

Proprial articles

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1. Introduction

Most of this chapter will deal with the preproprial article, which is far more common in the Nordic languages than its postproprial counterpart. However, we will also briefly touch upon the latter, since this is also encountered in Scandinavia. The preproprial article (PPA) is a prenominal definite article that must appear with proper names in argument positions, as in the Norwegian and Swedish examples in (1), while the postproprial article (PoPA) is suffixed to the name, as in (2).

(1) a. Men **ho** Inger se kkje e så mye (Norwegian)

But she.PPA Inger see not I so much

‘But Inger, I don’t see much.’ (Håberg 2010:90)

b. **En** Bjürström ha affärn (Swedish)

He.PPA Bjürström has shop.DEF

‘Bjürström has the shop.’ (Delsing 2003:21)

(2) **Lisen** (Norwegian)

Lise.DEF

‘Lise.’ (Larsen and Stoltz 1911:132)

The preproprial article typically has a form similar to that of unstressed personal pronouns whereas the postproprial article looks like the suffixed definite article in the dialects in question.

2. Results

In the ScanDiaSyn survey we investigated the use of the preproprial article in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In those dialects where the PPA is found, we also tested whether it can be used both with people the speaker knows well, (3), and with people the speaker does not know personally, as in (4). These two test sentences do not distinguish between given names and surnames, which is also a variable to be considered. This is discussed in section 3.

(3) Jeg har et bilde av **n** Ola. (#90) (Norwegian)

I have a picture of he.PPA Ola

'I have a picture of Ola on the wall.'

(4) Jeg har et bilde av **n** Elvis Presley. (#88) (Norwegian)

I have a picture of he.PPA E.P.

'I have a picture of Elvis Presley on the wall.'

Maps 1 and 2 give the results for these two sentences in Norwegian. We present the Swedish and Finnish data in section 3.



Map 1. The preproprial article in Norway used with first, familiar names (#90: *Jeg har et bilde av n Ola*. 'I have a picture of Ola on the wall.')

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

There is a clear isogloss on the Norwegian side of the border. Most of Norway allows the PPA, apart from a broad area from South Hordaland in the west across the counties of Rogaland, Telemark, West Agder and East Agder to Oslo (Stavanger and Setesdal in the west are within this area but allow the PPA).



Map 2. Preproprial articles with unfamiliar persons

(#88: *Jeg har et bilde av n Elvis Presley 'I have a picture of Elvis Presley on the wall.'*)
(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

Map 2, which shows the use of PPA with people the speaker does not know, and with both first and second name, looks very much like Map 1. This may be a bit surprising, as we will discuss in section 3.

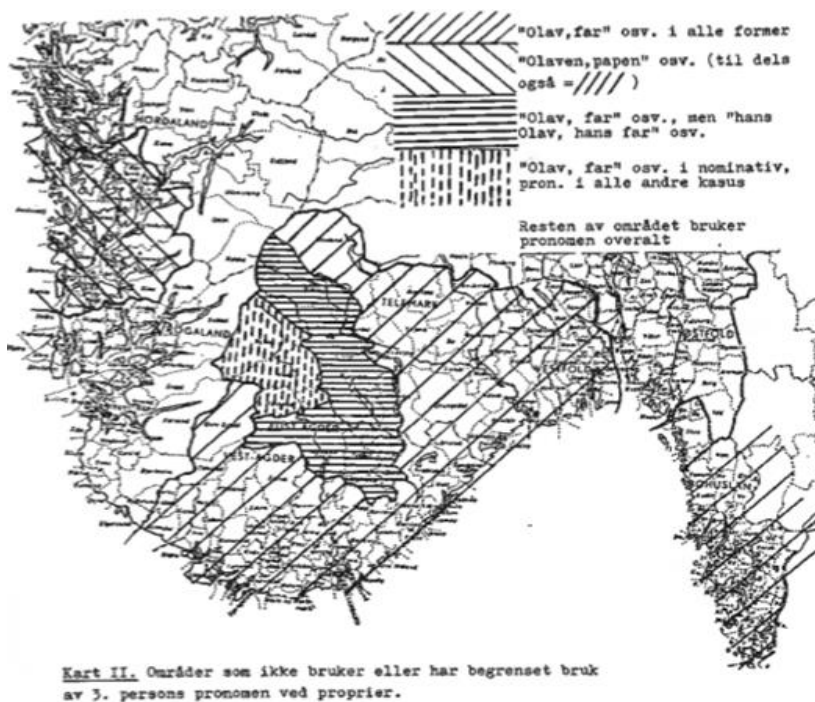
A map of the Swedish and Finnish side of the border is shown and discussed in section 3. The preproprial article was not tested in Denmark, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. However, according to Jørgensen (2001), there is no preproprial article in Danish. Hulthén (1944:90) refers to work that suggests that the PPA is common in Danish, but the examples there, with pronouns preceding common nouns and not only names and family terms, suggest that it is rather the PDD (see 3.2), which Johannessen (2008a) shows exists in Danish. Furthermore, the PPA is also assumed to be missing in Faroese (Lockwood 2002:§ 125), although it may exist in old folk songs (Torp 1973:143, f.n.10). In contrast, Torp (1973:143), citing Einarsson (1949), claims that Icelandic has PPAs. However, it is not clear whether these pronouns should be characterised as PPAs or PDDs, see section 3.

