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Modifiers

Nicolas Bertrand

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Abstract

Modifiers are elements used to modify the meaning of the head of their phrase. They are optional in that they may be removed without changing the syntactic structure of the sentence in which they occur. In AGk, adjectives are typically noun modifiers, whereas adverbs and adpositional phrases (APs) are universal modifiers, since they can be used to modify any kind of head, including nouns. This paper deals first with noun modifiers (on which, see further Noun Phrase*, especially for the question of the order of constituents within the NP), then with modification outside the NP.

Modifiers within the NP

The wealth of word classes* allowed in modifier position in the NP in AGk is noteworthy: one finds not only adjectives, genitive NPs, and relative clauses (as in most languages), but also adpositional phrases (APs), adverbs, and appositive nouns. This is truly a peculiarity of AGk, since other languages, e.g. French, are much more rigid in that respect. Though sometimes considered a subclass of modifiers, determiners* (i.e. definite article*, quantifiers*, deictic and anaphoric pronouns*) will not be considered in this chapter, since, strictly speaking, they do not modify the NP but rather actualize it in different ways. Furthermore, determiners do not behave at all like other modifiers in the AGk NP, since they may, and some of them must, appear before the definite article. I shall focus on those modifiers that may be located between the article and the head noun, i.e. elements occupying the same position as what Biraud (1991) calls “D1 determiners”.

It should be noted from the outset that nouns do not always refer to the same kind of entities. Following Lyons (1977:442–447), cf. Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008:131–132), we can classify these entities as:

- first-order entities, i.e. *individuals*, which can be located in space and evaluated in terms of their existence, as ‘the writer’;
- second-order entities: *events* or *state-of-affairs*, which can be located in space and time and evaluated in terms of their reality, as ‘the writing’;
- third order entities, i.e. *propositions*, which cannot be located in space and time, but may be evaluated in terms of their truth, as ‘the idea’.

The selection and use of modifiers is sensitive to that classification.

According to Rijkhoff (2002), modifiers fall into five semantic/functional categories (note that he does not distinguish between determiners and modifiers). The first four categories

are descriptive, in that they describe a property of the referent, whereas the fifth specifies the discourse status of the referent (Bakker 2009).

0. *classifying* modifiers, which indicate to which category a noun pertains;
1. *qualifying* modifiers, which denote a property of the referent;
2. *quantifying* modifiers, which specify the number or quantity of the referent;
3. *localizing* modifiers, not only they relate the referent either to a place or time, but also when they relate it to another referent, for instance possessive modifiers.
4. *discourse-referential* modifiers, which deal with the referent as a discourse element. In this category we find articles*, determiners*, but also referential modifiers.

The numbered hierarchy is meant to capture the scope of each kind of modifier on the lower ones; furthermore, it predicts that the higher a modifier is on the hierarchy, the farther away from the head noun it will surface, provided other factors are not in play, such as the weight of complex constituents (embedded NPs or relative clauses). However, as Bakker (2009:101–104) has shown, it is often difficult in practice to classify a modifier in a given category, since (i) genitives, for instance, may be argument-like and complement a noun rather than modify it, and Rijkhoff does not provide a layer for argumental genitives, since it is only concerned with NPs expressing first-order entities; (ii) modifiers can fulfill more than one function at the same time (e.g. a descriptive modifier may at the same time fulfill a discourse-referential role).

Adjectives

The most frequent noun modifiers are of course *adjectives*. Adjectives themselves come in different types, according to the type of entity denoted by the noun they modify and their own semantic properties (the modifier category to which they belong). Adjectives may pertain to each one of Rijkhoff's categories, as exemplified below:

0. *classifying*: *toús dè basileíous dómous* 'this kingly palace' (Eur. Hel. 1526)
1. *qualifying*: *toús kaloús paîdás te kai neanískous* 'the handsome boys and youths' (Plat. Conv. 211d)
2. *quantifying*: *tàs treîs naûs* 'the three ships' (Thuc. 2.94.3)
3. *localizing*, with either place or time adjectives, as in *pròs tàs epithalattidías póleis* 'towards the cities on the sea-shore' (Xen. Hell. 4.8.1), or with possessive, as in *Nestoréi parà nēi* 'near Nestor's ship' (Hom. Il. 54);
4. *discourse-referential*: referential modifiers such as *ho autós X* 'the same X', or *ho állos X* 'the other X', and ordinal numerals as in *tèn trítēn... gunaîka* 'his third wife' (Hdt. 6.63.1).

Adjectives may even express arguments with nouns expressing second-order entities, especially in *poetic language, where concision is desired: thus, in *taureíōi sphagêi* ‘the slaughter of the bull’ (Eur. Hel. 1582), the derived adjective is used to express the *patient in the state-of-affairs denoted by the noun, as is common with argumental genitives (see below).

