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# The Latin nominal group in typological perspective

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## 0. Summary

The following six general operational dimensions concur in forming a nominal group:

1. nomination, the naming of an entity;
2. apprehension, the grasp of the entity as either undifferentiated or individuated;
3. determination, its identification with respect to the speech situation;
4. specification, the attribution of properties so that the concept is enriched and/or the object identified;
5. possession, the identification of an object by its relation to another one;
6. quantification, the degree to which a set of objects participates in an event.

Latin is compared with other languages in the ways that it instantiates these dimensions. It is found that nominal strategies are employed to a high degree in all of them. The nominal group thus formed is relatively loosely integrated, as dependent members enjoy more than usual autonomy. The noun plays a prominent role in the language system.

## 1. Concepts used

### 1.1. Preliminaries

The title of this requires an explanation. The reader, at once struck by the novel term ‘nominal group’, will ask himself why the term ‘noun phrase’ is not used. **Group** here designates a configuration of syntactic units having relations to each other that functions as a whole in its context.<sup>1</sup> A **phrase** is a group whose members are sequentially contiguous.<sup>2</sup> The term ‘phrase’ is therefore too narrow for a configuration of syntactic units that, although having relations to each other and functioning as a whole in their context, are not contiguous. In the light of §9, item 2, it will be seen that this is more than a terminological distinction.

By the same token, the concept **constituent** presupposes the concept ‘phrase’ in that x can be a constituent (of y) only if x is a phrase. The concept of **discontinuous constituent**, adopted by a number of authors, presupposes a paradigmatic relationship (occasionally expressed by transformations) of the discontinuous group to a continuous one that is in some sense more basic. It thus involves a commitment both to a certain model of grammatical analysis and to certain empirical assumptions concerning the language in question which there is no need to accept a priori. So much for the title of this paper.

Taking a typological approach to my subject, I have to face the problem of using analytic concepts at a comparative level, i.e. to subsume phenomena of different languages under a common concept. Such concepts cannot be purely formal, i.e. structural; they must have a functional basis. The concept ‘nominal group’ appears to be a purely structural one. In fact, however, it is based both on linguistic function and on structure. In order to be able to see this, we first have to lay some theoretical groundwork.

Linguistic meanings result from the interplay between the real world as we react to it in perception and cognition and those mental operations which we are capable of executing as human beings. In the area of linguistic structure at hand, viz. the nominal group, the **real world phenomena** are so-called first order entities, i.e. concrete physical objects such as girls, lizards, apples and roses (cf. Lyons 1977, ch.11.3). The **mental operation** most relevant in this area is reference. Let us elaborate on these two aspects in turn.

## 1.2. Categories

The notion of nominal group presupposes the notion of noun. The **noun s.s.** (i.e. the substantive) will be defined as follows:<sup>3</sup> Let there be a class of unmistakable first order entities as characterized above. Take those words of a particular language which designate such concepts. Let us assume that the majority of them belong to one lexico-grammatical class, namely one part of speech. This is the category of nouns s.s. in the language, and the words on which it is based are the prototypical nouns s.s. All the words of the language that have the same structural properties as the prototypical nouns s.s. constitute the class of nouns s.s.

A **nominal group** (NG) is the maximal syntagm which contracts the same (external) syntactic relations as a noun s.s. The typical case is a referring expression. Its distribution is essentially the same as that of a proper name. A **nominal** is a syntagm whose semantic head (determinatum) is a noun s.s.

In Latin as in many other languages, there are good structural arguments for subsuming nouns s.s., adjectives, numerals and pronouns under a common designator. This is the **noun s.l.**

## 1.3. Operations

So much for the categorial notions and their ontological basis. However, the real world does not fully determine linguistic categories, otherwise all languages would have the same categories. Let us therefore come to the mental operations.

Two operations constitute a propositional act, a reference and a predication. All the other operations that may be involved in the formation of a linguistic expression are related in complex ways to these two basic operations. **Reference** is the localization of an entity in the universe of discourse. The prototypical linguistic device employed in reference is a personal pronoun, used deictically or anaphorically. **Predication** is the attribution of a concept to a referent. The prototypical linguistic device employed in predication is an intransitive finite verb form.

Reference may be complicated by the inclusion of information about the referent. In a sense, such additional information involves predication on the referent. More than once in the history of linguistics (e.g. in Bach 1968) a NG such as *the teacher* has been analyzed as ‘the one who is a teacher’, i.e. as involving the predication of ‘teacher’ over the referent. In order to avoid confusion I will not use the term predication in this sense but use **characterization** instead. The opposite of characterization will be **indication**: the identification of what is meant without characterizing it, by merely hinting at it. Cf. Seiler 1986, ch. 3 for the concepts of ‘indicativity’ and ‘predicativity’.

Thus, if in our reference to something we do not confine ourselves to mere indication but characterize the referent at the same time, we will designate it by a more or less complex

nominal expression. Such elaborated reference to an entity will here be called **designation**, and the entity designated will be called **designatum**. At least the following functional parameters are involved in designation:<sup>4</sup>

