Left Branch Extraction in Lower Sorbian

Andreas Pankau • FU Berlin

Introduction   Bošković (2005), building on Corver (1990), claims that the availability of Left Branch Extraction (LBE) – the extraction of material out of DPs, APs, and PPs to the left of the head – in a language correlates with the presence and absence of definite articles. Languages with definite articles must not have LBE (like English), languages without definite articles can have LBE (like Polish). Bošković (2005) suggests that the two phenomena are causally linked. Definite articles project a DP and since DPs are phases, they block subextraction from within. Languages without definite articles only project NPs, which are not phases and hence do not block subextraction. In this talk, I challenge the claim that the presence of definite articles implies the absence of LBE. The evidence comes from Lower Sorbian, an endangered Slavic language spoken in South East Germany. I show that Lower Sorbian has both definite articles and LBE.

Definite articles in Lower Sorbian   Grammars of Lower Sorbian note that the spoken languages uses the historically demonstrative determiners *ten/ta/to/te* as definite articles (Janaš 1984: 203). In order to establish that they are true definite articles, one needs to show they are not mere adjectives marking definiteness. There are three arguments that *ten/ta/to/te* are true definite articles. First, they are morphologically distinct from adjectives. Although the paradigms for adjectives and definite articles are nearly identical, there are two differences in the paradigms for masculine and neuter singular (cf. table 1). The vowels of the genitive and dative suffix differ: it is *e* for adjectives, but *o* for definite articles. Moreover, the definite article has a form for the locative that is distinct from that of the instrumental, whereas for the adjective, these two case suffixes are no longer distinguished in the spoken language. Second, definite articles differ syntactically from adjectives. Whereas adjectives have some freedom in their ordering, definite articles can only precede adjectives and must never follow them (unless otherwise indicated, the data reported in this abstract were collected in 3 interviews with a native speaker of Lower Sorbian in November and December 2018 in Berlin and Cottbus).

	ADJECTIVE		ARTICLE	
	M	N	M	N
NOM	*dobry*	*dobre*	*ten*	*to*
GEN	*dobrego*		*togo*	
DAT	*dobremu*		*tomu*	
ACC	*NOM/GEN*	*dobre*	*NOM/GEN*	*to*
INST	*dobrym*		*tym*	
LOC			*tom*	

Table 1: declension of adjectives and articles

(1) *ten wjeliki rědny   dom   / ten rědny   wjeliki dom*
     the big   beautiful house / the beautiful big   house
     'the big beautiful house/the beautiful big house

(2) * *wjeliki ten rědny dom* / * *wjeliki rědny ten dom* / * *wjeliki rědny dom ten*

Third, *ten/ta/to/te* share with definite articles in not being restricted to anaphoric NPs. Instead, they occur with NPs that are inherently definite: bridging definites (3), unique NPs (4), and situational definites (5).

(3) *Pětš jěžo z   kólasom. Naraz   se   pśełamjo **to** wóźidło.*
     Pětš drives with bike   suddenly REFL breaks   the steering.wheel
     'Pětš drives by bike. All of the sudden, the steering wheel breaks.'

(4) *Cora   w noce jo **ten** mjasec mócnje swěźił.*
     yesterday in night is the moon   strongly shined
     'Yesterday night the moon was brightly shining.'

(5) (waiting in a café) *Źo   jan wóstanjo **ten** kelnaŕ?*
                         where only remains   the waiter
                         'Where is the waiter?'

LBE in Lower Sorbian   Lower Sorbian allows LBE, contrary to what is expected under Bošković's (2005) analysis. First, Lower Sorbian allows LBE of interrogative determiners, as shown in (6) and (7). Similar to Upper Sorbian, LBE of D-linked interrogative determiners is slightly dispreferred (Blum 2013).

(6) ?**Kótry** jo rozpadnuł [$_{DP}$ t dom]*?*   (7) **Kajki** jo rozpadnuł [$_{DP}$ t dom]*?*
    which is collapsed   house   what is collapsed   house
    'Which house collapsed?'   'What house collapsed?'

In (6) and (7), both the auxiliary clitic *jo* and the *l*-participle *rozpadnuł* appear between the interrogative determiner and the remnant DP. This shows that the discontinuity is not the result of some PF-cliticization process that breaks up the DP because the *l*-participle never shows clitic behavior in Lower Sorbian (Franks & King 2000: 164-169; Breu & Scholze 2006). Similar to other Slavic languages (Bošković 2005: 8, 30), Lower Sorbian allows 'extraordinary LBE', (cf. 8), and disallows 'deep LBE', (cf. 9).

(8)   **Na kajke** wón jo skocył [$_{PP}$ t kšywo]*?*   (9) * **Kótreje** wón jo wiźeł [$_{DP}$ pśijaśela [$_{DP}$ t mamy]]*?*
    on what he is jumped   roof   which he is seen   friend   mother
    'On what roof did he jump?'   'The friend of which mother did he see?'

Second, Lower Sorbian allows what Talić (2015) calls 'adverbial LBE', that is, the extraction of an intensifying adverb out of a predicative AP, as shown in (10).

(10) Nět jo ten rotnik   **tak** był   [$_{AP}$ t zły]*, až*   wón jo jogo pšašał, co   wón jo.
      now is the gatekeeper so   been   bad   that he   is him   asked what he   is
      'Now the gatekeeper got so angry that he asked him what he were.'

                                                                (Schulenburg 1930: 152)

The example in (10) is taken from a collection of Lower Sorbian legends first published in 1880, but my informant judged this sentence perfectly grammatical also for today's language. Also in (10), a PF-cliticization process such that *był* disrupts the AP *tak zły* is unlikely because *był* does not occupy the second position typical for clitics in Lower Sorbian, in contrast to *jo*. That Lower Sorbian allows adverbial LBE is unexpected as well. Talić (2015) claims that either languages without definite article or languages with suffixal definite articles allow adverbial LBE. Lower Sorbian, however, fits neither category.

Third, Lower Sorbian allows LBE of attributive adjectives, cf. (11), but this seems to be a marked option.

(11) ??**Rědny**   wón ma [$_{DP}$ t dom].
      beautiful he   has   house
      'He has a beautiful house.'

Although LBE of attributive adjectives is not preferred, effects found in other Slavic languages are observed in Lower Sorbian as well. In the presence of two adjectives, LBE of only one adjective is judged bad (Bošković 2005: 12), whereas extraction of both adjectives is much better (Bošković 2015).

(12) * **Drogotne** wón ma [$_{DP}$ t rědne   pyšnotki].   (13) ??**Drogotne rědne** wón ma [$_{DP}$ t pyšnotki].
      precious he   has   beautiful jewelry
      'He has precious beautiful jewelry.'

Consequences Since Lower Sorbian has both definite articles and LBE, Lower Sorbian casts doubt on the claim that LBE implies the absence of definite articles. I argue that Lower Sorbian allows new insights into the question which languages have LBE and which don't. Comparing Lower Sorbian with German, which lacks LBE, I show that LBE must not cross sister nodes where one node governs the other to the right. I argue that this requirement follows once the notion *path* is re-introduced into grammatical theory.

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