3. Discussion

3.1 The PPA and PoPA in Norway

The results from Map 1 confirm most of the received knowledge of the distribution of Norwegian PPAs, with one exception: the Oslo area. Håberg (2010) has studied in depth three areas where the PPA exists;

her claims are otherwise based on the literature. According to Håberg (2010:103) “[I]t is known that the PPA occurs in many Norwegian dialects, mainly in Northern Norway, Middle Norway, North-west Norway and in East Norway. The article is missing in the provinces of Telemark, Vestfold, in southern and in south-western Norway” [our translation, JBJ & PG]. In other words, there is an area along the southern coast of Norway that does not have the PPA. Torp (1973:148) says that the PPA exists in almost all of Norway, down south to the Stavanger region of Rogaland. South of this region and along the coast to Vestfold in the east, the PPA is missing. Torp's data (1973), based on the Storm word lists used for dialect collection in the 1960s, show that there has been a development towards a narrowing of the geographical distribution of the PPA in recent years. Most notably, Oslo used to be a PPA area, but recent data (Johannessen 2008b) show that it no longer is. Håberg (2010) also describes vascillation in some dialects, which suggests that the feature's obligatory status in some dialects can be questioned.



Map 3. The distribution of PPAs and PoPAs in Southern Norway (Torp 1973)

The PoPA has limited regional extent, as can be seen in map 3. It is found in Bergen and the area immediately around it in West Norway.