1. **Nomination:** The designating expression is conceived as consisting of a semantic head and the rest. The head will be some sort of noun s.s. or nominal which is used as the name of this (type of) entity. Such designations are ordered on a continuum that varies between an indicating and a characterizing pole. At the indicating pole we have a mere label; at the characterizing pole we have a descriptive term. A descriptive term is a word which is morphologically complex and transparent, such as *agricola* ("field-cultivator") 'farmer'. A label is a word that is morphologically simple and not transparent, such as *tiro* 'recruit'.
2. **Apprehension:** The designatum is conceived either as an undifferentiated concept or as an individual or set of individuals which instantiate such a concept. Its designation is therefore accomplished by devices that both individuate the object and represent it as belonging to a certain kind. A typical example would be the measure phrase *granum salis* 'grain of salt', in which the mass noun designates an undifferentiated kind and the mensurative *granum* is an operator which helps designate an individual instance of this mass.
3. **Determination:** The designatum may or may not be identified as a particular one in the actual universe of discourse. If it is, we get a referring expression. The linguistic devices employed for this purpose localize the designatum either in the speech situation or in discourse. Typical examples of the former alternative are deictic expressions such as *hic* 'this'; typical examples of the latter alternative are the definite and indefinite articles.
4. **Specification:** This is essentially attribution of some kind. The concept under which the designatum is subsumed in nomination and apprehension may be narrowed down, made more specific. The devices employed in this area vary between two poles, object identification and concept formation. In **object identification**, the concept is made so specific that a particular object is selected by it. An example is the relative construction *chlamydatum quem uides* 'man in a coat whom you see'. In concept formation the basic concept is enriched by further properties, as in *egregia familia* 'outstanding family'.
5. **Possession:** The designatum may be pinned down as being related to another entity which serves as a point of reference. In the prototypical case, it is possessed by that other entity. The relation may be conceived as either inherent to the possessed entity, as in *amicus Pauli* 'Paul's friend', or as being established between the two, as in *arbores huius horti* 'the trees of this garden'.
6. **Quantification:** The designatum may be conceived as participating in the event to a certain extent or in a certain order of multitude. The devices expressing this may be more referent-centered or more predicate-centered. An example of the former type is *multi et magni dolores* 'many great pains'. An example of the latter is *dolores praeualent* 'the pains are too strong'.

The six concepts under which the phenomena of reference have been subsumed here are not strictly unitary operations but rather kinds of operations. Within each of them, there is large room for variation. Moreover, all of them may interact in the designation of a particular entity in semantically and structurally complex ways and may partially do each other's work.

In what follows I will first comment briefly on the role of the noun-verb distinction in Latin and then review all of the six operational dimensions in turn, illustrating the gamut of

cross-linguistically available devices from some contrasting languages, and thus show the place of Latin in each of the areas involved.

## 2. Noun-verb distinction

### 2.1. Cross-linguistic background

Before we go into the details of reference, we investigate briefly the prototypical grammatical instantiation of the two major operations of reference and predication. This instantiation is the distinction between noun and verb as grammatical categories. Cf. Walter 1981 and Broschart 1987 for a detailed cross-linguistic analysis.

The first thing that might seem to be needed if entities are to be designated is a class of nouns s.s. Here however we have to distinguish (with Coseriu 1955[S]) between the noun as a word-class and the noun as a part of speech. A **word-class** is a lexico-grammatical class, i.e. a grammatical class which a word belongs to qua lexical entry. A **part of speech** is a semanto-syntactic category in which a word is used. Every language distinguishes at least noun s.s. and verb as parts of speech. A couple of languages have been adduced not as lacking this distinction, but as failing to distinguish noun and verb as word-classes. Such languages have been found in the Wakashan family.

- E1. a. Amu:k-ma        qu:ʔas-ʔi.  
 NOOTKA    working-PRS.IND    man-DEF  
 ‘The man is working.’  
 b. Qu:ʔas-ma        mamu:k-ʔi.  
           man-PRS.IND    working-DEF  
 ‘The working one is a man.’ (Schachter 1985:11)

In a Nootka sentence the predicate comes first. E1.a shows a word designating a process in the function of predicate and a word designating a first order entity as subject. In E1.b the roles are inverted; the first order entity is in predicate position, the process in subject position. The remarkable thing here is that there are no derivational changes in the two words signaling this change in categorial function. However the definite article *-ʔi* plays an important role here. In E1.a, it may be missing, and the sentence then means ‘a man is working’. If it is omitted in E1.b, the result is not a sentence. This shows that there are at least two parts of speech in Nootka which can constitute the predicate of a sentence without further adjustments. But only one of them can constitute a referring expression without further adjustments, while the other needs determination by a definite article for this purpose. There is, thus, a very slight basis for the distinction between noun and verb as word classes.

On the other hand, *qu:ʔas* ‘man’ might appear to function as a verb in E1.b. This, however, is not the case. The element *-ma* is not an inflectional ending but an enclitic auxiliary that always occupies Wackernagel’s position. It therefore implies nothing about the category of the word to which it attaches (cf. Anderson 1985:155-157).

Another language in which the grammatical distinction between the parts of speech noun and verb is rather weak is Tagalog (cf. Schachter 1985:12). E2 shows the translation of E1.

- E2. a. Nagtatrabaho        ang lalaki.  
 TAGALOG    INTNS:IMPERF:work    [TOP man]  
 ‘The man is working.’

- b. Lalaki ang nagtatrabaho.  
 man [TOP INTNS:IMPERF:work]  
 ‘The one who is working is a man.’

As in Nootka, the predicate comes first. At first sight, the whole situation seems to be just as in Nootka. Here, however, verbs are distinct from nouns not by their inability to refer without adaptations - every NG has to be equipped by a proclitic marker - but rather by their ability to inflect for tense/aspect. That is, while *trabaho* ‘work’ may show the imperfective prefix as in E2 or other affixes of the same paradigm, nothing of the sort can appear on *lalaki* ‘man’.

## 2.2. The noun-verb distinction in Latin

We can conclude that while noun s.s. and verb are universal parts of speech, it is not necessary that every language grammaticalize it in terms of word classes, and there are indeed some languages which show just faint beginnings of such a grammaticalization. When we compare the Latin translation of the above examples, we can see that there is a great difference between a language such as Nootka and Tagalog on the one hand and a language such as Latin on the other.

- E3. a. Homo laborat.  
 LATIN ‘The/a man is working.’
- b. Laborans/Qui laborat homo est.  
 ‘The working one is a man.’

E3.b is radically different from both E1.b and E2.b, because the syntactic categories and functions in which a Latin word may appear are strictly predetermined by its word-class. If we want to use a verb as a referring expression, we have to nominalize it. This can be achieved by morphological techniques such as the selection of a non-finite verb form (e.g. *laborans*) or by syntactic techniques such as the formation of a noun clause (e.g. the (substantivized) relative clause *qui laborat*). Similarly, if we want to use a noun as a predicate, we normally verbalize it by means of the copula. However, as regards the use of nouns s.l. as predicates, Latin is a bit like Nootka and many other languages in that explicit verbalization is not always necessary; a nominal sentence such as E3.c is possible in certain styles.

