

## SOME FUNCTIONAL ASPECTS OF NOUN MODIFIERS IN LITHUANIAN AND ENGLISH

L. VALEIKA

### 1. Introduction

In describing noun constructions linguists generally do not confine themselves to a mere morphological analysis of the constituting parts. Due regard is given to the functional peculiarities of noun modifiers. Thus it is observed that noun modifiers function as determiners, i. e. individualizers of the head-noun. This is consistent with the nature of a substantive. Each word presents a dialectical unity of genus and individual. So, *radio* may function as a symbol for the whole class (generic function). E. g. *The radio was invented by Popov*. In another context the same word may function as an individual. E. g. *I want a radio*. When used so, the noun is conceived as something concrete and is referred to as determined as opposed to its generic function (i. e. non-determined function). Lithuanian and English belong to those languages which possess no synthetical means to differentiate the two functions of a substantive. The semantic differentiation is effected by the context or analytically. A determined noun is generally signalled by a mere presence of a modifier, e. g. *įdomi knyga* — *an interesting book*. Yet, there are cases when a modifier does not individualize the noun, e. g. *Laukinė katė yra pavojinga* — *The wild cat is dangerous*. The modifier *laukinė* — *wild*, though narrowing down the meaning of the head-noun, cannot be regarded as determiner in the sense stated above; it only refers to the species (*cat*) as a whole, no individual representatives are meant. Here a different sort of individualization takes place — *species* is isolated from *kind*. Such constructions are semantically integrated and present terms.

The paper is concerned with determined nouns and the ways of expressing the category of determination in nouns in Lithuanian and English. Determination realizes in two opposemes: one and the same noun may be

viewed as definite and as indefinite. Neither Lithuanian nor English possesses synthetical means that help distinguish the noun in regard to the correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness — one and the same word is employed for both indefinite quantity and definite quantity, e. g. *Duok man knygą* — *Give me a (the) book.*

## 2. General characteristic of parts of speech in relation to the category of determination

The definite and indefinite determination of nouns in English is generally expressed by functional words called articles — *a/an/the* and the so-called zero article. In this connection it is important to examine the meaning of the articles. The English articles are polysemantic. Their concrete meaning is conditioned by the linguistic environment in which the noun occurs. In spite of that, we can trace the meaning invariant to all. So, the definite article typically isolates an object out of the class of homogeneous objects or it may isolate a subclass out of a class (species versus kind)<sup>1</sup>. It is only in the former function that the article may be looked upon as a definite determiner, e. g. *I do not like the book.* It follows that *the* acts as a definite determiner when it retains its pronominal meaning (*this*). In the sentence *The horse is an animal*, *the* has lost its pronominal meaning — the sentence cannot be transformed into *\*This horse is an animal.* As regards the *a/an* article linguists generally ascribe the meaning of classification to it, e. g. *A boy came in. This is a boy.* We think that classification or non-isolation, as it is sometimes referred to, are variants of one and the same function, viz. individualization<sup>2</sup>. Consider the following sentences: 1. *The boy came in.* 2. *A boy came in.* 3. *He is a boy.* The meaning that the definite article imparts to the noun in sentences 1 and 2 is *one of a class*. The same meaning, though not without modification, may be traced in sentence 3. This will be better illustrated by the diagram where the big square stands for the whole class, the small square stands for individual boys making up the class.

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<sup>1</sup> See A. Steponavičius, *The Article in Modern English*, *Kalbotyra*. XX, 1968, p. 119—123.

<sup>2</sup> В. Г. Адмони, *Введение в синтаксис современного немецкого языка*, Москва, 1955, стр. 270.

### Class *Boy*

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	.	∞

When we say *the boy*, we isolate a particular boy out of the class (say *boy 8*). When we say *a boy*, we mean any boy (*boy 1, boy 3*, etc.). This is manifest when the noun functions as Subject, but may not be so explicit when the noun functions as Predicative, as in *He is a boy*. All the indefinite article means here is that the object is identified with another *single* object isolated from the class. Isolation assumes here a shade that may be called classification. In view of this, the indefinite article, in contradistinction to the definite article, in most cases signals that a new character or object or the known object, identified with a certain class, is being introduced into the discussion.

