

## STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE OLD ENGLISH ADJECTIVE

JANUSZ MALAK<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

As regards Old English, the inflectional strength and weakness are characterised by a kind of inconsistency. In the case of Old English adjectives these two inflectional properties appear to be different from those associated with nouns and verbs. In the case of the latter the two properties seem to be lexically determined while in the case of adjectives they appear to be determined by syntactic conditions. The traditional accounts of the Old English grammar attribute two paradigms to one adjectival lexical item. The analysis presented in this article postulates that one can actually speak about one adjectival inflection and what is traditionally presented as strong and weak adjectival inflections is actually the result of two different syntactic derivations.

Keywords: Old English; strong inflection; weak inflection; adjective; derivation; Lexical Item.

### 1. Introductory remarks

The inflectional strength or weakness of a given lexical item goes back to Jacob Grimm and was proposed to account for the observational fact that certain inflectional paradigms were characterised by fairly rich morphological distinctions while others were based on a high degree of syncretism. In the traditional accounts of the grammar of Old English this inflectional classification is present in the descriptions of nominal, verbal, and adjectival paradigms. While the inflectional strength and weakness were the properties of given nominal and verbal lexical items which resulted, among others, from certain phonological and morphological processes which had been operative in Proto-Germanic, in the case of adjectival lexical items this inflectional property was related to the syntactic context. Thus the division into Strong Masculine, Feminine, Neuter nominal declensions and Weak Masculine, Feminine, Neuter ones was based on the type of the Proto-Germanic nominal stem, i.e., terminating in a vowel or a consonantal segment, while in the

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Opole. [magoret@poczta.onet.pl](mailto:magoret@poczta.onet.pl)

case of verbs the division into Strong and Weak Verbs was mainly related to the ways of signalling the past tense, i.e., ablaut, i.e., internal modification, in the case of Strong Verbs vs. suffixation in the case of Weak Verbs. In the case of adjectives this paradigmatic duality appears to be the property of one adjectival lexical item, i.e., the majority of Old English adjectival lexemes were characterised by two inflectional paradigms, one based on a fairly rich inflectional distinction, the other characterised by a high degree of syncretism. The distribution of the two adjectival paradigms seems to be syntactically determined.

This inflectional duality characterising Old English adjectives is a phenomenon characteristic of Germanic languages. According to Reszkiewicz (1973), the rise of two kinds of adjective inflections, i.e., strong and weak, is one of the ten characteristic features setting Proto-Germanic apart from the other Indo-European languages within the Centum group. Lehmann (1994) claims that the two adjective inflections are attested in Gothic. Taking into account what is said in Reszkiewicz (1973) and Lehmann (1994), it can be concluded that the property consisting in one adjectival lexeme featuring two paradigmatic patterns, i.e., one inflectionally diversified and the other inflectionally syncretic, arose as early as Proto-Germanic. There is another interesting property concerning the two inflectional paradigms. According to Faarlund (1994) and Lehmann (1994), the two inflectional paradigms had a lot in common with nominal inflections. Faarlund (1994) claims that: “[o]riginally, adjectives were inflected as nouns, but already in Proto-Germanic some pronominal forms were adopted, which gave rise to the adjectival inflection” (Faarlund 1994: 50). Lehmann (1994) observes that one of the two Gothic adjectival inflections is based on the nominal inflection, with *o/a* stems as most prominent, although *ja*-stems, *i*-stems and *u*-stems were also possible. The mixture of nominal and pronominal endings gave rise to what is known as the strong adjectival inflection. The weak adjectival inflection is a Germanic innovation based on the inflection of nominal *n*-stems. Thus the question addressed in this paper is whether or not it would be justified to revise the issue of strength and weakness in the case of the OE adjective inflection in such a way as to obviate the descriptive inconsistency pertaining to the relation between lexemes belonging to different lexical categories and their paradigmatic patterns.

An intriguing question obtrudes itself at this point. Namely, what is the essence of two paradigmatic patterns representing one adjective lexeme? As will be shown in the subsequent parts of this article, Old English adjectives through assuming strong forms provided grammatical information in which nominal forms were deficient and which was normally signalled by determiners as well as other pronominal forms being components of the Old English DP. As will be presented in the following section, Old English nominal paradigms were characterised by a certain degree of indeterminacy and this had to be resolved through inflected forms of determiners.

