

Indefinite Demonstratives in Yiddish¹

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1. Introduction

Since the 1980's, the structure of the noun phrase has received much attention. However, sequences where an element – somewhat unexpectedly – precedes an indefinite article have not been discussed to the same extent:

- (1) a. such a night
b. *solch ein Typ* (German)
such a guy
c. *aza khaver* (Yiddish)
such a friend

Traditionally, these elements are called “pre-determiners”. What has gone unnoticed as far as I am aware is that these structures fall into two syntactically different types.² Specifically, when an adjective is added directly before the noun, some structures easily accommodate such a modifier. I will call these instances ‘demonstrative structures’:

- (2) a. such a (big) fool
b. quite a (nice) guy
c. *epes a (fremder) yungerman* (Yiddish)
some a foreign young.man
d. *eyner a (yunger) yid*
one a young man

However, others do not allow such an adjective (Felber & Roehrs 2004). Note that the addition of an adjective here leads to the presence of a second modifier in the noun phrase as a whole. These cases will be called ‘degree structures’. Interestingly, combinations of the second type show different degrees of ungrammaticality. Compare (3a) to (4a):

- (3) a. too cheap a (*big) car
b. too big a (*cheap) car

¹ Parts of this paper were presented at the 3rd annual DFW Metroplex Linguistics conference and the 2012 Berkeley Germanic Linguistics Roundtable. I would like to thank the audience for questions and comments, especially, Marc Pierce, Haj Ross, Joseph Sabbagh, and Heike Wiese.

² As is well-known, some of these structures may have two interpretations: a kind/demonstrative/identifying-reading (with non-scalar adjectives/nouns) and a degree/gradability/intensifying reading. Since I focus in this paper on the syntax of one of these structures, the different interpretations will not play a role in the following discussion.

- (4) a. too crazy a (??young) couple
 b. too young a (*crazy) couple

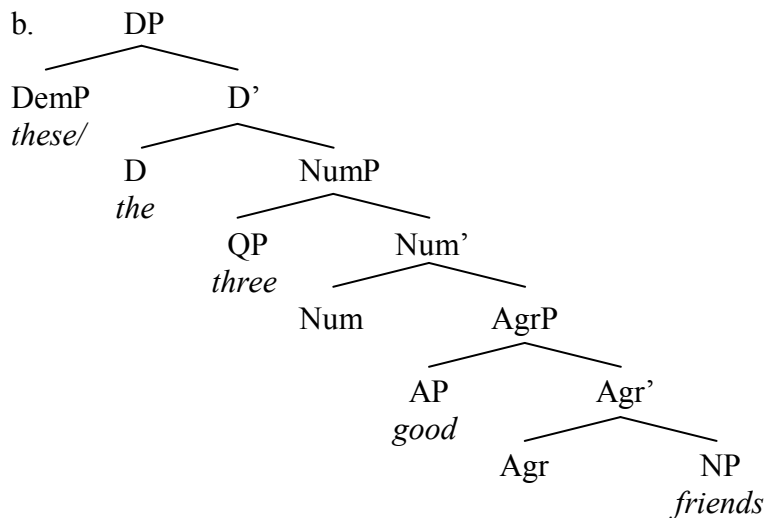
Presumably, this has to do with the different combinations of adjectives & noun used and with the linear order of the two adjectives. In contrast, it seems clear that a demonstrative structure can easily occur with a modified noun. Putting the degree structure aside here, I will discuss the demonstrative type in more detail. In particular, I will examine two movement accounts (Wood & Vikner 2011) and three base-generation analyses. I will end up proposing that the pre-determiner and the indefinite article are base-generated in a complex specifier. It will be suggested that these elements make up an indefinite demonstrative structure. I will demonstrate that such an analysis has at least five advantages.

The paper is organized as follows: after some preliminary remarks, four potential proposals are discussed and shown to have some shortcomings. In section 3, I provide my own proposal. Section 4 turns to some extensions of the analysis and tries to tie up some loose ends. The conclusion summarizes the main findings of this paper.