AGk allows very frequently the use of headless NPs, in which the only semantic restrictors are determiners and modifiers. One can distinguish three groups among headless NPs, according to their degree of nominalization, i.e. to whether or not the modifier should be considered the head of the NP. (i) In some cases, mainly idioms, the headless NP is the result of gapping, and the gapped head noun may be more or less easily retrieved (depending on the number of occurrences of the complete phrase): *hē husteráia* (sc. *hēméra*) ‘yesterday’, *hē aristéra* (sc. *kheír*) ‘the left hand’, *hē hippiké* (sc. *tékhne*) ‘equestrianism’; but in *apò tēs ísēs* (sc. *moíras?*) ‘in an equal manner’, the gapped head is difficult to pinpoint, since it is not attested. (ii) In another group of headless NPs, the head is vague and its grammatical gender and number are the only clues as to the kind of entity denoted. (Most of the headless NPs with non-adjectival modifiers belong to this group: see below.) Thus, in *hoi sophoi* ‘wise men’, one can easily construe the null-head as an animated masculine entity; in *tà emá* ‘my belongings’, the neutral gender evokes an unanimated entity, hence a literal reading ‘my things’. (iii) In the third group, the process of nominalization is complete, in that the modifier itself has become the head of the noun phrase: the nominalized neuter adjective or participle, for instance, is very common, especially in philosophical texts, to express abstractions (see *abstract nouns): *tò kalón* ‘beauty’, *tò agathón* ‘the good’. Of course, the line between the second and third groups is difficult to draw and also depends on the degree of nominalization of each phrase.

Genitive NPs

The second most frequent strategy for NP modification is the use of a genitive NP (see Genitive*). Genitive NPs may be used to express:

- possession (possessive genitive): *tên kephalên tou paidós* ‘the boy’s head’ (Hdt. 1.119)
- a part/whole relationship (partitive genitive): *tôn peltastôn anēr* ‘one of the peltasts’ (Xen. An. 4.8.4);
- the agent of the a second-order entity (subjective genitive): *têi Simmíou antilépsei* ‘the objection [raised by] Simmias’ (Pl. Phdr. 87a)
- the patient of the a second-order entity (objective genitive): *tên tôn paídōn paideían* ‘the education [given to] children’ (Xen. Cyr. 8.3.37);

Both subjective and objective genitives (i.e. argumental genitives) are sometimes used in the same NP, as in *Dēmarētou tēn katápausin tēs basilēiēs* “Demaretus’ deposing of the monarchy” (Hdt. 6.67), i.e. the event in which Demaretus deposed the monarchy. As already noted by Kühner and Gerth (1890–1904:§414.4), this classification is somewhat too rigid to account for the variety of semantic relations expressed by genitive modification, especially in verse, for instance *Recipient, as in *meledēmata patrós* ‘cares for his father’ (Hom. Od. 15.8) or, in prose, *tò Megarēōn psēphisma* ‘the decree about the Megarians’ (Thuc. 1.140.3, cf. 1.139.1 *tò perì Megarēōn psēphisma*). One may say that the modifying genitive is underspecified as to its semantic function; it only establishes a link between two entities, without specifying the nature of this link. As we will see below, AGk also has the alternative option of specifying this function through modifying APs.

It may also happen that a subjective genitive is used with a first-order entity; one has to construe a state-of-affairs (a second-order entity) in which the referent of the head noun is involved for successful interpretation, as in *kúmata pantoíōn anémōn* “the waves [caused by] various winds” (Hom. Il. 2.396). In other cases, an *agent noun (a special class of individuals, since they are defined by the state-of-affairs in which they participate in) may be constructed either with an objective genitive, as in *tōn meteōrōn phrontistēs* ‘the thinker of celestial things’ (Xen. Symp. 6.7), or with the case the corresponding verb (here *phrontízō*) would demand, as in *tà metéōra phrontistēs* (Pl. Ap. 18b).

Genitives may also occur in headless NPs: with person names, the genitive is used to name the father as in *Aléksandros ho Philíppou* (sc. *huiós*) ‘Alexander son of Philipp’. This is also common with place names, as in *eis didaskálōn* (sc. *oíkon*) ‘to the teachers’ place’. Sometimes, the nominal head is left unspecified and has to be construed in context: *tà tēs póleōs* (sc. *prágmata?*) ‘the city’s affairs, charges, duties, etc.’

Adpositional phrases

According to the type of entity denoted by a noun, different types of APs may be used, locating them in space (first-order entities), in time and/or space (second-order entities), or indicating other semantic relations (cause, manner, etc.) (second-order entities). Thus, in *hoi epì tou teíkhous phúlakes* “the guardians of the wall” (Aen. Tact. 26.13), the first-order entity *phúlakes* is located in space, whereas in *tàs metà tà déka étē spondás* “the peace [made] after ten years” (Thuc. 5.25.3), a second-order entity, *spondás* (specifically the “pouring of libations to conclude a peace treaty”), is located in time.