The theoretical approach adopted for the analysis proposed in the subsequent parts of this article is mainly based on the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 2000, 2001). The reasons for the adoption of this approach are presented in Section 5. Thus the functional character of the strength or weakness of Old English adjectives will be analysed as the result of operations affecting the derivation of DPs in the narrow syntax as regards the role of adjectives in the formation of those syntactic objects. The purpose of the analysis presented in this paper is to account for the inflectional duality of the Old English adjectival paradigm taking into account the formal affinity of the strong adjectival paradigm to the paradigms of various pronominal forms as well as the formal similarities between the weak adjectival paradigm and the weak nominal declensions. *Contra* Chomsky (2000, 2001) and other generativists, it is assumed here that inflection is not a part of the realisational component of the linguistic faculty, i.e., the morpho-phonological plane presented as Phonological Form (PF), but is a part of the lexical set-up of each lexical item. Assuming after Chomsky (1995) that lexical items appear in Lexical Array fully inflected and that Linguistic Capacity manipulates only features of LIs in the narrow syntax, it is assumed here that Old English adjectives also appeared in LA fully inflected.

The paper is organised as follows: it begins with the presentation of the surface, i.e., PF forms of the strong and weak paradigms of Old English adjectives. The two inflectional paradigms will be contrasted with determiner and pronominal forms in the case of strong adjectival inflection and weak nominal inflection will be contrasted with the weak adjectival inflection. The purpose of this presentation is, among others, to show the predominant pronominal/determiner character of the OE strong adjectival inflection, while the analysis of OE weak nominal paradigms is meant to point to the nominal character of the OE weak adjectival inflection. The differences between the characters of the two inflectional patterns will be associated with different derivations of the OE DP. That is why the subsequent parts of the current paper will deal with two different derivations of the Old English DP featuring strong and weak adjectival forms. This part is meant to provide observations based on the inflectional and structural conditions resulting from different derivations within the narrow syntax which will accommodate the two inflectional paradigms in the structure of the OE DP, which will hopefully provide an answer to question posed above.

## 2. Observational PF facts concerning the Old English nominal, demonstrative, and pronominal inflections

Chomsky (1995) postulates that each lexical item (henceforth LI) can be described as an aggregate of features of three types, i.e.,  $\pi$ -features visible at PF,  $\lambda$ -features

visible at Logical Form (LF), and  $\phi$ -features operating within the confines of the narrow syntax. As regards nominal LIs the  $\phi$ -features reflect such grammatical categories as Gender, Number, and Case. Chomsky (1995) further assumes that Gender and Number are visible at LF, i.e., such features are interpretable, while Case is not, and thus it is uninterpretable and must be disposed of before the whole derivative is sent to spell-out and thus becomes fully legible at LF and PF. Despite the fact that what is going to be presented in the two subsequent sections as regards the inflections of Old English nouns and Old English pronouns and determiners is at length described and analysed in numerous accounts of the Old English grammar, it would be useful to have a closer look at the forms of the Old English noun in order to gauge the degree of indeterminacy of the Old English nominal inflection. It is assumed here that the inflectional information necessary for full intelligibility of Old English nominal expressions at LF is provided through such elements as demonstrative pronouns, determiners, and adjectives through their strong inflection. That is why it would also be interesting to analyse the Old English pronominal and determiner paradigms in order to find out what they share in their forms so that it is possible to unequivocally account for the information absent from the forms of nouns necessary for full interpretation of DPs at LF. The results of this analysis will be contrasted with the Old English strong adjectival paradigm, which may offer some clues as regards the status of strong adjectival forms in the derivation of the OE DP.