- E3. c. Qui laborat homo.  
 LATIN ‘The one who is working is a man.’

We can conclude here that Latin has a deep-seated word-class distinction between noun s.l. and verb. However there is a slight imbalance in that a finite verb cannot but serve as the predicate of a clause, while a noun s.l. can either refer or, at least under certain conditions, predicate (cf. Carvalho 1986[N], first part). This may be interpreted typologically as a marked weighting of the noun s.l. in the linguistic system (cf. Carvalho 1986[S]).

## 3. Nomination

### 3.1. Labels

Every language has **labels**, words which have no morphological structure and which therefore just apply to a concept without giving any information about it. The extreme form is a monosyllabic word which does not even show its word-class, so that literally nothing can be inferred from the form about the concept designated. The so-called isolating languages are rich in such words. Most of the Germanic roots of English are of this form; cf. E4.

E4. house stone tree girl aunt  
ENGLISH domus lapis arbor puella amita

If we compare them to their Latin counterparts, we see that these in general have at least one more syllable constituted by the inflectional ending, and some include an additional derivational suffix. These Latin words are not pure labels insofar as they at least show their word-class and thus give categorial information about the concept that they designate. There are very few monosyllabic nouns in Latin, such as those in E5.

E5. uir res ius dux  
LATIN 'man thing right guide'

Even these, of course, become disyllabic in declension; some of them are morphologically complex even in the monosyllabic nominative.

### 3.2. Descriptive terms

**Descriptive nouns** can be formed in many languages by composition. Chinese and English are well known for the ease with which they compound words of arbitrary complexity, as in E6.

E6. a. dà-xué - wǔ-fàn - yánjiu-shēng dǎo-shi  
CHINESE big-school noon-food research-student instruct-teacher  
'high school - lunch - research student tutor'

As is well known, Latin has almost nothing of the sort. The only moderately productive pattern of composition forms nouns on a verbal basis such as *signifer* 'colour-bearer', *agricola* 'farmer'. Only a few verb roots, such as *fer-* 'bear', *col-* 'cultivate', *fac-* 'make', can provide the base.

There is almost no productive composition of nouns on a nominal basis; thus, there are no equivalents to the words in E6. 'High-school' would be translated into Latin either by *schola* 'school' or by something like *schola superior* 'higher school'. 'Lunch' is *prandium*. The 'research student tutor' would have to be rendered by a circumlocution like *litterarum studiosorum adiutor*, which does not even come close to the significatum of the Chinese and English words.

It is not only by not being compounds that these Latin versions differ formally from the Chinese and English words. They are also derivationally complex, such as *prandium*, *adiutor*. And they may be syntagms, such as *litterarum studiosorum adiutor*. The derived words are morphologically complex and as such are not mere labels. However the information that they provide is less descriptive, viz. more grammatical. For instance, *adiutor* is an agent noun to *adiuuare* 'to help'; so, if we know the verb base and the derivational rules, we can infer that *adiutor* designates someone who - probably professionally - helps. Chinese *dǎo-shi* on the other hand gives more concrete lexical information, namely that the designatum is a teacher who has something to do with instruction.

The syntagms such as *schola superior* or *litterarum studiosorum adiutor*, provide of course more information than the compounds. But they are not words and therefore not apt to designate concepts belonging to the lexical store of a language.

At this moment we are not yet in a position to propose a functional analysis of these findings. However, in anticipation of what we will see later, we may say that they are compatible with the hypothesis that Latin is antipathetic to the lexical integration of a concept into a more complex concept.

#### 4. Apprehension

The basic problem in apprehension is: how do we indicate whether our designatum is the concept as an undifferentiated whole or one or more individuals subsumed under the concept? Take the concept of ‘window’. In E7.a we are talking about windows in general, in b we are referring to an individual window.

- E7. a. A window is some sort of opening in a wall.  
 ENGLISH b. My dog-kennel has a window.

In English, this distinction is often not expressed at all, as here. Many languages individuate their nominal concepts by some sort of classification.

- E8. a. te-im eļ sensi  
 PALAUAN CL.HUM-five CONN teacher  
 ‘five teachers’  
 b. kle-im eļ kluk  
 CL.NONHUM-five CONN dollar  
 ‘five dollars’

- E9. a. môt cuôn sách  
 VIETNAM one CL.flat.obj book  
 ‘a book’  
 b. tôi muốn mua sách  
 I want buy book  
 ‘I should like to buy (a) book(s).’

Both E8 and E9 show **numeral classifiers**, i.e. morphemes that preferably accompany numerals and name a class that comprises the concept to be individuated. E8 illustrates nouns belonging to different classes. E9 shows that the classifier is used when exemplars of the concept have to be individuated, as in a, but not when individuation is not at stake, as in b. Languages with numeral classifiers generally do not have the category of gender, and number is at most optional.

A semantic and a syntactic fact have to be noted here. The semantic observation is that individuation is afforded by classification. This sounds paradoxical, but we will see familiar analogues in a moment. The syntactic observation is that the numeral cannot stand alone in these languages. This is illustrated in E10.

- E10. a. Hay ts’iit kib a k’áat?  
 YUCATEC how.many CL.long.obj candle POSS.2.SG wish

‘How many candles do you want?’

- b. Kan ts’ít (kib in k’áat).  
 four CL.long.obj candle POSS.1.SG wish  
 ‘Four (candles I want).’

Although the answer in E10.b anaphorically resumes the concept of candles just mentioned, the numeral has to be accompanied by its classifier. This is because it is a modifier that cannot simply be used as a noun s.s. (cf. Lehmann 1982:255). Note again that there is no number in E10.

The closest Latin counterpart to this is nominal **gender**. A Latin translation of E9 would have *liber*, with masculine gender, and a translation of E10 would have *candela*, with feminine gender. Now note the counterparts to the semantic and syntactic observations made for numeral classifier systems. In Latin every noun s.s. belongs to a class by virtue of its gender; and it necessarily has either of two numbers. By the logic of the classifier languages the noun would thus be individuated. This is confirmed by the syntax of numeral constructions: the numeral can be combined directly with the counted noun, as in *unus liber* ‘one book’, *quattuor candelae* ‘four candles’. It is as though the noun s.s. of a classifier language designated an undifferentiated concept, whereas the Latin noun s.s. designated an arbitrary individual falling under the concept.