2. Potential Proposals

Before I discuss some former proposals, let me start with some preliminaries. Throughout the discussion, I will adopt the following basic structure of the noun phrase (for more detailed discussion, see among many others Abney 1987, Cinque 1994, 2010). Proceeding bottom-up, I assume that nouns project NPs, that adjectives project APs and are in the specifier position of AgrP, and that numerals and quantifiers project QPs and are in the specifier position of NumP. Determiners are in DP whereby demonstratives project DemP and are in the specifier position of DP and articles are in D:³

- (5) a. these/the three good friends



³ There are many variants of this structure; for instance, some scholars assume that adjectives are left-adjoined to NP. As far as I can see, nothing in what follows hinges on this and other differences.

With this basic structure in place, the question arises as to how pre-determiner structures are analyzed. Specifically, the question is in which position or positions are the pre-determiner and the indefinite article located? To keep the topic manageable, I will focus on Yiddish *epes*, an element that has never been discussed in this regard before.⁴ An example in (Romanized) transliteration is provided in (6a) and another in the more typical Hebrew script in (6b):

- (6) a. *epes a khaver*
 some a friend
 ‘some (kind of) friend’
 b. אין עפעס אַ ביליקן רעסטאָראַנט
 restaurant cheap a some in
 ‘in some inexpensive restaurant’

It is interesting to point out that some of the more general properties of *epes* have not gone unnoticed. For instance, Kenneth Libo states the following:⁵

[...] a word that defies translation is epes. Go try telling an eynekl (grandchild) what epes means in English. Words like “something” or “somewhat” are useless. Only in context can its value for letting off steam be fully appreciated. Thus, toward a doctor who appears oblivious to your tsores, you might mumble under your breath: “This is epes a doctor?” Or if someone’s inflated ego is driving you crazy you might say in a stage whisper to your spouse: “This is epes a gantser knaker?” Or about a home entertainer whose jokes fall flat you might inquire: “This is epes a tumler?” [my italics, DR]
 (<http://www.midstreamthf.com/200707/feature.html>)

We will see that the situation is not as grim as Libo makes it out to be. While it is indeed sometimes hard to find appropriate translations for this word, I will nevertheless propose that there is just one lexical entry for *epes*. I will suggest that the differences in interpretation alluded to above are derived from the larger structures *epes* may occur in.

To get the discussion off the ground, there seem to be at least four uses of *epes*: as shown in the introduction, it can be part of pre-determiner structures, (7a), where *epes* has some emotive flavor; in combination with an adjective ending in *-s*, it can mean ‘something’, (7b); and it can function as a degree word in front of adjectives, (7c). These are the cases mentioned in the above quote. Furthermore, it can function as a (modal) particle, (7d). As far as I have been able to establish, *epes* cannot be quantitative. In order to express ‘some’ in quantitative terms, Yiddish uses elements such as in (7e) (the data in (7c-e) are taken from Lockwood 1995: 113-4):

- (7) a. qualitative, emotive ‘some’:
 epes a zelner
 some a soldier
 ‘some soldier’
 (Birnbaum 1979: 298)

⁴ As Christopher Sapp (p.c.) points out to me, the element *epes* (in Swiss German: *öpis*; in Swabian/Pennsylvania German: *ebbes*) presumably goes back to *etwas* where [t] and [v] assimilated to each other.

⁵ This quote is taken from *Midstream: A Quarterly Jewish Review*, July/August 2007 Feature “From Yiddish to English: The Humor of It All”, available on the internet.

- b. argumental ‘something’:
(mit) epes nays
 with something new-S
- c. degree word ‘somewhat’
zey zaynen epes umgliklekh
 they are somewhat unhappy
- d. (modal) particle:
tsi hot er epes gelt?
 whether has he PRT money
- e. quantitative ‘some’:
a bisl gelt
 a bit money
 ‘some money’

While I will focus on (7a) in this paper, I will tentatively suggest below that (7b-d) involve the same element as (7a). Note in passing that languages differ in this regard. For instance, English *some* cannot surface by itself in structures like (7b-d). However, the latter language does have counterparts for the qualitative/emotive (7a) and the quantitative (7e). This is shown in (8a) and (8b), respectively. Notice that quantitative *some* usually appears in reduced form marked as *sm*:

- (8) a. some idiot/idiots
- b. sm water/children

Returning to the Yiddish case in (7a), it is important to point out that *epes* forms a constituent with the following nominal. This is evidenced by prepositional phrases in (9a-b) and a coordination structure in (9c):

