

## Dividing the definite article up between verbal inflection and personal pronoun

Postal (1969) proposed that pronouns are determiners (i.e. definite articles, cf. Elbourne (2002)) whose noun is non-overt. However, in Germanic, unlike Romance, pronouns are morphologically lacking the definite article. So, German *er* ‘he’ is the definite article *der* ‘the.M.NOM’ without the definite article part, *d-* (Wiltschko, 1998). Now where could that *d-* have gone? A partial answer may lie in the possibility raised by R. Kayne (2014, p.c.) that the inflectional suffix *-t* of the 3.SG in German could be a devoiced definite article (1). In this talk, we will discuss some of the pros and cons of this idea, pointing out relevant implications.

It is well-known that verbal inflection can be pronominal as a whole (Anderson, 1982). But in the hypothesis expressed in (1) only a part of the pronoun seems to have gone verbal. Such adoptive interaction between verb and pronoun at the level of phonological pieces is diachronically attested, for instance in the Bern dialect of Swiss German, where the pronoun adopted a segment from the verbal inflection, from the frequent subject-verb inversion due to V2.

- (1) [Verb-t/d]-er
- (2) **tir** heit ‘you.SG have’ (Bern), cf. iär hend ‘you.SG have’ (Altdorf)
- (3) a. ich mach-e/mach-t-e b. du mach-st/mach-t-est c. er mach-t/mach-te(\*t)  
I make/made you make/made he makes/made
- (4) a. ich mach-e/mach-t-e b. du mach-st/mach-t-est c. er mach-t/mach-te(\*t)  
I make/made you make/made he makes/made

But (1) is interesting only as a morphosyntactic claim. On that reading, the internal structure of pronouns is relevant, for instance Gruber’s (2013) claim that pronouns have a temporal and a spatial component, with TIME in D. This lends itself to seeing the curious fact that 3.SG *-t/d* is incompatible with past tense in German (4) in a fresh light, which casts an intriguing shadow on English *-s* (i.e. *-th/s*).

Interestingly, in the plural, the third person (*-n* in German, but *-t* in Swiss German) is compatible with past tense, suggesting that (4c) reflects an anti-locality effect between tense and third person which the presence of PLURAL obviates.

Another dimension to (1) is the fact that the same *-t/d-* is also a piece of the finite complementizer *dass* ‘that’ (Leu, 2015), with which the finite verb competes for the C position in root clauses. The relevance of *dass* lies in the restriction to root contexts of French (hyper) complex inversion *-t-*, which, like *-t/d-*, is also restricted to third person (Kayne and Pollock, 2012).

## References

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