1 Introduction


(1) the idea that ginger aids digestion

Two realizations of DCNs in Danish:

(2) a. den ide at ingefr gavner fordejelsen
   DEF idea that ginger aids digestion.DEF
   [DEF N CP] = Bare DCN

   b. ide-en om at ingefr gavner fordejelsen
   ide-DEF about that ginger aids digestion.DEF
   [N-DEF P CP] = Prepositional DCN

Question 1 Why are there two realizations of DCNs in Danish?

Because there are two syntactic structures available (with different meanings).

Question 2 Could (3) have been the attested pattern?1

(3) a. *den ide om at ingefr gavner fordejelsen
   DEF ide-DEF about that ginger aids digestion.DEF
   [DEF N P CP]

   b. *ide-en at ingefr gavner fordejelsen
   ide-DEF that ginger aids digestion.DEF
   [N-DEF CP]

No. (Or, at least, it would be surprising.)

---

1[3a] is grammatical if den is stressed, but then den is unambiguously a demonstrative D, not a definite article. The same is true of (1b), (6b), (11b), (12b), and (13b).
1.1 Danish definiteness markers

- -en and den
- never cooccur
- complementary and fixed distribution:

(4) Unmodified DPs require suffix:
   a. film-en
      film-DEF
      the film
   b. *den film
      DEF film

(5) APs require article:
   a. *belgiske film-en
      Belgian film-DEF
   b. den belgiske film
      DEF Belgian film
      the Belgian film

(6) PPs license suffix:
   a. film-en fra Belgien
      film-DEF from Belgium
   b. *den film fra Belgien
      DEF film from Belgium

Analysis Distribution of definiteness marker is governed by syntactic structure:

- -en is found when D[DEF] is sister of a minimal NP (i.e. NP consisting solely of N)
- den is found elsewhere (Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2005, 2008)

(7) Unmodified DPs:

```
             DP
              |
       D      NP
         -en film
```

(8) DP containing AP:

```
             DP
              |
       D      NP
         |
       den  AP  NP
         |
       belgiske film
```
2 Two structures for DCNs

**Bare DCN**: CP is sister to N → sister of D[DEF] is not a minimal NP → definite article:

(9)  
```
       DP
      /    
     D     NP
    /      
  den    N   CP
   |      /  
  ide   at ... fordøjelsen
```

**Prepositional DCN**: PP is adjoined to DP → sister of D[DEF] is a minimal NP → definite suffix:

(10)  
```
       DP
      /    
     DP   PP
    /      
   D   N   P   CP
  /       /      
-en ide om at ... fordøjelsen
```

2.1 PPs attach to DP

PPs uniformly trigger the definite suffix:

(11)  
**Modifier PPs**

a. mad-en fra igår
   *food-DEF from yesterday
   the food from yesterday

b. *den mad fra igår
   *DEF food from yesterday

(12)  
**Complement PPs**

a. søster-en til Per
   *sister-DEF to Per
   the sister of Per

b. *den søster til Per
   *DEF sister to Per

(13)  
**PPs in pseudopartitives**

a. grupp-en af turister
   *group-DEF of tourists
   the group of tourists

b. *den gruppe af turister
   *DEF group of tourists

(14) \[
\text{DP} \\
\text{DP} \quad \text{PP} \\
\text{D} \quad \text{NP}
\]

Ps generally allow CP complements:

(15) \begin{align*}
\text{Jeg tror på at mine sange opbygger modet i folk.} \\
& \quad I believe on that my songs up-build courage-def in people \\
& \quad I believe that my songs build courage in people.
\end{align*}

(16) \[
\text{VP} \\
\text{V} \quad \text{PP} \\
\text{P} \quad \text{CP}
\]

These two patterns intersect to produce Prepositional DCN:

(17) \[
\text{DP} \\
\text{DP} \quad \text{PP} \\
\text{D} \quad \text{NP} \quad \text{P} \quad \text{CP}
\]

Could things have been the other way around, i.e. [N-DEF CP] and [DEF N P CP]?

- no prejudice against [N-DEF CP]: no independent evidence that CP cannot adjoin to DP
- generalizing from (11)–(13), [DEF N P CP] is unexpected, unless category of sister of P could determine attachment site of PP
  - Unexpected if PP is complement: c-selection is limited to category of complement and properties of head of complement
  - Unexpected if PP modifier: head of modifier may restrict the range of possible hosts, but non-head elements may not

\textbf{Upshot} \quad \text{Attested realizations of DCNs are consistent with general properties of the language and conservative view of selection and modification.}
2.2 Intervening relative clauses

Both DCNs allow a non-restrictive relative clause to follow CP:\(^2\)

(18) \textit{den ide} [at ingefær gavner fordojelsen], som forøvrigt ikke er ny

\textit{DEF idea} that \textit{ginger} \textit{aids} \textit{digestion} \textit{which incidentally not is new}