- (9) a. *oyf epes a modne daytshmerishn dialekt*
 in some a strange German-like dialect
 ‘in some (kind of) strange German-like dialect’
 (cited in Goldberg 1993: 22)
- b. *beshas epes ayn umglik*⁶
 during some a misfortune
 ‘in any (least) misfortune’
 (Wiener 1893: 67)
- c. *epes a kleynikeyt! – epes a parnose!*
 some a trifle - some a livelihood
 (Lockwood 1995: 114)

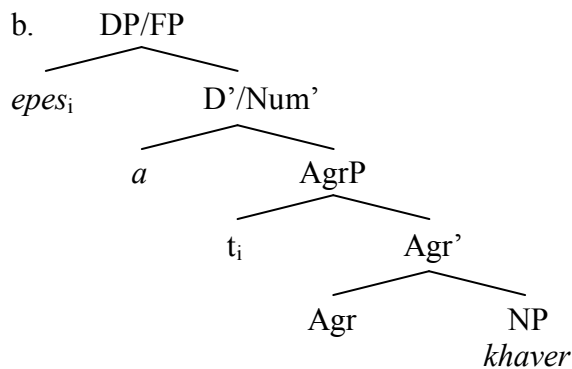
With these preliminary remarks in place, let us turn to the question of how we can account for the syntactic distribution of this type of pre-determiner structure. In what follows, I will discuss two movement analyses and two base-generation proposals. Documenting some shortcomings of these potential accounts, I will propose a third type of base-generation analysis in section 3.

⁶ The form *ayn* is probably related to Dovid Katz’ observation (p.c.) that the indefinite article was spelled as *eyn* ‘one’ in the 19th century but pronounced as *a(n)*.

2.1. Movement from Spec,AgrP

Among many others, Matushansky (2002: 272) proposes that pre-determiners move from the typical adjective position to Spec,DP (also cf. Wood 2002: 108):

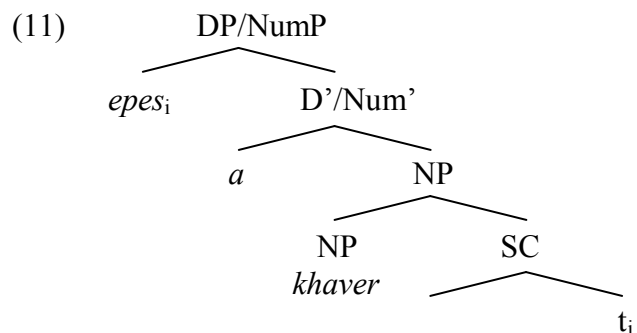
- (10) a. *epes a khaver*
some a friend



Notice, however, that this proposal cannot extend to *epes*, which is not an adjective. Even if one were to claim that *epes* is a special kind of adjective, it is clear that it cannot surface in its base-position: **an epes khaver* ‘a some friend’. As a consequence, proponents of this structure should provide a rationale as to why *epes* must move to the left periphery of the noun phrase. As an alternative, one might suggest then that *epes* is actually a degree word or an operator. Similar to such elements in German *welch ein Typ* ‘what a guy’, one might claim that *epes* undergoes movement to the left periphery to check/value a certain feature.⁷ However, Wood & Vikner (2011: 104) point out that this type of analysis constitutes a left-branch constraint violation.

2.2. Movement from the Complement Position of a Small Clause

Following Bennis, Corver & den Dikken (1998), Wood & Vikner (2011: 95, 100) propose that pre-determiners are base-generated as part of a small clause (SC) and move to the left periphery:



⁷ The motivation of such movement with cases like English *too cold a night* would not be straightforward as this would involve – what I called above – a degree structure.

Similar to above, note that *epes* is not a typical predicate and that it cannot surface in this base-position: **a khaver epes* ‘a friend some’. Again, as a consequence, proponents of this structure should provide a rationale as to why *epes* must undergo movement (for one idea, see the previous section). One of the main arguments in Wood & Vikner (2011) for their structure is the presence vs. absence of inflection on adjectives when they are in pre-determiner and predicative positions. However, this is not without problems.