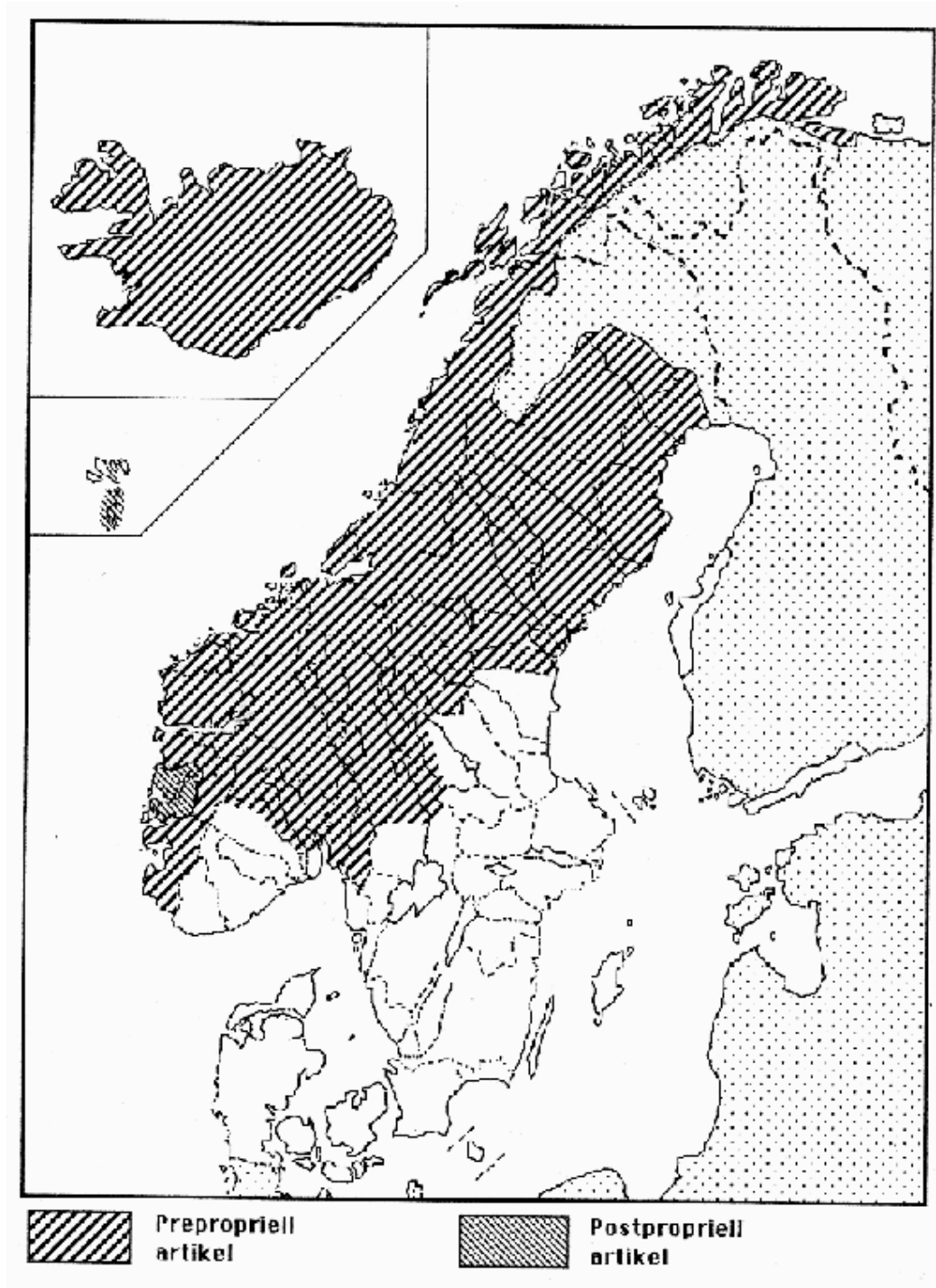
3.2 The PPA vs. the psychologically distal demonstrative (PDD)

Maps 1 and 2 show clear isoglosses for Norway, but the situation for Swedish is less clear. We present one map here:



Map 4. The preproprial article in Sweden and Finland used with first, familiar names (#90 *Jeg har et bilde av n Ola. 'I have a picture of Ola on the wall.'*) (White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score).

Map 4 shows that the PPA should be acceptable in the southwestern parts of Sweden, it also shows a scattered acceptance of the PPA across the Swedish-speaking area. Taken together with map 5 below, which shows the opposite geographical distribution, it is clear there is a huge discrepancy between the present and the past data. Map 5 shows the situation as it was depicted for Norwegian and Swedish. Delsing (2003) describes the extension of the preproprial article in Sweden and Finland based on extensive studies of dialect texts and literature. He concludes that it does not exist in Finland, but that it does exist in Norrland, Dalarna and north Värmland (op.cit. p.22-23), see Map 5.



Map 5. *The preproprial article in the Scandinavian countries as presented in Delsing (2003:24).*

We suspect that it is the modern data that are wrong, and that there has possibly been some confusion in the gathering of these. When investigating the PPA, it is important to distinguish it from the psychologically distal demonstrative (described in Johannessen 2008a, b, Strahan 2008, [Johannessen 2014](#)), since they have overlapping syntactic distribution and the same lexical origin (personal pronouns). The main differences are listed in Table 1.

PPA	PDD
Only attaches to names or name-like nouns	Attaches to any kind of human nouns
Can inflect for case	Cannot inflect for case
Is never stressed	Is always stressed
Is obligatory	Is not obligatory
Carries no meaning in most dialects	Is loaded with meaning
Often has a reduced, clitic form	Has a full, unreduced form

Table 1. The differences between PPAs and PDDs.