Again, a Latin translation of E10.b might perfectly well consist of *quattuor* ‘four’. A numeral is enough of a noun s.l. to constitute a NG by itself. Some of the numerals, in particular the basic ones *unus*, *duo*, *tres* ‘one, two, three’, have gender and number.

Classifiers are used in some languages not only for counting but also in determination, which means that determiners combine with them just as numerals do.

E11. rôm (khan) ní  
 THAI umbrella CL.artifact this  
 ‘this umbrella’

E12. nèi-zhī mǎo  
 CHIN that-CL.animal cat  
 ‘that cat’

In E11 the classifier is optional; in E12 it is obligatory. The same semantic and syntactic observations apply as for the use with numerals.

We may conclude at this point that Latin nouns s.s. designate relatively individuated entities rather than undifferentiated concepts.

## 5. Determination

By determination, a designatum is related to the actual universe of discourse. There are basically two ways of doing this: either by indicating its information status in the discourse or by localizing it deictically. Very often the two strategies are combined.

### 5.1. Information status

Let us first see some examples of determination referring to **information status**.

E13. I bought the/(some) books.

## E14. ketāb(-hā)(-i)

PERSIAN book-PL-IND.SPEC

‘(some) book(s)’

The opposition illustrated by E13, well-known from English and other languages, distinguishes between a definite and an indefinite determination. The former signals that the set of individuals constituting the designatum is in the universe of discourse and is exhausted. The latter signals that the set of individuals involved is either not (yet) in the universe of discourse or, although being in it, is not exhausted.

E14 illustrates the specificity opposition in Persian. The suffix *-i* expresses indefiniteness paired with specificity. Thus, if arbitrary books are being spoken of, it will be missing in E14, but if reference is being made to books which are thereby introduced into the universe of discourse, the suffix is appended, as in *ketāb-hā-i xarid-am* ‘I bought some books’.

These oppositions may be grammaticalized to varying degrees. The definite article is used in many languages for the substantivization of clauses, verbals and adjectives, and the Persian specificity suffix is, under certain conditions, compatible with definiteness of the NG (cf. Lehmann 1984, Kap. V.2.3).

## 5.2. Deixis

The other dimension along which determination may extend is **deixis**. All languages have a set of demonstratives which localize referents in the universe of discourse, which may be either in the concrete speech situation or in the discourse and the world evoked by it. While systems involving different shades of the notion of distance from the speaker may be found (cf. E17 below and see Anderson & Keenan 1985), systems which assign the referent to the space occupied by the discourse participants, i.e. the three persons, are quite common.

## E15. a. ko-re - so-re - a-re

JAPAN D1-SBST D2-SBST D3-SBST

‘this one- that one (by you) - yonder one’

## b. ko-no/ so-no/ a-no hon

D1-AT D2-AT D3-AT book

‘this/that/yonder book’

It is obvious that the Japanese deictic system illustrated by E15 is the same as in Latin (E16). There is however one important difference: While the Japanese demonstratives must have one of two suffixes, depending on whether they are used attributively or independently, all Latin demonstratives may be used equally as determiners or as pronouns s.s., as exemplified in E16.

## E16. hic/iste/ille (liber)

LATIN ‘this/that/yonder one/book’

It should also be recalled that Latin demonstratives, in contradistinction to those of many other languages, include gender and number categorization.

On the other hand Latin has no articles to express either the definiteness or the specificity opposition. However the demonstratives are bound up with definiteness. It should be observed that this is not universally so. Dyirbal has the deictic proforms shown in E17.

## E17. a. gi-yi (yaṛa)

DYIRBAL D1-CL.1 man(CL.1)

‘the/a man/one here’

- b. ba-yi (yaṛa)  
D3-CL.1 man(CL.1)  
'the/a man/one there'
- c. ṅa-yi (yaṛa)  
INVIS-CL.1 man(CL.1)  
'the/a invisible man/one' (Dixon 1972:44-46)

These elements show location, noun class and case of the referent and like the Latin demonstratives function both as determiners and as pronouns. However, unlike these they do not imply definiteness; cf. E18.

- E18. a. ba-yi ṅaṅga mayi-yaray-gu  
DYIRBAL D3-CL.1 child(CL.1) come.out-INCH-FIN  
'so that a child came out'
- b. ba-yi ṅagaṅunu  
D3-CL.1 Ngagangunu  
'He was [called] Ngagangunu.' (Dixon 1972:369)

The sentences in E18.a and b form a sequence in a text. From the structure of the text it is quite clear that in the a-clause the child is introduced into the universe of discourse, while in the subsequent sentence he is mentioned again, so that the first *bayi* would be indefinite and the second definite, by SAE standards.

However both the Latin and the Walbiri deictics have it in common that they indicate specificity. Naturally a designatum can be localized in the universe of discourse only if it is constituted by a specific subset of the individuals falling under the concept in question.

Although Latin does not have an indefinite article, it does express specificity paired with indefiniteness:

- E19. a. Est quidam homo qui illam ait se scire ubi sit.  
LATIN 'There is a certain man who says he knows where it [that box] is.'
- b. At pol ille a quadam muliere, si eam monstret, gratiam ineat.  
'But, by Pollux, that man would deserve thanks from a certain woman if he could indicate it.'
- c. At sibi ille quidam uolt dari mercedem.  
'But that person wants to be given a reward.' (Pl.*Cist.* 735-737)

*Quidam* here is comparable to Persian *-i* (cf.E14). Although it is typically paired with indefiniteness, as in E19.a and b, it is compatible with definiteness, as can be seen from E19.c, two lines further on in the same dialogue.

We may conclude here that Latin optionally expresses definiteness and indefiniteness, provided it is paired with specificity. For the most grammaticalized function of the definite article, namely the expression of the nominal character of a syntagm, especially a nominalized one, Latin has its declension suffixes, which suffice for this purpose.