To illustrate their claim, compare (12a) to (12c) and (13a) to (13c), which are parallel in terms of inflection:⁸

- (12) a. *eyner a khaver* (Yiddish)
 one a friend
 ‘a (certain) friend’
 b. * *an eyner khaver*
 an one friend
 c. *Dos iz eyner.*
 that is one
- (13) a. *solch ein Typ* (German)
 such a guy
 b. *ein solcher Typ*
 a such guy
 c. *Das ist nett.*
 that is nice.

However, observe that the parallelism between (13a) and (13c) is not straightforward. While *nett* ‘nice’ is a regular adjective and is inflectionless in predicative position, “predicative” *solch* ‘such’ must have an inflection in such a position (see Helbig & Buscha 2001: 230):

- (14) a. *Ein Philosoph ist jener, der durch seine Erkenntnisse,* (German)
 a philosopher is one who through his discoveries,
 Moralitäten hinzugewonnen hat. Ein Freigeist ist solcher,
 morals gained has a freethinker is such
 der durch seine Erkenntnisse, Moralitäten verloren hat.
 who through his discoveries morals lost has
 (<http://heinzsauren.wordpress.com/2011/05/10/aphorismen-zum-ich-und-dem-menschen/>)
 b. * *Ein Freigeist ist solch, der*
 a freethinker is such (/a person) who

Similar differences reveal themselves in Yiddish, where *aza* ‘such a’ is inflectionless in pre-determiner position but has an –s in post-nominal position:

⁸ In Yiddish, *eyner* can directly follow a nominal but notice the different meaning:

(i) *er eyner*
 he one
 ‘he alone/himself’

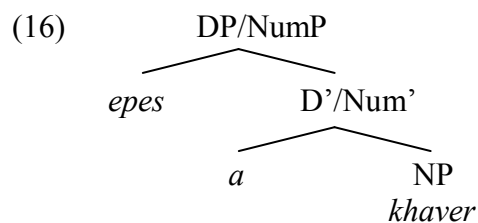
(Lockwood 1995: 115)

- (15) a. *aza kind* (Yiddish)
 such.a child
 ‘such a child’
 b. *a kind azas*
 a child such.a-S
 ‘a child like that one’
 (Jacobs 2005: 187)

Turning to *epes*, while this element is generally indeclinable and thus not telling, I take the issues just mentioned as an indication that this type of analysis is not on the right track. I turn to three base-generation proposals.

2.3. *Separate Base-generation in Spec,XP and X*

Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou (2007: 108-9) propose that pre-determiners are in Spec,DP. Wood (2002: 111) suggests that they are in Spec,NumP. In each case, the indefinite article is in the head position of the phrase that contains the pre-determiner:



Notice, however, that there is an interesting restriction in the West Germanic languages. Unlike the North Germanic languages (here exemplified by Danish), the West Germanic languages do not allow the co-occurrence of a demonstrative and a definite article:

- (17) a. * demonstrative article... (West Germanic)
 b. *dette (det) høje hus* (Danish)
 this DEF high house
 ‘this tall house’
 (Julien 2005b: 113)

Similar facts hold when the demonstrative is replaced by a possessive:⁹

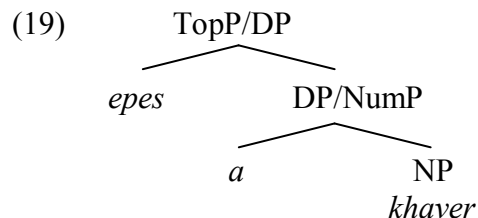
⁹ Harry Perridon (2012, p.c.) points out that possessive+definite article is possible in Old English. In contrast, the combination of demonstrative+definite article seems to be very rare if it exists at all. As is well-known, this language was strongly influenced in its history by dialects of the North Germanic branch. I assume then that this explains the “exceptional” behavior of Old English.

- (18) a. * possessive article... (West Germanic)
 b. *min (den) sorte kat* (Danish)
 my DEF black cat
 ‘my black cat’
 (Julien 2005a: 234)

To be clear, then, unlike North Germanic, West Germanic does not allow Spec,DP and D to be filled simultaneously. In other words, a Doubly-filled DP Filter seems to be at work in the latter language family. If this restriction holds more generally, then the structure in (16) involves a violation of this filter and is not a promising candidate for an appropriate analysis (incidentally, note that the same also applies to the movement analyses discussed in the two previous sections). What seems to be needed is an analysis that does not involve such a Spec-head relation. There are two options: (i) the pre-determiner and the article are located in different phrases; that is, the pre-determiner is in Spec,XP but the indefinite article is not in X but lower in the extended projection of the noun; (ii) the pre-determiner and the indefinite article are closer together making up a complex specifier. The first option is discussed in the next section and the second in section 3.

