# Adjective: The unknown Category
## Inflection, articles and other functional material in the AP

Keywords: *adjectives, categorial status, functional elements, morpho-syntax, typology*

In spite of a substantial body of research on the status of **A**(djectives), from both a generative (e.g. Baker 2003) and functionalist (e.g. Bhat, 1994) as well as a diachronic and typological (Dixon 1982; Rießler 2016) perspective, there does not seem to be a broad consensus on a number of relevant questions like

(i) Is A a universal category?
(ii) Is A a category at all or is it rather a version of N or V?
(iii) Are there (sub-)categories like "nouny" and "verby" As?
(iv) Which categorial properties make A clearly distinct from N and V?

Against the backdrop of these rather broad and general questions, this workshop addresses a relatively specific domain – ***functional elements*** *(inflection, articles, ezafe)* ***in the AP*** and their (possible) ***contribution to*** **or** ***interaction with the categorial status of A***:

(v) Are there functional elements/morphemes in the AP that are intimately related to or dependent on the category A, or even determine adjectivehood?
(vi) Do they have cognates in other domains (NP, VP), and if so, how are they related (morphologically/semantically/etymologically)?

The general aim of the workshop is to gain new insights regarding the – up to this day unanswered – question of what it is that makes an A an A. Do As have specific properties that allow a definition of their categorial status, and if so, are they substantial or merely functional properties (e.g. attributive modification) – or are As simply the least specified category (see Baker 2003) that are best characterized by what they are not rather than by what they are?

**The workshop has an empirical and a theoretical component, and explicitly welcomes diachronic, comparative and typological, as well as theoretical perspectives**. On the empirical side, we want to bring together a number of relevant phenomena from a range of languages, and try to establish a (small-scale) typology of relevant items. The goal is to formulate diagnostics that allow us to compare such AP internal material across languages. On the theoretical side, we are interested in what role these items play regarding the categorial status of A.

Below we give a brief (non-exhaustive) overview of relevant topics for the WS:

a) Early Indo-European has been claimed not to have a separate category A, but merely one super-category ***nominal.*** One of the arguments used is that presumed adjectives are syntactically, semantically and **morphologically** non-distinct from nouns. This raises the question what characterizes ***inflectional material*** *as* ***adjectival***. Is it merely distinctness from nominal inflection, is it gender (and phi-) agreement or something else? Germanic weak adjectives are particularly interesting as they seem to have

changed their categorial status from N to A (see Osthoff 1876; Viti 2015; Rehn 2019).

We are thus particularly interested in adjectival inflection that appears to be more than simply the spellout of agreement, such as the strong vs. weak inflection in Germanic, the definite vs. indefinite inflection in Latvian and Lithuanian, but also short vs. long adjectives in Slavic languages.

b)   Some languages employ ***adjectival***/*linking*/*attributive **articles***: article elements that appear to be inherently dependent on the presence of an adjective. Although these elements are usually etymologically related to demonstratives/definite determiners, they cannot be considered "regular" definite articles since they are more closely associated with the adjectival constituent, rather than the noun phrase at large. Consequently, it has been argued that they are narrow components of the AP (Marušič & Žaucer 2007, 2013; Perridon & Sleeman 2011; Rießler 2016; Börjars & Payne 2016; Pfaff 2019). Elements fitting the profile of "adjectival article" can be found in Greek, Slovenian, Albanian, Romanian, Gothic, Old Norse, Hebrew, and others. There is, however, quite some (crosslinguistic) diversity, and the precise function of these elements, their grammaticalization path and their relation to definiteness remain unclear.

c)   ***Comparative/superlative morphology*** is relevant in the present context because it seems to be a paradigmatic adjectival property, designed for the category A, and is often used as one diagnostic for adjectivehood. It has however been pointed out that there are languages where comparative morphology is also found with nouns and even verbs (for discussion and further references, see Ratkus 2011). This suggest that comparison is not uniquely dependent on a category A.


**Participants should try to make reference to one or more of the following questions:**

⇨ What is the role/function/contribution of AP-internal elements?
  o   Are they responsible for "adjectivehood"?
  o   Do they presuppose a category A?
  o   Can they serve as unambiguous diagnostics?
  o   How do they vary crosslinguistically?
  o   Do we find the same morphology with other "attributes" (e.g. appositions)?
  o   Do we find interesting cases of systematic multifunctionality/polysemy or common grammaticalization paths with VP-/NP-internal elements?


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