So far we have been dealing with countable nouns. The correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness is expressed by uncountable nouns as well. Definite quantity is expressed by the definite article and indefinite quantity is indicated by the mere absence of the article (This is also true of countables used in the plural). E. g. *This is water. I like water.*

As compared to English, Lithuanian has no such means to specify its nouns. The correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness is expressed, above all, by means of the context<sup>3</sup>. Consider the following passage:

*Kartą valstietis rudenį pasėjo rugį, miežį ir avižą. Miežis su aviža sparčiau augo ir greit peraugo rugį. Dėl to rugys labai supyko ir nusprendė jiems atkeršyti. Vieną dieną miežis su aviža pamatė, kad ateina debesīs su ledais ir perkūnija: išsigando ir ėmė bėgti.*

<sup>3</sup> This also holds good for English nouns — the article alone (the definite article in particular) is not in a position to show it.

Compare it with the English translation —

Once in autumn a *peasant* sowed a *rye*, a *barley* and an *oat*. The *barley* and the *oat* grew faster and soon outgrew the *rye*. This made the *rye* envious and he decided to take revenge. One day the *rye* and the *oat* saw a *hailstorm* approaching; they got frightened and ran away. In the quoted passage all the nouns are determined: *valstielis* is used in its indefinite meaning. This might have been emphasized by the pronouns *vienas, kažkoks*. The same is true of *rugys, miežis*, and *aviža*, but in the next sentence the same nouns are repeated — hence, they are definite. As can be seen, the definite and indefinite determination of nouns in Lithuanian is a matter of the context. In other words, differentiation between definite and indefinite determination is effected by the so-called functional sentence perspective (FSP). A rhematic subject in Lithuanian assumes end position and a thematic subject assumes front position, e. g. *Į kambarį įėjo berniukas*. English differs from Lithuanian in being little susceptible to the requirements of FSP. Compare the English translation of the above sentence: *A boy came into the room*.

In the case of the context being insufficiently expressive Lithuanian, as well as English, resorts to determiners. In this regard pronouns, owing to their semantics, stand out as a class of words whose function is largely restricted to specifying the noun in relation to the category of definiteness and indefiniteness. E. g. *Sis/mano/brolis* — *This/my/brother* (definite determiners); *Kažkoks berniukas* — *a/some/boy* (indefinite determiners). The pronoun both in English and Lithuanian makes up the largest class of determiners.

Nouns, when used as modifiers, may also form the correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness. Common nouns are generally indefinite determiners, e. g. *berniuko kepurė* — *a/the/boy's cap*. It should be observed that both Lithuanian and English genitive nouns may be used descriptively. As a result, the genitive noun itself turns into a non-determined noun, which means that it practically acquires the semantic features of a relative adjective. Since the adjunct is undetermined, the head automatically loses the status of determination as well. To act as individualizer the construction must be used in an appropriate context or determiners must be used with it, e. g. *Vaikų kambarys* — *A children's room*. To prove it we will use the constructions in the following context: *Vaikų kambarys buvo prabanga tais laikais* — *A children's room was something only few people could boast of in those days* [undetermined/]; *Čia yra vaikų kambarys* — *This is a*

*children's room* (undetermined) *This children's room* — *Sis vaiky kambarys* (determined).

As regards proper nouns they generally function as definite determiners. In English, for instance, it is only rarely that the article is used with them. A proper noun, owing to its nature (does not name but individualizes<sup>4</sup>), is a definite determiner of its own.

The adjective in Lithuanian shows different potentialities as compared to the adjective in English. In Lithuanian the adjective may be both definite and indefinite, i. e. it may be a definite modifier and an indefinite modifier<sup>5</sup>. So, when nouns are viewed as definite, as an attribute they will take a pronominal adjective, e. g. *raudonasis stalas* 'the red table'. This usage does not cover all adjectives in Lithuanian — relative adjectives have no pronominal forms. It will be noted that pronominal adjectives are not always definite. The point is that, due to its meaning, the pronominal adjective may also impart a generic meaning to the noun. Thus *juodas gandra*s merely means 'a black stork', i. e. a stork which happens to be black, whereas *juodasis gandra*s is the variety of black stork (*Ciconia nigra*). In such cases the pronominal adjective is treated as any adjective, the difference lying in the fact that the pronominal adjective merely emphasizes more the attributive characteristics of the noun.

It is interesting to note that nouns modified by pronominal adjectives with a generic meaning tend to turn into compounds, e. g. *juodoji žolė*→*juodžolė*; *juodoji žievė*→*juodžievė*. In such cases the meaning of pronominal adjectives is similar to that of an ordinary adjective. The individualizing function is performed by the context or by other determiners. E. g. *Juodasis gandra*s — *retas paukštis Lietuvoje* (undetermined). *Žiūrėk, juodasis gandra*s! (determined). Pronominal adjectives are sometimes replaced by collocations of simple adjectives preceded by demonstratives, e. g. *gerasis kiškutis*→*tas geras kiškutis*.