2.4. *Separate Base-generation in Spec,XP and Y*

Separating the two relevant elements by more structural space, we could suggest that the pre-determiner is in Spec,TopP and the indefinite article is in D. This option would constitute a split-DP. Alternatively, we could assume a regular DP structure and suggest that the pre-determiner is in Spec,DP and the article is in Num. In each case, the two relevant elements are located in different phrases:



While this structure is not implausible, it is more likely that it applies to a different construction.

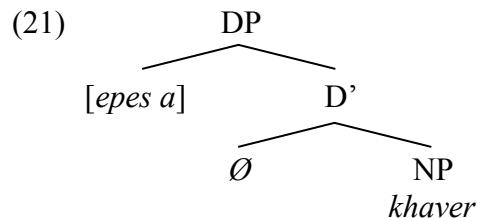
Specifically, note that *khaver* ‘friend’ is not combined with *emets(er)* ‘somebody’ but with *epes*. However, the noun phrase is still about a person; that is, the DP is [+animate]. As such, *khaver* (and not *epes*) is the head. Furthermore, *epes* here does not mean ‘something’ and does not behave like an argument. Rather, *epes* resembles a modifier in its meaning and distribution. In this regard, recall Libo’s quote from above. Now, with movement options limited in the Germanic noun phrase, modifiers usually surface very close to their modifyees typically forming a constituent with them. This is not the case in the structure in (19). If these considerations are on the right track, then the proposal above is not the most likely candidate for this pre-determiner structure. In fact, as I argued elsewhere (Roehrs 2011), the above structural constellation accommodates (referential) arguments such as possessives:

- (20) a. *mayns a bukh*
mine a book
‘a book of mine’
- b. *fun Móyshe a bukh*
of Moyshe(-DAT) a book
‘a book of Moyshe’s’

As observed in that paper, only West Germanic allows possessives that precede indefinite articles. As is well-known, though, both West and North Germanic have pre-determiner structures. To account for the difference with regard to the pre-determiner possessives, I proposed that West Germanic has structures as in (19) but North Germanic does not.

3. Base-generation as Complex Specifier - My Proposal

As a second and more likely option, I would like to suggest that the pre-determiner and the indefinite article are generated very closely together. Specifically, I propose that these two elements form a complex specifier in Spec,DP. A simplified structure is provided below:¹⁰

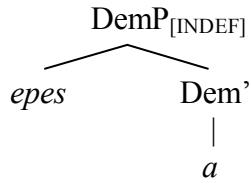


There are five points that unanimously speak in favor of this structure. First, note that with the D head empty marked in (21) by \emptyset , there is no Doubly-filled DP. Second, recall that *epes* is not interpreted as the neutral argumental ‘something’ but rather as the emotive modificational ‘some’. This property is accounted for if *epes* is located in the specifier of the indefinite article (cf. German *irgendein* ‘(any+) a’). Remaining agnostic about the lexical category of *epes*, I will simply assume here that it is a particle. Fleshing out the square brackets in (21), I suggest that the indefinite article projects a Demonstrative Phrase (DemP) with *epes* as its specifier. Unlike the more common demonstratives (see below), this structure is indefinite in interpretation:

¹⁰ Heike Wiese makes the suggestion that this structure could also account for cases of the following type (for some discussion, see Meinunger 2009):

- (i) *voll der Idiot*
full the idiot
‘a complete idiot’

(22) “Indefinite Demonstrative” Structure



To be clear, modificational *epes* and the indefinite article form a syntactic constituent located in Spec,DP.

