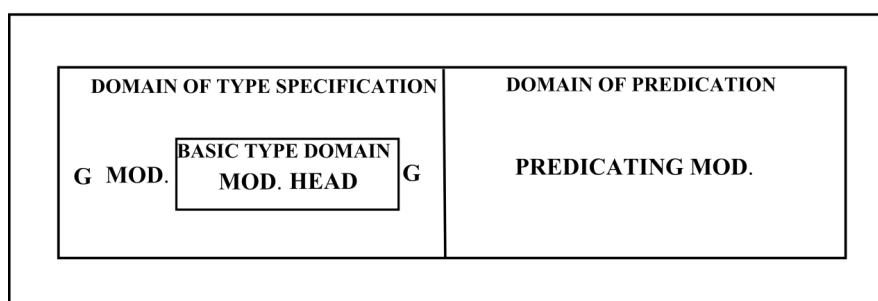


Type specification and predication in NPs: A Cognitive Grammar analysis

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It will be argued in this paper that simple position relative to the head noun marks an important functional distinction among modifiers within NPs. Based on different possibilities for valency realisation in different adjectival functions, a new analysis of NPs is proposed. The proposal is that the NP is split into two domains of modification: a Domain of type specification (preceding the head noun), and a Domain of predication (following the head noun). Prenominal attributive adjectives combine with a noun type to form a more complex noun type, and this, I suggest, is where instantiation of a noun type occurs. In the domain of predication, on the other hand, the modifiers predicate properties about the profile of the instantiated noun type. Furthermore, there is a smaller domain within the domain of type specification, which is referred to as the Basic type domain. Hence, the structure of the NP can be sketched as follows:

The Norwegian NP



Note also that grounding elements, indicated by “G”, surround the Domain of type specification. The main basis for the analysis is Norwegian NPs, but evidence from English will also be discussed. The point of departure is the differences between attributive and predicative adjectives and their different modes of combination with nouns (Taylor 1992). It will be shown that postnominal attributive adjectives have many common features with predicatives; in addition to following the head noun, adjectives in these functions both combine with the profile of the noun only, they behave in the same way when adjectives are combined, and they show the same features when it comes to agreement with the head noun. In addition, postnominal attributive adjectives and predicatives can both take complements, whereas prenominal attributives normally cannot. This is referred to as the No Complement Restriction, see for example Bouchard (2002) and Hofherr (2010). In the model proposed, the No Complement Restriction on prenominal attributives is a restriction within the Basic type domain. The model also allows for other interesting generalisations pertaining to the overall structure of NPs; for example, the fact that all modifiers in the Domain of predication can be paraphrased by relative clauses, whereas this is never possible in the Domain of type specification, falls naturally into place.

Keywords: Cognitive Grammar, semantics, NPs, adjectives, nouns.

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