As for ordinary (i. e. non-pronominal) adjectives they usually function as indefinite determiners. It should be observed, however, the adjective in its positive degree does not automatically assign the noun to determined nouns. As already seen, the adjective may not only restrict the meaning of the noun, but also transfer one class to a subclass, e. g. *mėlyni baltiniai* — a blue shirt. The adjective *mėlyni* — blue narrows down the meaning

<sup>4</sup> K. A. Левковская, Теория слова, Москва, 1962, стр. 178.

<sup>5</sup> More about it in A. Valeckienė, Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos įvardžiuotinių būdvardžių vartojimas, Literatūra ir kalba, II, Vilnius. 1957, p. 161—308.

of the noun *baltiniai* — *shirt*; the construction turns into a determined one: the adjective has helped us to isolate a group of shirts—shirts whose colour is white. Narrowing down the meaning of the noun the modifier *blue* reveals and concretizes the substantive meaning of the noun<sup>6</sup>. As for comparative degree adjectives, they are always indefinite determiners. e. g. *geresnė knyga* — *a better book*, which generally implies an individual book. Superlative degree adjectives, due to the fact that they present the noun as having the most of the material content, may serve as definite determiners, e. g. *geriausia knyga* — *the best book*. The object (*knyga* — *book*) is distinguished from all other homogenous objects by the largest amount of material content. It will be noted that in Lithuanian and less characteristically in English the superlative degree adjective may be descriptive, i. e. an indefinite determiner. E. g. *Kambaryje kilo didžiausias triukšmas*; *Ir smarkiausia žiema bijo pavasario*<sup>7</sup>. In the quoted examples the superlative degree only shows the quality of high intensity-no comparison takes place. Hence, the constructions may be transformed into *labai* 'very' + positive degree adjective + noun → *labai didelės triukšmas*; *labai sunki žiema*. Sometimes such adjectives may be substituted for pronominal adjectives, e. g. *per kalnus aukščiausiai* → *per kalnus aukštuosius*<sup>8</sup>. As for English, we can find only separate examples. E. g. *He's the most experienced doctor I knew*. *He's a most experienced doctor*. In the first sentence we have the superlative degree of *experienced* which accounts for the use of the definite article; in the second sentence *most* is not superlative, as there is no comparison. It is an adverb of degree, so that the whole combination is an indefinite determiner. Consider some more examples: *a best suit*, *a best seller*. Linguistically, the process is generally referred to as lexicalization, which means that 'a form that originally expressed grammatical meaning... becomes a basis for a new grammatically conditioned lexical meaning. In this new meaning it is isolated from the paradigm, so that a new word comes into being'<sup>9</sup>.

If adjectives show certain vacillation as regards the determination of nouns, so numerals, owing to their semantic peculiarities unequivocally refer their nouns to the class of determiners. This is especially true of cardinal numerals, e. g. *dvi knygos* — *two books*. As can be seen, cardinal

<sup>6</sup> See B. Г. Адмони, op. cit., p. 252.

<sup>7</sup> The examples are drawn from *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika I*, Vilnius, 1965, p. 523.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 523.

<sup>9</sup> I. V. Arnold, *The English Word*, Moscow, 1966, p. 23.

numerals function as indefinite determiners. Ordinals generally mark the noun as definite, e. g. *antra knyga* — *the second book*. The correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness, however, is of a different nature: while cardinals denote some numerical quantity, ordinals denote numerical order. It will be noted that ordinal numerals in their simple form (this concerns Lithuanian, as English has no pronominal forms) often undergo lexicalization. So, for instance, *Rašau antrą skyrių* may mean either 'I'm writing the second chapter' or 'I'm writing a second chapter'. To resolve the ambiguity the speaker resorts to pronominal ordinals, e. g. *Rašau antrąjį skyrių* 'I'm writing the second chapter'. The lexicalization of ordinal numerals may be observed in English as well, e. g. *the second book* → *a second book*. As already seen, to discriminate the two meanings English uses appropriate articles. In view of this, cardinal numerals both in Lithuanian and in English cannot be regarded as presenting marked definite determiners, their actual function being dependent on the context. A morphologically marked determiner is represented by the pronominal ordinal in Lithuanian, only. This is true of most pronominal ordinals. There are cases, however, when pronominal ordinals change their function: they may come to be used in a new grammatical function with no change of form. In other words, they pass into indefinite determiners. So, *pirmoji pamoka* may imply that there is something in the lesson itself which makes it the first one, i. e. that there is some inherent firstness in the lesson. The whole construction presents a lexicalized unit.