Third, if this is true, then we need to address an alternative where *epes* is in fact analyzed as the syntactic argument meaning ‘something’. However, such a conjecture would face an issue involving disagreement in animacy and gender, (23a). As is well-known, ordinary demonstratives agree with the noun in phi-features (case, number, gender), (23b):

- (23) a. *epes* *a khaver*
 some(thing-NEUT) a friend(MASC)
- b. *yener* *khaver*
 that(MASC) friend(MASC)

Given the strong generalization that related nominal elements share the same phi-features, such an alternative claim seems problematic. Before I argue against this option, let me show first that *epes* can indeed be of neuter gender.

As is well-known, *dos* ‘the’ and *kind* ‘child’ are both neuter elements. Importantly, *guts* ‘good’ combines with both of these elements. Consider (24a-b). Taking concord in phi-features inside the noun phrase as a guide in the investigation, we may conclude that *guts* is a neuter form too. If this is true, then the presence of *guts* in (24c) indicates that *epes* is most likely neuter as well (for a detailed discussion of indefinite pronoun constructions involving concord as in (24c), see Roehrs 2008).

- (24) a. *dos* *guts*
 the-NEUT good
 ‘good (and evil)’
- b. *a kind* *a guts*
 a child-NEUT a good (one)
- c. *epes* *guts*
 something good

A second piece of evidence that *epes* is neuter can be gleaned from the fact that if *epes* is combined with a determiner, only the neuter form *dos* is possible:

- (25) *dos* “*epes*”
 this-NEUT something

An attested example of this is contained in the following paragraph, where *epes* and *dos epes* are underlined:

„פלאין! זעלמאן קומט צופאָהרען!“ האָט זיך דערהערט אין
דער מינוט פון א רעדעל מענישען, וועלכע האָבען עפעס געשלעפט
איבער דיא שטיינער. דאָס „עפעס“ איז געווען א מעניש אדער דער
קערפער פון א מענישען, א האלב נאקעטער, מאָנערער קערפער, צו
קוועטשט, צוריסען, פון קאָפּ ביז דיא פיס בעדעקט מיט בלוט און
שמוין. צו זעלמאָנס פוס איז געווען צוגעבונדען א שטריק, מיט
וועלכען מען האָט איהם געשלעפט איבער דיא שטיינער פון נאָס, און
א ברייטער פאָס בלוט האָט בעצייכענט דעם וועג. צווישען דיא
פלייזשס האָט זיך געשלעפט א שטיק פלייש, צוזעצט, בענאָסען מיט
בלוט, און צוזאמען מיט דיא לאנגע, מאָנערע הענד האָט זיך דאָס
געשלאָנען אן דיא שטיינער. ...

(from *Ertseylungn*¹¹ by Maxim Gorky)

Returning to the aforementioned issue, we have seen evidence that *epes* is neuter. At the same time, this element can be combined with a masculine noun. Again, given the strong generalization that related nominal elements share the same phi-features, we must explain why our demonstrative structure does not lead to morphological disagreement inside the noun phrase. In other words, given the current structure and the mismatch in morphological gender, we would expect ungrammaticality, contrary to fact.

3.1. *Epes as a Particle Word*

Above, I suggested that *epes* is a particle. As such, I assume that it does not have inherent gender. If so, this allows us to avoid potential mismatches in features.¹²

(26) ‘some (qualitative)’:

[_{XP} *epes*]

To be clear, the above disagreement in features is only apparent. The question arises now as to how we can explain the cases where *epes* does show evidence of neuter gender.

3.2. *Epes as a Syntactic Argument*

As shown above, *epes* as a syntactic argument is neuter. I believe that gender in this instance is not assigned by a default mechanism. In this regard, Steinmetz (2001) claims that (early) West Germanic underwent a Great Gender Shift. He states that masculine (and not neuter) is now the default gender, where Yiddish has even fewer neuter nouns than German (pp. 206-7). Harbert

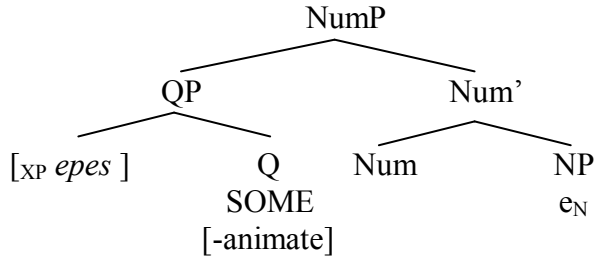
¹¹ The word *ertseylungn* usually appears as *dersteylungen*.