\textit{the idea} \textit{that ginger} \textit{aids} \textit{digestions, which incidentally isn't new}

(19) \textit{ideen om} [at ingefær gavner fordojelsen], som forøvrigt ikke er ny

\textit{idea.DEF about} that \textit{ginger} \textit{aids} \textit{digestion} \textit{which incidentally not is new}

This is consistent with our proposal, under the standard assumption that such relative clauses adjoin to DP (\textit{inter alia} Toribio 1992 with antecedents in Jackendoff 1977 (chapter 7) and Smits 1988):

(20) Bare DCN

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{D} \quad \text{NP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{den} \quad \text{N} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{ide} \quad \text{at} \ldots \text{fordøjelsen} \\
\end{array}
\]

(21) Prepositional DCN

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{DP} \quad \text{PP} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{-en} \quad \text{ide} \quad \text{om} \quad \text{at} \ldots \text{fordøjelsen} \\
\end{array}
\]

Relative clauses may intervene between N and P in Prepositional DCN by attaching to lower DP in (21):

(22) \textit{ide-en, som forøvrigt ikke er ny, om} [at ingefær gavner fordojelsen]

\textit{idea-DEF which incidentally not is new about that ginger} \textit{aids} \textit{digestion}

but not between N and C in Bare DCN; no lower attachment site in (20):

(23) \textit{*den ide, som forøvrigt ikke er ny, [at ingefær gavner fordojelsen]}

\textit{DEF idea} which incidentally not is new that \textit{ginger} \textit{aids} \textit{digestion}

\(^2\) [18] is slightly odd, possibly for semantic reasons discussed in section 3. The contrast between it and (23) is nonetheless clear.
2.3 Intervening PPs

Given (20), we expect that nothing can intervene between N and C in Bare DCN. In fact, a PP may intervene:

(24) Han havde nemlig den aftale [med lægen] at han skulle undersøges igen til maj.

In fact he had the agreement with doctor.DEF that he should examine.PASS again in May.

One possibility:

(25) DP
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   /   \\
  /     \\
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CPs can extrapose out of DCNs:


   They made the agreement that no one may enter there after close.time last spring.

b. De lavede den aftale sidst forår [at ingen må gå derind efter lukketid].

   They made the agreement last spring that no one may enter there after close.time.

General preference for PPs to precede CPs motivates extraposition in (24).

No motivation for extraposing CP complement across relative clause in (20), hence no derivation for (23).

3 Meaning and usage

Presupposing vs. asserting  Prepositional DCNs presuppose the existence of their referent:

(27) De har overholdt aftalen om at bibliotekerne skal finansieres via brugerbetalning.

   They have kept the agreement that libraries.DEF shall finance.PASS via user.payment.

To evaluate the truth of (27) an agreement that library users pay to use the library must have been made. If (27)

is negated (they didn't keep the agreement . . . ), this is still the case.

Bare DCNs do not presuppose the existence of their referent. They assert it:

(28) De har lavet den aftale at bibliotekerne skal finansieres via brugerbetalning.

   They have made DEF agreement that libraries.DEF shall finance.PASS via user.payment.

If there is no agreement about library user payment, (28) is false, not truth-valueless or uninterpretable. The

negation of (28) does not presuppose any such agreement either, in fact it denies it (though a more felicitous way

of expressing this would have an indefinite object NP).
Environmental support

- Prepositional DCN, with N=af tale (agreement), occurs as
  - object of predicates like overholde (keep), være uenig i (disagree with), opsige (cancel), undertegne (sign), være med i (be part of)
  - subject of predicates like være kommet i stand (be established), holdde (last), få tilslutning (get support), blive effectueret (be implemented), blive aflyst (be cancelled), blive betegnet som (be characterized as), være præget af (be characterized by), være uønskelig (be unacceptable).

- Corresponding Bare DCN occurs as
  - object of predicates like have (have), lave (make), få (get), indgå (enter into), fungere med (function with), skiller med (separate with), give håndslag på (shake hands on)
  - only one attested subject use, with the verb indgå (be included in)

(This pattern appears to instantiate Hawkins’ (1978: 130–149) distinction between anaphoric and referent-establishing definites, with Prepositional DCNs being anaphoric and Bare DCNs being referent establishing.)

4 Conclusion

- Danish has two realizations of definite DCNs because general properties of the language make two structures available.
- The realization of definiteness markings in each of these (suffix vs. article) is consistent with syntactic regularities of the language (PPs attach to DP) along with a conservative view of selection and modification.
- Assuming the proposed structures we can explain the ordering possibilities of CP complements, relative clauses and PP complements in DCNs.
- The two structures are not arbitrary; they have distinct meanings and distinct usage.
- Thus we see once again that definiteness marking is a useful probe for the internal structure of nominals.

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