Things are not always that simple, however, since even nouns denoting first-order entities may be modified by APs expressing time or logical relations. The effect is that the AP evokes the state-of-affairs in which the referent of the noun is involved. What is modified is then that second-order entity, not the first-order one itself. In *tàs epì taís euergesíais dōreíás* “the

gratifications [obtained] for good service” (Dem. 20.154), one has to construe a state-of-affairs in which the gratifications are obtained to allow for a satisfying reading of the phrase.

Headless NPs with AP modifiers are quite common in AGk: *hoi en ástei* ‘the city-dwellers’ (Lys. 13.90), *hoi amphì tòν Dareîon* ‘Darius’s court’ or ‘Darius and his courtiers’ (Hdt. 3.76).

Adverbs

AGk allows very freely the use of *adverbs as NP modifier, as witnessed by *katà tèn khthès homologían* “according to yesterday’s agreement” (Pl. Soph. 216a). This is even possible with a null-head NP (the determiner is then the only clue as to the gender of the NP), as in (1).

(1) Τῶν νῦν οἱ τότε μυρίῳ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν διέφερον Pl. Plt. 271 e

tôn nûn hoi tóte muríōi pròs eudaimonían diépheron

“the people of those times where thousand times happier than the people today”.

As the last example shows, the noun does not have to denote a second-order entity to be open to adverbial modification: first-order entities (here “people”, as shown by the masculine gender of the article) are possible too, being then located in space or, as here, in time.

Sometimes, the use of an adverb as modifier in an NP is metalinguistic: the adverb modifies the discourse act of choosing such or such lexeme to name the referent of the head noun. Thus in *tòn homologouménōs doûlon* (Dem. 29.14), the adverb modifies the discourse act of calling someone a slave, and the phrase should be glossed “he who is recognized by all as a slave” or “he who has admitted that he is a slave”.

The adverb *pánu* “altogether” is a special case: when used as a modifier in an NP, it indicates that the name or property attributed to the referent by the head noun is perfectly adapted. Thus, in *Perikleî [...] tōi tou pánu Perikléous huiōi* “Pericles [...] the son of Pericles himself” (X. Mem. 3.5.1), there is a distinction between Pericles, the one everybody knows, and his son who bears the same name.

Relative clauses and participial clauses

Unsurprisingly, one finds relative and participial clauses in modifier position (see further *relative clause and *participle). Their basic principle is that they modify the referent by specifying a state-of-affairs in which it is involved. Since both kinds of clausal modifiers are treated elsewhere in this volume, I will only exemplify each construction (2–3), with (a) and without (b) a head-noun.

(2) a. πρίν [...] γινώσκωσι τὸν ὄλεθρον ἐν ᾧ εἰσί

prín [...] gignōskōsi tòn ólethron en hōi eisi

‘before they know the ruin in which they are’ (Antiph. 1.29)

b. ὅσα δὲ παραλελοίπαμεν, ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων [...] ῥάδιόν ἐστιν καταμαθεῖν

hósa dè paralelóipamen, ek tōn eirēménōn [...] rháidión estin katamatheîn

‘all what we have passed over may be readily understood judging from what we said’ (Isoc. 7.56)

(3) a. ἐν τῷ γραμματείῳ τῷ ἐπὶ τοῦ δικαστηρίου γραφέντι

en tōi grammateíōi tōi epì tou̅ dikastēriou graphénti ouk énesti taûta

‘in the document drawn up before the tribunal’ (Isaeus 5.25)

b. οἱ γραψάμενοι Σωκράτην

hoi grapsámenoi Sōkrátēn

‘those who have accused Socrates’ (Xen. Mem. 1.1.1)

Nouns

AGk also allows same-case nouns to function as noun modifiers, in a construction called (close) apposition*. However, it is not entirely clear, in such instances as *téktones ándres* “architect-men” (Hom. Il. 6.315), which of the nouns is the head and which one is the modifier. Things are clearer in the so-called appositive genitive construction, where both the head noun and the genitive denote the same referent, as in *Kánēs óros* ‘Mount Kane’ (Hdt. 7.42.3).

Modification outside the NP

Outside the NP, modification is achieved by adverbs and APs. As universal modifiers, adverbs can modify virtually any kind of constituent; the same is true of APs, which can be seen as complex adverbial constituents*. Here are some examples of constituents modified by adverbs (for nouns, see above):

– a verb: *rhāidíōs gnósesthe* “you will easily know” (Lys. 19.11);

– a AP: *mál’ en díkēi* “very rightly” (Pl. Phdr. 266a);

– an adjective: *hekousíous te kai adíkous pántōs* “wholly willful and wicked” (Pl. Leg. 872d);

– an adverb: *mál’ orthōs* “quite rightly” (Dem. 8.48);

– a suffix: *pollōi paradoxóteron* “much more strange” (Dem. 9.21), where the adverbial dative *pollōi* intensifies only the comparative suffix *-teron*.

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