¹² Recall also that *epes* is not a quantifier; that is, *epes a zelner* does not mean ‘some amount of soldier’. Rather, *epes* seems to modify the reference of the noun phrase.

(2007: 103) interprets this such that Yiddish is more advanced in this development than German. If this is true, then the gender of *epes* must have a different origin.

I would like to propose that if *epes* constitutes a syntactic argument, then there is a null quantifier present, call it SOME. I assume that this quantifier is only compatible with objects and substances. In other words, this element quantifies over unspecified [-animate] elements marked in (27) by the null noun e_N . Returning to *epes*, I suggest that it modifies the null quantifier similar perhaps to *so* in German *so viel(e)* ‘so much/many’. A simplified structure of argumental *epes* could look as follows:

(27) ‘something’:

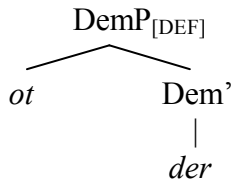


To be clear, the particle *epes* can be merged in two different structures: in the specifier of the indefinite article and in that of the null quantifier SOME. Returning to the third and fourth case involving *epes* in Yiddish, (7c-d), I assume that the degree word and the modal particle are the same element as in the two structures just discussed. To sum up, I proposed that there is only one lexical entry for *epes* and the morpho-syntactic and semantic differences are derived from the larger structures containing *epes*. I take this to be another, the third advantage of this proposal.

A fourth advantage of the above structure is that it is parallel to the more common definite demonstrative constructions (see Roehrs 2010). This can be nicely documented by Yiddish, where (28a) is basically derived as (28b):

(28) a. *ot der man* (Yiddish)
 here this man
 ‘this man’

b. *Definite Demonstrative Structure*



Note now that *epes* occurs with an indefinite article and *ot* with a definite determiner but not vice versa. In other words, we can observe that there is an (in-)definiteness restriction in these structures. If the indefinite and definite demonstrative structures are indeed related, then we might have an explanation for this restriction. Specifically, we could suggest that certain modifiers can only be merged in an appropriate specifier. In other words, there are two

determiner elements, definite and indefinite, where each has its own types of specifiers. If so, it appears as if this restriction might be selectional in nature.

As a fifth and final advantage, we can point out now that the proposal of a demonstrative structure leads us to expect that regular adjectives can occur, which is the case. Before we turn to the conclusion, let us discuss three more cases.

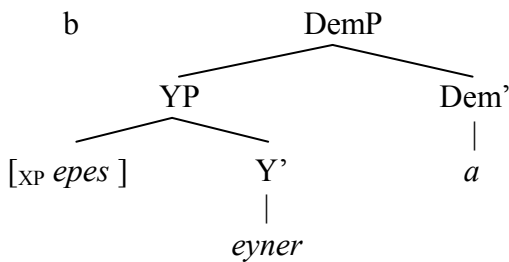
4. Extensions and Loose Ends

Resuming the discussion of the indefinite demonstrative structure, recall from the introduction that Yiddish also has cases like *eyner a khaver*, where *eyner* ‘one’ seems to have replaced *epes*. Unlike the latter, *eyner* in combination with an indefinite noun phrase is specific indefinite in interpretation. In other words, *eyner a khaver* can usually be rendered as ‘a certain friend’. As far as I have been able to establish, this structure may introduce somebody or something new into the context but it is never used once a certain person or thing has already been mentioned (all examples below are taken from Olsvanger’s *Röyte Pomerantsen*):

- (29) a. *eynem a Rubinshteyn*
 one a Rubinshteyn
 (story 200, p. 135)
- b. *eyner a reb Hersh*
 one a rabbi Hersh
 (story 64, p. 43; also story 43, p. 30)
- c. *eynem an apikoyres Feterzon*
 one a free-thinker Feterzon
 (story 123, p. 78)
- d. *eyner a fraynd zayner*
 one a friend his
 (story 62, p. 42)

It is interesting to point out that *epes* and *eyner* seem to be able to co-occur, (30a). Although some caution about the status of this construction might be in order, this case, if analyzed correctly, is derived as in (30b). Below, *epes* is in the specifier of *eyner* and *epes eyner* is in the specifier position of the indefinite article:

- (30) a. *Epes eyner a balagole hot amol...*
 some one a coachman has once
 (story 117, p. 74; cf. story 242, p. 167)



As in the above cases, *epes* is in a specifier position. As for the semantics, the combination of *epes* and *eyner* a presumably means something like German *irgendein gewisser* ‘(any+) a certain’.