## 6. Specification

### 6.1. Functional alternatives of the adjective

6.1.1. Specification of a designatum in the sense intended here is the enrichment of a basic concept by additional semantic traits. The operation that brings this about is **attribution** of a modifier. The simplest way of doing this is to combine the head nominal with an adjective. Syntactically speaking, an **adjective** is a word whose primary function it is to be an attribute to a noun s.s. As such, it is missing from many languages. There are two important functional alternatives to the adjective: the verb and the noun s.s. (cf. Lehmann 1988[1]).

Property concepts may be expressed by **stative verbs**. Consider E20 and E21 from ChiBemba (taken from Schachter 1985:16).

- E20. a. U-muuntu á-a-lemba.  
BEMBA CL.1-person SBJ.CL.1-PRS-write  
'The person is writing.'
- b. u-muuntu ù-a-lemba  
CL.1-person REL.CL.1-PRS-write  
'person who is writing'
- E21. a. U-muuntu á-a-shipa / á-a-kosa / á-a-ceenjela  
BEMBA CL.1-person SBJ.CL.1-PRS-brave SBJ.CL.1-PRS-strong SBJ.CL.1-PRS-wise  
'The person is brave/strong/wise.'
- b. U-muuntu ù-a-shipa / ù-a-kosa / ù-a-ceenjela  
CL.1-person REL.CL.1-PRS-brave REL.CL.1-PRS-strong REL.CL.1-PRS-wise  
'brave/strong/wise person'

E20.a has a dynamic verb as the predicate of a main clause; b has the same verb in attribute function, where it has been turned into a relative clause. E21 shows the same for some stative verbs, which in English appear as adjectives. Their syntactic treatment is exactly parallel to the dynamic verbs; thus, if they are to be attributed, they must first be transformed into a relative clause. Consequently their primary function is not attribution, as in true adjectives.

Many languages may resort to a participial construction instead of a relative clause. In a number of languages, such as Tamil, there are very few primary adjectives, most adjectives being participles of stative verbs (or else derived from nouns s.s.).

The other main alternative to adjectives are **abstract nouns** (s.s.), as exemplified in E22 and E23.

- E22. a. Ya-na da doki.  
HAUSA he-COP with horse  
'He has a horse.'
- b. mutum mai doki  
person having horse  
'a person having a horse'
- E23. a. Ya-na da alheri / arziki / hankali.  
HAUSA he-COP with kindness prosperity intelligence  
'He is kind/prosperous/intelligent.'
- b. mutum mai alheri / arziki / hankali  
person having kindness prosperity intelligence  
'a kind/prosperous/intelligent person'

E22 shows possession of a concrete object, expressed in a predication in E22.a and in an attribution in b. In the latter case the possession characterizes the possessor. E23 shows the

same with abstract nouns. Their syntactic treatment is absolutely parallel to that of other nouns s.s. Thus the way to specify a designatum by a certain property is to attribute to it possession of that property.

Given that the major word classes are nouns s.s., verb, adjective and adverb, there is yet another logical possibility to substitute the adjective, namely by the adverb. In terms of representation in the languages of the world, this is a minor one,<sup>5</sup> but Hixkaryana does instantiate it. This language has a word class of adverbs which includes many of those concepts like ‘good’, ‘strong’ etc. which in other languages show up as adjectives. These are modifiers, words which may be used equally to specify a noun s.s. or a verb, but do not enter into noun phrases with the nouns they relate to. They share no more properties with nouns than with verbs. Cf. E37 below.

6.1.2. Latin does have some stative verbs like those in E21, for instance the colour verbs *albere*, *uirere*, *liuere* ‘to be white, green, blue’, etc. These could be attributed in relative clauses or participials much like the verbs in E21.b. At the same time, it is clear that this would not be the normal way of doing it, as there are the adjectives *albus*, *uiridis*, *liuidus* ‘white, green, blue’.

On the other hand, Latin has constructions comparable to E23:

E24. a. T. Baluentius est magnae auctoritatis.

LATIN ‘T. Balventius has much authority.’

b. T. Baluentio ... uiro forti et magnae auctoritatis

‘to T. Balventius, a brave man of great authority’ (Caes.*Gal.* 5. 35. 6)

In Classical Latin the genitive or ablative of quality is used almost only if the abstract noun in question is not derived from an adjective which might be used instead; and it is always equipped with an intensifying adjective like *magnae* ‘great’ in E24. This shows that its role in the linguistic system is much more restricted than the role of the corresponding construction in Hausa. On the other hand, its syntactic function as an attribute is quite parallel to that of an adjective attribute, witness the coordination in E24.b.

Finally, there is a clear categorial difference between adjectives and adverbs in Latin. If adjectives are to be used adverbially, they have to be converted into the adverb category by a derivational process. Similarly, adverbials cannot simply be used as attributes. Either they will have to be reformulated as based on a participle, and the participial can then be attributed to a noun. Or they have to be bracketed by the head noun and one of its nominal modifiers. In the latter case, exemplified in E25, word order freedom is annulled because there are no grammatical marks to signal the relationship.

E25. suum talem erga me animum

LATIN ‘this kind of attitude which he has towards me’ (Cic.*fam.* 4. 6. 1)

This is another case in which word class membership in Latin strictly determines the syntactic potential.

## 6.2. The adjective

The main burden of specification in Latin is borne not by stative verbs or abstract nouns converted into attributes, but by adjectives. Now, while most languages do have adjectives,

we have to differentiate between the adjective that is a subcategory of the noun *s.l.* and the adjective that is not. The first alternative may again be exemplified from Dyirbal.

