

Determiner spreading and modification in Kipsigis

Maria Kouneli, NYU

Keywords: Modification, determiners, relative clauses, adjectives, DP structure, Nilotic languages

Introduction: The goal of this talk is to present novel data from determiner spreading (DS) in Kipsigis (Nilotic, Kenya), a language that, to my knowledge, has never featured in theoretical discussions of multiple determiners so far. I show that Kipsigis DS has differences from DS in other languages, which can shed light on the typology of the phenomenon, as well as on the structure of the DP and the nature of modification more generally.

Background: DS is the phenomenon in which multiple determiners are expressed in a single noun phrase, usually in the context of (adjectival) modification. For example, the Greek noun phrase in (1) is semantically monodefinitive, yet there are three determiners present. The ‘extra’ determiners are associated with each one of the adjectives modifying the noun.

- (1) to kuti to prasino to megalo
 the box the green the big
 ‘the big green box’

Alexiadou (2014) explores the properties of the phenomenon in a variety of languages, and concludes that there are significant cross-linguistic differences, which cannot be accommodated by a single analysis for all cases of DS. She shows, however, that the (non-)optionality of the phenomenon in a given language, the type of adjectives (predicative vs. attributive) involved, the number of possible determiners, and the presence/absence of interpretational effects associated with multiple determiners are criteria that can be used to evaluate different analyses for DS in a particular language. For example, she argues that definiteness agreement between the noun and its modifiers is the best analysis for Hebrew, where DS is obligatory, has no effect on interpretation, and does not show sensitivity to the type of adjective involved. A reduced relative account for adjectives, *à la* Kayne (1994), on the other hand, best accounts for DS in Greek, where DS is optional, has certain interpretational effects, and is restricted to predicative adjectives.

DS in Kipsigis: All data presented in this talk come from original fieldwork with 6 native speakers conducted by the author in Kenya in the fall of 2017; to my knowledge, these data have never been reported in the literature before. Firstly, the language does not have articles, and no determiners are present in the absence of modification. When an adjective/relative clause modifies the noun, the marker *ne* precedes them (2). This marker agrees with the head noun in number, and Case (oblique vs. nominative; tonal marking), as shown in (3), and is morphophonologically similar to demonstratives in the language. Moreover, it is in complementary distribution with demonstratives (4); that is, when one of the three demonstrative suffixes (proximal *-ni*, medial *-naan*, distal *-niin*) is present on the noun, the presence of *ne* is ungrammatical. I take these facts to suggest that both the marker *ne* and the demonstratives are associated with D in the language.

- (2) a. làakwéet ***(nè)** kárâarán b. làakwéet ***(nè)** á-chám-é
 girl.OBL ne.SG.OBL beautiful.SG.OBL girl.OBL ne.SG.OBL 1SG-like-IMPV
 ‘a/the beautiful girl’ ‘a/the girl that I like’
- (3) a. làagóok ***(chè)** kárâarán b. làakwéet ***(né)** á-chám-é
 girls.OBL ne.PL.OBL beautiful.PL.OBL girl.NOM ne.SG.NOM 1SG-like-IMPV
 ‘(the) beautiful girls’ ‘a/the girl that I like’
- (4) pàgàa-nì/-náan/-níin (*nè) túuy
 cat-PROX/-MED/-DIST ne black
 ‘this/that big black cat’

Focusing on what happens when a demonstrative suffix is present (as in 4), if multiple adjectives modify the noun, all adjectives after the first one must be preceded by a free morpheme version of the demonstrative suffix on the noun (5), and all occurrences of demonstratives in the phrase must encode the same distance semantics (6). This is, therefore, a type of DS involving demonstratives (as opposed to articles), which is very rare cross-linguistically. Apart from this ‘peculiarity’, DS in Kipsigis is similar to DS in Hebrew in being obligatory without any effect on interpretation.

- (5) a. pàgàa-nì túuy ***(ni)** ôo

	cat-DEM.PROX	black	DEM.PROX	big
	‘this big black cat’			
c.	pàgàa-níin	túuy	*(níin)	ôo
	cat-DEM.DIST	black	DEM.DIST	big
	‘that big black cat’			
(6) a.	*pàgàa-nì	túuy	náan/níin	ôo
	cat-DEM.PROX	black	DEM.MED/DEM.DIST	big
	‘this big black cat’			
b.	*pàgàa-náan	túuy	nì/níin	ôo
	cat-DEM.MED	black	DEM.PROX/DEM.DIST	big
	‘that big black cat’			

Even though DS is obligatory with multiple modifiers, Kipsigis also exhibits optional DS with a single adjective. This optional DS is possible only when the demonstrative suffix is followed by another suffix, such as the possessive suffix in (7b).

(7) a.	*pàgàa-nì	nì	túuy
	cat-DEM.PROX	DEM.PROX	black
	‘this black cat’		
b.	pàgàa-nì-nyùun	(nì)	túuy
	cat-DEM.PROX-my	DEM.PROX	black
	‘this black cat of mine’		

Implications for theories of DS: Using Alexiadou’s (2014) criteria, we can conclude that Kipsigis is most similar to Hebrew (for which an analysis of definiteness agreement between the noun and its modifiers is often advocated) in exhibiting obligatory DS with all types of adjectives without interpretational effects. However, it also differs from Hebrew in some important ways. Firstly, in the absence of modifiers, there is no article associated with the noun in Kipsigis, while Hebrew has a definite article. This means that in Hebrew, DPs including adjectives will have $n + 1$ definite articles (where n is the number of adjectives present) – one article for the noun and one for each adjective modifying it. In Kipsigis, on the other hand, the number of demonstratives will be n , i.e. equal to the number of modifiers present. This is reminiscent of Slovenian and Swiss German (Leu 2014), in which a determiner is present only in the presence of modifiers. Secondly, even though at first sight both Kipsigis and Hebrew show no restrictions to the type of adjectives (predicative vs. attributive) involved, Kipsigis does not have any attributive adjectives, and as shown in (2) above, adjectives behave syntactically in the same way as relative clauses in the language (but it can be shown that they form a distinct morphosyntactic class, different from verbs). The resemblance between adjectival modification and relative clauses, as well as the complete absence of attributive adjectives in the language, strongly suggest that all adjectives in Kipsigis are (reduced) relative clauses. DS has often been discussed in the literature in relation to a reduced relative clause structure for adjectives; for example, Alexiadou & Wilder (1998) analyze Greek DS in this way. Finally, even though articles are involved in most cases of DS described in the literature, the ‘multiplied’ determiners in Kipsigis are demonstratives. This indicates that demonstratives in the language occupy a D position. **Conclusion:** In this talk I describe DS and modification in Kipsigis, and show that the best way to account for the data is by postulating an analysis of DS in which adjectives are reduced relative clauses, headed by D, along Kayne (1994) and Alexiadou & Wilder (1998). Furthermore, there is agreement between the D heads of multiple modifiers that are associated with the same noun, which explains the matching values of spatial deixis found with demonstratives in the language. The novel data of DS and modification in Kipsigis, an understudied Nilotic language, significantly add to our knowledge and understanding of these phenomena cross-linguistically.

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