Second, for completeness’ sake, we briefly discuss quantitative ‘some’ in Yiddish. Recall that it is often expressed by *a bisl* ‘a bit of’. Note that the equivalent in German has special properties such that the adjective and/or article preceding *bißchen* ‘bit’ can be uninflected or, if inflected, these elements are neuter:

- (31) a. *ein (klein/kleines) bißchen Wasser* (German)
 a small/small-INFL bit water
 ‘a (little) bit of water’
 b. *mit ein(em) bißchen Geduld*
 with a(-INFL) bit patience(FEM)
 ‘with a bit of patience’

This optionality in inflection is not typical of German. I take this as an indication that *ein bißchen* has a special status. While I have not come across any relevant evidence in Yiddish yet, note that *a bisl* is parallel in structure. I assume that this quantitative element has special properties in the latter language too. A simplified structure could be as follows where *bisl* might have the status of a semi-lexical or light noun:

- (32) ‘some (quantitative)’:

[_{DP} *a bisl* [_{NP} *gelt*]]

Finally, in the introduction, we made a distinction between two types of pre-determiner structures. Recall that an adjective directly added before the noun is not possible in the degree structure:

- (33) a. too cheap a (*big) car
 b. too big a (*cheap) car

While I cannot provide a full-fledged account for this type here, it seems clear that the ungrammaticality is induced by the presence of the second adjective.

As discussed in detail in Roehrs (2009), articles are base-generated below adjectives, in a phrase called ArtP. Let me tentatively suggest that a (singular) indefinite article can take a specifier containing an adjective and a degree word. The underlying structure of (34a) is as in (34b). Let us further assume that these type of degree elements are operators that have to move overtly to Spec,DP in English. Note now that *too* or *too big* cannot move out of Spec,ArtP as that would constitute a left-branch constraint violation. In order to move to Spec,DP, the degree word has to pied-pipe ArtP. This is illustrated in (34c):

- (34) a. too big a car
 b. [_{ArtP} [_{AP} *too big*] a [_{NP} *car*]]

- c. [DP [ArtP too big a car]_i D [... t_i]]

In order to derive the ungrammatical cases, I will suggest that the presence of a second adjective blocks movement to Spec,DP.

Specifically, the second adjective is merged in Spec,AgrP, which is above ArtP. The underlying order of (35a-b) is shown in (35c). Again, given the left-branch constraint in Germanic, *too* or *too big* cannot move by itself. Note now that if ArtP moves to Spec,DP, it must cross the adjective, (35d).

- (35) a. * too big a cheap car
 b. * too big a car cheap
 c. [AgrP cheap [ArtP [AP too big] a [NP car]]]
 d. [DP [ArtP too big a car]_i D [AgrP cheap [t_i]]]

Leaving many details open here, I suggest that this crossing movement leads to ungrammaticality.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I proposed that there are two types of pre-determiner constructions. This distinction is revealed when an adjective is inserted directly before the noun. The structure where an adjective is possible was labeled demonstrative structure and the one where not was called degree structure. Focusing on the former, this paper discussed Yiddish *epes* when it occurs in front of an indefinite article. Three more uses of *epes* were briefly discussed. To the extent I know, this empirical terrain has never been covered in formal linguistics before.

I proposed that the pre-determiner and the indefinite article involve a complex specifier making up an indefinite demonstrative structure. This element surfaces in Spec,DP. There are at least five advantages of the proposal: (i) there is no Doubly-filled DP, (ii) locating *epes* in a specifier position accounts for its modificational meaning, (iii) there is no agreement mismatch with regard to animacy and morphological gender, (iv) the indefinite demonstrative structure is parallel to definite demonstratives, and (v) the current structure straightforwardly accounts for the presence of regular adjectives.

More generally, proposing that there is just one lexical entry for *epes*, I derived its morpho-syntactic and semantic differences from the larger structures *epes* is contained in. I believe that this makes the current analysis theoretically attractive.

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