- E26. a. ba-yi yaṛa-badjun  
 DYIRBAL D3-CL.1 man-REAL  
 ‘he is a real man’
- b. ba-yi yaṛa bulgan  
 D3-CL.1 man big  
 ‘the man is big’ (Dixon 1972:71)
- c. ba-yi yaṛa bulgan bani-ṇu  
 D3-CL.1 man big come-REAL  
 ‘big man is coming’
- d. ba-yi bulgan bani-ṇu  
 D3-CL.1 big come-REAL  
 ‘big [man] is coming’
- e. bulgan bani-ṇu  
 big come-REAL  
 ‘[something] big is coming’ (Dixon 1972:61)

As E26 shows, adjectives have almost the same syntactic properties as nouns *s.s.* E26.a shows a noun *s.s.* as a predicate (cf. also E18.b), b an adjective in the same function. In E26.c we find an adjective constituting a NG together with a noun *s.s.* and its deictic marker, while in d there is no noun *s.s.* in the NG, and in e the adjective constitutes the NG by itself. Moreover, adjectives exhibit the same morphology as substantives. The only morphological difference between substantive and adjective nouns *s.l.* is that the noun class is lexically fixed for the former (except for motion) but variable for the latter (Dixon 1972:61). This entails the syntactic asymmetry that while the adjective is the attribute par excellence, the substantive cannot by itself (without being put into the genitive) function as an attribute. For the formation of a NG containing a substantive and a coreferential adjective this means of course that its grammatical categories are determined by the substantive, not by the adjective.<sup>6</sup>

The direct opposite of this situation would be a language whose adjectives can only function as attributes in a nominal. Hua comes close to this, having some primary adjectives for which this is true (see Haiman 1980:115, 268). In English adjectives share only some of the grammatical properties of nouns *s.s.* Neither can serve as a predicate in a clause like E26.a or b. Together they form nominals, as in the translation of E26.c. Combined with a determiner, the noun *s.s.* forms a NG. This is true of the adjective only to a limited degree, as shown by E27.

- E27. a. The big have the power.  
 ENGLISH b. \*A big is coming.

Finally, while a noun *s.s.* can form a NG by itself (esp. in the plural), this is not possible for an adjective. Thus there is nothing really comparable to E26.d and e.

The Latin adjective belongs to the nominal variety illustrated by Dyirbal in E26. It also shares with the Dyirbal adjective its essential order freedom and the agreement in those inflectional categories which they express (case in Dyirbal, gender, number and case in Latin), as shown in E28.

E28. ba-yi yaṛa-ŋu djugumbi-ṛu buṛa-n waṅal ba-ŋgu-n ba-ŋu-l bulga-nu  
 DYIRBAL D3-CL.1 man-GEN woman-ERG see-REAL boomerang D3-ERG-CL.2 D3-GEN-CL.1 big-GEN  
 ‘woman saw big man’s boomerang’ (Dixon 1972:107)

In §4 we saw the relative autonomy of the Latin numeral. Here we have found that the adjective is even more independent syntactically. In English as in many other languages, an adjective has a fixed position relative to its head noun and forms a phrase (viz. a nominal) with it. A Latin adjective does not form a phrase with its head noun. Despite the asymmetry observed above, the adjective attribute is not strongly subordinate to the head noun but rather, through agreement, coreferential with it.<sup>7</sup>

At this point it should be mentioned that the most common diachronic origin of nominal declension affixes on adjectives is through the agglutination of pronominal elements, especially demonstratives. An Indo-Europeanist hypothesis of long standing postulates the same for the declension of the adjectives of Indo-European. A NG such as *uir fortis* would thus have meant, originally, ‘man a/the brave one’. The adjective (or other noun *s.l.*) was thereby substantivized and related anaphorically to the preceding head noun. The synchronic behaviour of the Latin adjective would thus be a natural consequence of its diachronic origin: it is the pronominal element of the agreement suffix that lends nominal independence to adjectives, numerals and determiners.

### 6.3. Position and bondedness

**Syntagmatic position** of signs varies along two parameters: precedence vs. subsequence of A as against B, and proximity vs. distantiation (contiguity vs. disjunction) of A as against B. We will briefly review the word order of attributes in Latin with respect to these two parameters.

The rules for the position of attributes vis-à-vis their head noun are complicated (see Marouzeau 1922 for an early and exhaustive account). At a very general level, one may say that pronominal position makes for a tighter syntactic bond between attribute and head than postnominal position. Pronominal position incorporates the attribute into the nominal, postnominal position renders it more independent (see Marouzeau 1922: 221f). There is thus a factor of **syntactic bondedness** involved here.<sup>8</sup> The general correlates of bondedness are as in F1.

#### F1. *Semantic correlates of bondedness of attributes*

tightly bonded	loosely bonded
inherent, essential property	discriminative, accidental property
description	contrast
concept formation	object identification

In keeping with their relative independence, the unmarked attributive position for most Latin adjectives is postnominal, as in *equus Romanus* ‘Roman knight’. Pronominal position is chosen if the specification is regarded as something inherent or essential to the head notion. Thus *Romanus equus* would mean ‘typical Roman knight, knight as we like him’. This is a generalization that is valid at a cross-linguistic level. We even find it to be true for modifiers in general, not only for adjective attributes.

There are various techniques for the formation of more complex attributes, which cannot be surveyed here.<sup>9</sup> Only the relative clause, as the most productive and efficient of them, will be mentioned. The Latin relative clause is quite variable and adaptable for many purposes. However it is typically not used to express notions such as the ones in E21. *Homo qui est fortis* ‘person who is brave’ would be a quite marked and emphatic way to say ‘brave person’.

This is in perfect keeping with what was said about the bondedness of attributes. The more substantial an attribute is, the more weight of its own has it naturally. It is thus a type of attribute that is suited to a low degree of bondedness. Still in the same vein, since a relative clause contains a predication based on a verb, it is much more suited to discriminate the designatum as against others (object identification) than to characterize it by some inherent property (concept formation). Therefore postnominal, as against prenominal, position is universally the preferred position of relative clauses. Syntactic and semantic features here concur, with the result that, as regards its potential for specification, the Latin relative clause is, from a typological point of view, quite an unremarkable kind of relative clause.

Let us now turn to the parameter of contiguity vs. disjunction. Let A be the head of a syntagm and B directly depend on A. A sequence AXB or BXA will be called a disjunction of the syntagm AB only if X does not depend directly on A or B. By this definition, there is a disjunction in E29, but not in E30.