Our examination of the semantic peculiarities of pronominal adjectives and ordinal numerals leads us to the conclusion that the class relevant to morphology is made up of only the so-called definitive adjectives and numerals, while emphatic adjectives and numerals may be regarded as lexicalized variants of the former. To end our observations on pronominal adjectives we would like to discuss one more point. Pronominal adjectives and numerals (i. e. their definitive forms) tend to disappear. While we do not deny the fact, we would like to stress another point. When we say that *naujoji suknelė* means the same as *nauja suknelė*, we merely emphasize the role of the context; without an appropriate context, ordinary adjectives could not function as definite determiners, which means that to function as definite determiner the adjective or the numeral must either take on the pronominal element or be preceded by other determiners.

As for participles, they usually function as indefinite determiners. As compared to adjectives, the specification they give the noun is more concrete. Cf. *įdomi knyga*—*skaitoma knyga*. Owing to its semantics, the par-

ticiples (active voice participles in particular) narrows down the meaning of the noun to such a degree that the noun may be practically regarded as definite, i. e. the participle itself marks the noun as definite. E. g. *dainuojantis berniukas* 'a singing boy' does not mean any boy, but a particular boy, i. e. the boy who is singing. Unlike English, participles in Lithuanian may form the correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness, e. g. *rašantis mokinys* 'a writing boy' — *rašantysis mokinys* 'the writing schoolboy'

Our analysis of the semantic properties of the determiners shows that not all the determiner classes are equal: some determiners enrich the content of their noun directly<sup>10</sup>. These are numerals, nouns, participles, and indefinite pronouns. The other determiners bring out the material meaning of the noun indirectly<sup>11</sup>: demonstrative pronouns, articles, and possessive pronouns.

### 3. The valency of determiners

It is generally assumed that determiners make up a class of words which are characterized by mutual exclusiveness. This means that a noun phrase can admit only one determiner, e. g. *my table*, but\* *the my table*. This is a matter of usage. Functionally, two determiners can coexist. In Lithuanian, for instance, *šis mano brolis* is a grammatical phrase. Even in English the combination of demonstrative+possessive is often met with. English usage demands that demonstratives and possessives be separated, e. g. *this brother of mine*. The usage can be accounted for by the fact that the class of definite and indefinite determiners is not homogenous from the semantic point of view. So, proper names as compared to demonstrative pronouns and possessives are less specific. As a result, constructions modified by less specific determiners may be further modified as in *this brother of mine* or *our John's car*.

Constructions like *šis mano brolis* — *this brother of mine* deserve special mention. The type of construction can be used in two functions: it may mean one of my brothers (partitive meaning) and may sometimes acquire emotional force denoting praise, pleasure, displeasure and thus become descriptive, e. g. *that cottage of my friend's*. It is interesting to note that

<sup>10</sup> Cf. В. Г. Адмони, *op. cit.*, p. 250—253.

<sup>11</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 250—253.

in Old English there was no such construction, as the Old English possessive could not incorporate the definite article<sup>12</sup>.

Determiners as exhibited by possessive pronouns and proper names display similar valency properties — they combine with the article *the* and the demonstratives *šis* — *šie*; *tas* — *tie*; *this* — *these*; *that* — *those*. The article and the demonstratives occupy a peculiar position in the system of determiners: they cannot be preceded by other determiners of the same semantic subclass. We shall call them absolute definite determiners. The other definite determiners (possessives, proper nouns, definitive adjectives and numerals in Lithuanian) may be termed non-absolute definite determiners.

Indefinite determiners are not homogeneous either. As already seen, this group consists of morphologically different classes: indefinite pronouns, common nouns, adjectives, numerals, participles, and gerunds. Indefinite pronouns stand out as a special group of determiners. The notable fact about them is that no other indefinite determiner can precede them. As regards valency, indefinite determiners subdivide into two groups: absolute indefinite determiners (e. g. *abu*, *bet koks*, *daug*, *joks*, *kažkoks*, *kiekvienas*, *pusė*, *vienas*, *visi* — *all*, *any*, *both*, *each*, *every*, *half*, *many*, *much*, *no*, *one*. *some*) and non-absolute indefinite determiners (common nouns, adjectives, numerals, participles, and gerunds). Special mention should be made of the determiners *abu*, *daug*, *pusė*, *visi* — *all*, *half*, *both*, *many*. In English and Lithuanian the quoted determiners are not normally preceded by other determiners. In a noun phrase they function as phrase-closing elements, e. g. *visi šie daiktai* — *all these things*. It is interesting to note that in English *all* and *both* may occur not followed by definite determiners, as in *all five men*, *both books*. In the light of the peculiarities *all* and *both* may be looked upon as being endowed with two functions: they may act both as definite determiners and indefinite determiners.

