG village-N:SG pretty-N:PL village-N:PL

Agreement in RUSSIAN (E-Slavic < IE)

**krasiv-oje** sel-o || **krasiv-yje** sel-a  
pretty-N:SG village-N:SG pretty-N:PL village-N:PL  
'a pretty village' || 'pretty villages'

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BULGARIAN: **Agreement**

**krasiv-o** sel-o 'a pretty village'  
pretty-N:SG village-N:SG

tova sel-o e **krasiv-o** 'this village is pretty'  
this village-N:SG is pretty-N:SG

RUSSIAN: **Anti-Construct agreement**

**krasiv-oje** sel-o 'a pretty village'  
pretty-ATTR:N:SG village-N:SG

sel-o **krasiv-o** (**krasiv-oje**)  
village-N:SG pretty-PRED:N:SG (pretty-ATTR:N:SG)  
'this village is pretty' / '(... is a pretty one)'

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## DISCUSSION

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SKOLT SAAMI: **Anti-Construct** [NP A:ATTR N]

**moožž'-es'** pörtt

- Two adjective states: the so-called "attributive form" licenses only ATTR

RUSSIAN: **Anti-Construct agreement** [NP A:ATTR:AGR N]

**krasiv-oje**

- Two adjective inflections: the so-called "long form" licenses ATTR and AGR simultaneously

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## DISCUSSION

MORPHOSYNTACTIC ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION MARKING DEVICES

Adjective attribution

...

morphological device

- agreement (Bulgarian)
- construct-agreement (Russian)
- construct (Skolt Saami)

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## DISCUSSION

ADJECTIVE ATTRIBUTION MARKING DEVICES

Rather few attested instances of attributive state marking (with or without agreement)

- Anti-Construct-Agreement (Russian) =Dep-marking formative that registers presence of head and undergoes agreement triggered by the head
  - eg Dargwa (Nakh-Daghestanian), Germanic languages (IE), Hausa (Chadic), Itelmen (Kamchatkan)
- Anti-Construct (Skolt Saami) =Dep-marking formative that only registers presence of head
  - eg Japanese, N-Talysh (IE), Rutul (Nakh-Daghestanian), Takia (Austronesian)
- Construct (Persian) =Head-marking formative that only registers presence of dep
  - Iranian languages (Toreva-Hopi (Uto-Aztecian))

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## SUMMARY

MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES RELEVANT FOR NP STRUCTURE

- There are instances of purely syntactic assignment of adjective attribution marking devices.
- The relevant feature is |state|.

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MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES RELEVANT FOR NP STRUCTURE

Morphological features

- Morphology
- Morphosyntax
  - +semantic assignment
    - AGR
    - eg [number (SG, PL)]
    - eg [case (ACC, LOC)]
    - eg [species (DEF, INDEF)]
  - semantic assignment
    - GOV
    - eg [state (MOD/ATTR)]

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## FURTHER QUESTIONS

### ATTRIBUTIVE STATE MARKING

- “Government” without a governor?
- “Determination of a syntactic category”?
- ... but morphology is involved in the licensing of syntactic structure, hence **morphosyntax!**

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