It is possible that the Norwegian field work investigators when collecting data for the Nordic Syntax Database were instructed more carefully about the distinction. Importantly, the article had to be presented without stress to the informants, and if the investigators were not aware of this, the results would not be reliable. Another factor that may influence the data collection in this case are for instance topics in the interview situation, restrictions on the mentioning of other people, accommodation to non-dialect interviewer etc.

However, it could also be possible that the situation in Sweden is indeed less clear, and that the lack of sharp isoglosses reflects an actual situation. The present status of the preproprial article in Swedish is thus not known. The literature and dialect texts that Delsing (2003) refers to are mainly at least half a century old. Hulthén (1944:90) says that in Swedish, preproprial articles are rare. The ScanDiaSyn investigation did not succeed in collecting data in Sweden and Finland, but this may be due to unfortunate circumstances during the fieldwork. There are no occurrences of the PPA in the Swedish part of the Nordic Dialect Corpus. There are 189 occurrences of either a first name or one of the family terms *mamma* 'mummy' and *pappa* 'daddy', but no example of the PPA. However, it could be due to a number of factors as mentioned above. The situation in present-day Sweden should be investigated further.

Map 5 suggests that Iceland also has the preproprial article. This is what was suggested by Torp (1973:143), citing Einarsson (1949). However, it is not clear that these pronouns should be characterised as PPAs. One reason is that they can be used with common nouns, not just proper names (Einarsson 1949:123). Johannessen (2008a) argues instead that Icelandic has PDDs, with the characteristic accompanying psychologically distal meaning. Einarsson, on the other hand, claims that the use of these pronouns expresses familiarity (1949:122-3). A proper investigation into the Icelandic situation is still called for.

Table 1 shows that the PPA is generally obligatory. The PoPA, on the other hand, is used with personal names, both sexes, and surnames, but not those ending in *-sen* (Larsen and Stolz 1911:132). Haslev (1988:247) agrees with Larsen and Stolz (1911), but says that the PoPA cannot occur with both at the same time (**Ingrid-en Dal-en*). The nature of the obligatoriness of the PoPA is debatable.

3.3 The semantics of the PPA and the PoPA

Delsing (2003) states that for the PPA to be used, the speaker should know the person referred to. This may be similar to the situation in many Norwegian dialects, where the preproprial article is used with given names and family relations and not surnames (cf Faarlund 2000:54). It might be tempting, therefore, to conclude that while the PDD indicates distance, the PPA indicates proximity, which has been suggested by Nesse (2002a:233). Johannessen (2008a) argues that this cannot be the case for all Norwegian dialects, since the PPA is often obligatory for all names, as it is in e.g. Northern Norway. It would be unreasonable to claim that every time a person is mentioned by name, there would be a closeness expressed by the speaker. But there is clearly a difference in the obligatoriness of the PPA throughout the country, and this citation by Aasen (1864:287) suggests that there can indeed be some proximity attached to the PPA: “This use is common in colloquial speech with names of acquaintances and contemporary people, to the extent that it can be seen as offensive to leave out the pronoun.” [Denne Brug er almindelig i Dagligtalen ved Navne paa bekjendte og samtidige Personer, saa at det endog ansees som meget stødende at udelade Pronomenet. Translation by JBJ.]

While the PPA is considered to be obligatory and without lexical meaning, the PoPA does seem to be used at the speaker's own choice. Nesse (2002a:233) suggests that it also is linked to social background and the utterance situation. If it is not obligatory it must have a certain meaning attached to it. Nesse (2002b) says that the suffixed PoPA indicates that the person is known by the speaker, and also liked. Larsen and Stoltz (1911:132) say that there is nothing comical or condescending about it, thus supporting Nesse's claim.

Finally, we would also like to mention that there are proprial articles in many other European languages. Håberg (2010) mentions Greek, Frisian, Portuguese and Catalan, and we know that also Italian and German dialects have such articles. It would be interesting to investigate the nature of the proprial articles in these languages with respect to syntax as well as pragmatics.

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