Our analysis of determiners in Lithuanian and English does not claim to be complete. We have only pointed out the most fundamental problems concerning some functional aspects of modifiers in preposition. The determination of nouns may be made by modifiers in postposition as well as by other linguistic devices.

To sum it up we present a table showing the realization of the correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness by different parts of speech in Lithuanian and English.

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<sup>12</sup> See Jiri Nosek, Some Remarks on the Development of English Possessive Pronouns, *Casopis pro moderni filologii*, Praha, 1955, VII/1, p. 190.

THE REALIZATION OF THE CORRELATION OF DEFINITENESS AND INDEFINITE

Parts of speech	Subclasses relevant to the correlation of definiteness and indefiniteness		Functions of the determiners	
			Definite	Indefinite
Pronoun	L	Demonstrative, possessive Indefinite	+	+
	E	Demonstrative, possessive Indefinite	+	+
Numeral	L	Cardinal Ordinal: Simple Pronominal	+	+
	E	Cardinal Ordinal	+	+
Adjective	L	Simple Pronominal Positive, comparative Superlative	+	+
	E	Positive, comparative Superlative	+	+
Noun	L	Common Proper	+	+
	E	Common Proper	+	+
Participle	L	Simple Pronominal	+	+
	E	Simple		+

Note: +· means that the unit may pass into another class (i. e. lexicalize) and, consequently, +·· Depending on the lexical meaning of the participle and the head-noun, the

Inventory of determiners	
Definite	Indefinite
šis-šie, tas-tie, mano, tavo, jo, jos, mūsų, jūsų, jų, mūsųkis, jūsųkis, pats, kieno, etc.	vienas, kiekvienas, kai kuris, kažkoks, kažin koks, kažkuris, kažin kuris, kitas, šioks toks, visas, visoks, tūlas, niekieno, joks, abu, daug, pusė, ect.
this-these, that-those, same, such, my, your, his, her, its, our, their	all, any, each, every, both, half, no, one
antras mokinys ” antrasis mokinys	du mokiniai antras mokinys—kitas mokinys
the second boy	two boys a second boy
mėlynoji eilutė geriausias apsiaustas	mėlyna eilutė juodasis gandrai geras (geresnis) apsiaustas
the best man	a good (better) coat a best man
Petro dviratis	berniuko pieštukas
Peter's bicycle	a boy's pencil
rašantysis vaikas	rašantis vaikas
	a singing bird

ly, be transferred into the class of indefinite determiners.  
noun may be regarded as definite (see p. 88).

# KAI KURIE LIETUVIŲ IR ANGLŲ KALBŲ DAIKTAVARDINES KONSTRUKCIJOS PRIJUNGIAMŲJŲ KOMPONENTŲ FUNKCINIAI BRUOŽAI

L. VALEIKA

## Re z i u m ė

Lietuvių ir anglų kalbose daiktavardis praktiškai gali prisijungti visas kalbos dalis — būdvardį, daiktavardį, įvardį, skaitvardį, dalyvį irrieveiksmį. Visi pažyminiai vienokiu ar kitokiu laipsniu ar būdu konkretizuoja (determinuoja) daiktavardį. Visi pažyminiai skirstomi į dvi grupes: pažyminiai, tiesiogiai determinuojantys daiktavardį (daiktavardžiai, būdvardžiai, skaitvardžiai, dalyviai, nežymimieji įvardžiai) ir pažyminiai, netiesiogiai determinuojantys daiktavardį (artikeliai, parodomieji ir savybiniai įvardžiai). Pagal žymimumo ir nežymimumo koreliaciją visi determinatyvai skirstomi į žymimuosius ir nežymimuosius. Pagal valentingumą žymimieji ir nežymimieji determinatyvai dalijami į dvi grupes: absoliutūs ir neabsoliutūs. Absoliučiais determinatyvais laikomi tokie determinatyvai, kurie eliminuoja kitus determinatyvus, priklausančius tai pačiai funkcionalinei klasei. Pvz.: *šis — šis stalas* +→\**mano šis stalas; this — this table* +→\**my this table*.