E29. hic autem locus

LATIN ‘this place, however’ (*Per.Aeth.* 37. 3)

E30. pro amplissima familiae dignitate

LATIN ‘for the extraordinary dignity of your family’ (*Cic.fam.* 15. 12. 1)

According to counts reported in Herman 1985, sect. III, the proportion of disjoined NGs oscillates around 25% in all prose writers from Cato down to Tacitus. In those counts, however, examples such as E30 constitute the bulk of the cases of disjunction. If we assume that cases of genuine disjunction make up 10% of all complex NGs, this percentage is both too small to speak of a pervading feature of Latin speech and too high to be neglected as exceptional. However what really counts here are not percentages but the observation that Latin freely allows disjunction of the members of a NG as an expressive device. How often the need for this possibility arises depends on incalculable factors. The ability of Latin attributes to be distanced from their head noun thus confirms the relatively low degree of bondedness which is evinced by their preferred sequential position vis-à-vis the head. This makes for a picture of the Latin NG as a construction with a relatively low degree of integration.

## 7. Possession

### 7.1. Cross-linguistic background

Possession is a relation between two entities X and Y such that if X possesses Y, X is typically human and Y is typically inanimate. This prototypical situation is the basis for all sorts of grammatical relations between two entities. Here we can consider only the expression of possession within the NG.<sup>10</sup>

We begin with a semantic and a syntactic distinction, both of which are illustrated in E31 and E32.

- E31. a. bala-n djugumbil mambu ba-ŋgu-l yaŋa-ŋgu balga-n  
 DYIRBAL D3-CL.2 woman back D3-ERG-CL.1 man-ERG hit-REAL  
 ‘man is hitting woman’s back’ (Dixon 1972:61)
- b. ba-gu-l waŋal-gu ba-ŋu-l-djin-gu yaŋa-ŋu-ŋdjin-gu  
 D3-DAT-CL.1 boomerang-DAT D3-GEN-CL.1-Ø-DAT man-GEN-Ø-DAT  
 ‘to the boomerang of the man’ (Dixon 1972:106)
- E32. a. dgai’ d-nogu’  
 HUA I(GEN) OBL.1.SG-maternal nephew  
 ‘my nephew (son of my sister)’
- b. dgai’ fu(-di)  
 I(GEN) pig-POSS.1.SG  
 ‘my pig’ (Haiman 1980:367)

The semantic distinction involves the opposition between **inherent and established possession**, more often called inalienable and alienable possession. The a-sentences above present inherent, the b-sentences established possession. As in many other languages, body parts are inalienable in Dyirbal and relatives are inalienable in Hua. Boomerangs and pigs on the other hand are typically alienable. Both languages display a structural differentiation of these two kinds of possessive attribution. In Dyirbal the possessor of an alienable head noun is in the genitive, while the possessor of an inalienable head is not case-marked. In Hua inalienable nouns obligatorily have a possessive prefix, while alienable nouns optionally have a possessive suffix.

The syntactic distinction relevant here is between **marking of the possessor and marking of the possessed**. Dyirbal marks the possessor, namely by its genitive case suffix and in addition by case agreement with the head noun, as is to be seen in E31.a. Hua primarily marks the possessed, by the possessive affixes just observed. In addition it marks the possessor by the genitive case suffix. Possessive affixes and genitive cases are very widespread cross-linguistically, while agreement of the possessor with the possessed is somewhat rare.

## 7.2. Possession in Latin

What about Latin in these respects? Clearly there is no morphological distinction between inherent and established possessive attribution; the expression structure of *Marci manus* ‘Mark’s hand’ is just like the one of *Marci porcus* ‘Mark’s pig’. In particular the flexive language that Latin is does not have the option of simply leaving the possessor without case-mark. However what it can do is leave the possessor unmentioned altogether. Thus we find E33.

- E33. a. cum filios misissent  
 LATIN ‘after they sent their sons’ (Cic. *Att.* 10. 4. 2)
- b. nixa caput manibus  
 ‘leaning her head on her hands’ (Prop. 1. 3. 8)

While it would be possible to add the possessive pronouns here, inherent possession is a precondition for their omission *salva significatione*.

Parts of space, such as ‘top, side’ etc., show symptoms of inherent possession in almost all languages, as their concepts necessarily involve an entity of which they are a part. Latin with its obligatory case marking would seem to have a disadvantageous starting position here, having to mark something by the genitive which is obvious from the lexical meanings. E34 shows how it manages to solve the problem.

E34. cum summus mons a Labieno teneretur

LATIN ‘when the top of the mountain was held by Labienus’ (Caes. *Gal.* 1. 22. 1)

There are practically no such relational nouns s.s. in Latin! Instead parts of space are conceived as properties of the relevant objects and consequently expressed by adjective attributes. From a comparative point of view this is highly unusual, but it does show that the relationship of a part of space to the object which it is part of is not simply analogous to just any possessive or genitival relation.<sup>11</sup>

Given that Latin has a genitive case but no possessive affixes in possessive attribution, it marks the possessor, that is, the dependent element. Universally, the most natural expression for inherent possession is either no marking at all or marking of the possessed item, primarily by a possessive affix. Given that the structure of Latin provides for neither of these alternatives, the three ways out that it has are naturally to treat inherent like established possession (*Marci manus - Marci porcus*) or not to express the possession at all (E33) or to conceive the relationship in question as something falling outside possession altogether (E34).

## 8. Quantification

### 8.1. Cross-linguistic background

Quantification relates to the extent to which the designatum is involved in the predication. It is thus an operation whose locus is halfway between the referential entity and the predicate. Consequently the techniques employed in various languages oscillate between the nominal and the verbal domain. This is true both for exact numerical quantification, i.e. for counting, and for imprecise quantification involving notions such as ‘some, many, all’.<sup>12</sup> E35 - E37 illustrate some of the possibilities.

E35. a. t’axam-Ø-əł k<sup>w</sup>-ç-q<sup>w</sup>əʔmay  
COMOX six-SBJ.3.SG-PAST D3-POSS.1.SG-age

‘I was then six years old’ (Hagège 1981:142)

b. ʔo:k<sup>w</sup>-ʔət t-ms-θo+θo-əł  
all-PROB D1-POSS.1.PL-go+PROG-PAST

‘we were going about here everywhere’ (Hagège 1981:144)

E36. a. Kommt massenhaft zur Demonstration!  
GERMAN ‘Come to the demonstration in masses!’

b. Ich habe den Brei ganz aufgegessen.  
‘I ate up the whole porridge.’

- c. Wir haben die Aufsätze zum Teil gelesen.  
'We read part of the articles.'

- E37. a. to-txowi                                      biryekomo komo,    asako/    omeroro  
HIXKAR    (3.PL)go-IMM.PAST.COL    boy                                      COLL    two                                      all  
'Two/All (of) the boys went.' (Derbyshire 1979:104)
- b. twaroro n-to-txowi                                      biryekomo komo  
how.many 3.PL-go-IMM.PAST.COLL    boy                                      COLL  
'How many boys went?' (Derbyshire 1979:105)

In Comox numerals and quantifiers are, details aside, verbs. Thus literal translations of E35.a and b would read something like 'my age then sixed' and 'our going about here alled'. The German sentences in E36 show adverbs and adverbials with quantifying function. Here it is particularly clear how the degree of the participation of an entity or a set in the predication is subject to quantification. In Hixkaryana, numerals and quantifiers belong to the class of adverbs mentioned in §6.2. In E37.a they stand near the quantified noun; in b the quantifier is dissociated from the noun. Finally the English translations of almost all of the examples show maximal noun-like quantifiers. Numerals may be adjective attributes, as in the translation of E35.a, or nouns *s.s.*, as in *two of the boys* (E37.a). The same goes for quantifiers, as may be gathered from a comparison of the translations of E37. b and E36.c.

## 8.2. Quantification in Latin

As we might have expected, Latin again is at the nominal end of this scale. Numerals are like adjectives and thus nouns *s.l.* (cf. §4); and the same goes for quantifiers. Worthy of particular note is the partitive genitive and like constructions, exemplified in E38 (cf. also *pars*, *dimidium* etc.).

- E38. a. unum de legatis  
LATIN                                      'one of the legates' (Cic. *Verr.* 2. 8)
- b. uterque legatorum  
'both of the legates' (Vell. 2. 50. 4)

These constructions treat the quantified noun as an attribute to the quantifier, not vice versa, as in the English translation of E37.b. On the other hand, Latin has very little that would be comparable to the constructions in E35 and E36. Only *abundare* 'to be there in abundance' comes to mind as a verb; and adverbs may, of course, be formed on the basis of the adjectival quantifiers, such as *multum*, *paulum* 'much, little'.

## 9. Conclusion

We have considered briefly the noun-verb distinction as it is handled in Latin, and then reviewed the operations which constitute a designatum of a first-order entity. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Latin has several word-classes which may be subsumed under the common denominator of noun *s.l.*, since they share essential syntactic properties with nouns *s.s.* In particular, all

- nouns *s.l.* share the relative syntactic and referential independence of nouns *s.s.*
2. This entails that when several coreferential nouns *s.l.* form a nominal group, this is not integrated tightly enough to be called a phrase. There is neither tight syntactic cohesion in such syntagms nor a pronounced hierarchical inequality between the substantival head and the various kinds of modifiers.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Latin achieves very little in the formation of lexically complex object concepts. One may generalize that at the lower grammatical levels down to the word there is a lack of tight integration of concepts into richer concepts.
  3. In the typological alternative between head-marking and dependent-marking Latin very consistently prefers dependent-marking. The dependent exhibits its own inflection and thus indicates by itself its syntactic function. This contributes to its relative autonomy (cf. Nichols 1986). Given that ultimately everything in a clause depends on a verb, this weakens the governing role of the verb and strengthens the role of the non-verbal elements.
  4. In all cases where there is, at a cross-linguistic level, a choice between nominal, verbal or adverbial strategies, Latin consistently prefers nominal strategies. This enhances the role of the noun *s.l.* in the grammatical system. We might speculate that Latin more than most languages tends to reify concepts (cf. Capell 1965).

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> An essentially equivalent term for 'group' would be 'syntagm'.
- <sup>2</sup> This corresponds to the sense of the term as defined in Bloomfield 1933:178 and subsequently used in phrase/constituent structure grammar.
- <sup>3</sup> Cf. Lyons 1977, ch.11 for such a definitional procedure.
- <sup>4</sup> Most of the following functional parameters are based on universal dimensions set up by H. Seiler and his UNITYP group. Cf. especially Seiler & Lehmann (eds.) 1982, Seiler & Stachowiak (eds.) 1982 and Seiler 1986.
- <sup>5</sup> German adjectives have some adverbial properties: They can be used as adverbs without any derivational apparatus, and there is a derivational suffix, *-lich* (etymologically identical to English *-ly*), which derives either adjectives (*peinlich* 'painful') or (mere) adverbs (*wohlweislich* 'prudently').
- <sup>6</sup> For the parallel situation in Latin, cf. Fugier 1983, esp. 215.
- <sup>7</sup> This was already clearly seen in Sapir 1921:96. Cf. also Lehmann 1982 and Carvalho 1986[S]:299.
- <sup>8</sup> See Foley 1980 and Lehmann 1984, ch. IV.2 for bondedness at a cross-linguistic level.
- <sup>9</sup> Cf. Fugier 1983, §3 and Pinkster 1984, ch.6 for a detailed account.
- <sup>10</sup> See Seiler 1983 for a comprehensive account.
- <sup>11</sup> A similar indeterminacy of the head-modifier role distribution may be seen in E38 below and, again, in English phrases such as *a giant of a man*; *let's sort of line things up* (cf. Verhaar 1986).
- <sup>12</sup> The most palpable expression of this oscillation within one language is the phenomenon known as quantifier floating.
- <sup>13</sup> Several authors (Herman 1985, Carvalho 1986[N], among others) argue that the noun phrase develops historically from Latin to the Romance languages.

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