If one takes a look at Old English nouns in isolation, it can be noticed that only Number, but not in all cases, seems to be visible at LF, which can be attested in such PF forms as, e.g.,

- (1)
- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| a. <i>stan</i> ~ <i>stanas</i> ‘stone ~ stones’  | Strong Masculine             |
| b. <i>lar</i> ~ <i>lara</i> ; <i>talū</i> ~ <i>tala</i> ‘lore ~ lores, tale ~ tales’   | Strong Feminine <sup>2</sup> |
| c. <i>hus</i> ~ <i>hus</i> ; <i>scip</i> ~ <i>scipu</i> ‘house ~ houses, ship ~ ships’ | Strong Neuter <sup>3</sup>   |
| d. <i>hunta</i> ~ <i>huntan</i> ‘hunter ~ hunters’                                     | Weak Masculine               |
| e. <i>tunge</i> ~ <i>tungan</i> ‘tongue ~ tongues’                                     | Weak Feminine                |
| f. <i>eare</i> ~ <i>earan</i> ‘ear ~ ears’   | Weak Neuter                  |

In the case of Strong Neuter heavy syllable stems the plural also fails to be formally signalled. This formal indeterminacy of Old English nouns is alluded to in Hogg (1992) and Allen (1995). Quirk & Wrenn (1958) claim that the gender specification is signalled through such forms, which they term ‘demonstratives’, as *se*, *þæt*, *seo*. It is also maintained in Quirk & Wrenn (1958: 19) that these

<sup>2</sup> The presence or absence of the ending *-u* in Strong Feminine inflection was determined by the structure of the stem syllable. It was absent if the syllable was heavy.

<sup>3</sup> Just like in the case of Strong Feminine, the presence or absence of the ending *-u* in the plural forms was determined by the structure of the stem syllable.

demonstratives “...enforce corresponding agreement on the other demonstratives, on adjectives, and on pronouns”. *Contra* Quirk & Wrenn (1958), it is assumed here that these demonstratives do not make the canonical category responsible for the analogical formal agreement on the other demonstratives, pronouns, but the three classes of pronominal formations make one class sharing the capability of signalling the same grammatical information vital for the interpretation of DP in Old English. Quirk & Wrenn (1958) mention also adjectives as regards this agreement but it is assumed in the current analysis that adjectives do not belong to this class and what is termed in the literature as ‘strong adjectival inflection’ is the matter of derivation, i.e., the association of adjectival LIs with a higher, functional projection.

Thus the formal indeterminacy of the Old English nouns as regards the gender and, in some cases, number specification, as shown in (1), seems to be resolved by the presence of the above mentioned demonstratives thus rendering the nominal  $\phi$ -features visible at LF as in shown in (2):

(2)

- a. *se stan* ~ *þa stanas* ‘the stone ~ the stones’
- b. *seo lar* ~ *þa lara*; *seo talu* ~ *þa tala* ‘the lore ~ the lores, the tale ~ the tales’
- c. *þæt hus* ~ *þa hus*; *þæt scip* ~ *þa scipu* ‘the house ~ the houses, the ship ~ ships’
- d. *se hunta* ~ *þa huntan* ‘the hunter ~ the hunters’
- e. *seo tunge* ~ *þa tungan* ‘the tongue ~ the tongues’
- f. *þæt eare* ~ *þa earan* ‘the ear ~ the ears’

What is presented in (2) contains only nominative forms. In the case of neuter nouns whose stems contained a heavy syllable the distinction between *þæt* and *þa* seems to be the only means of signalling Number.

The formal means of signalling Case on Old English nouns does not seem to be fully informative, i.e., what is vital for LF interpretation of nominal forms as regards syntactic structures is not fully reflected in their PF realisations. The greatest number of case endings is found on Strong Masculine and Strong Neuter nouns. Thus the forms *stan* and *scip* could be analysed in isolation either as nominative or accusative singular. In the case of the former the two Case specifications are rendered through the distinction between *se* for nominative and *þone* for accusative. As regards the latter the demonstrative form *þæt* does not signal the distinction between the two Case specifications. Thus *þæt scip* could be analysed as nominative as well as accusative singular. This, however, reflects the nominative-accusative syncretism of neuter nouns which is found in all Indo-European languages. As regards plural forms, all nominal declensions are characterised by nominative-accusative syncretism. Both Masculine and Neuter

Strong declensions are characterised by a distinct ending in genitive singular and plural. In the case of dative plural it is the same for all nominal declensions. Thus the genitive singular forms of *stan* and *scip* were, respectively, *stanes*, *scipes*, while the dative singular forms were *stane*, *scipe*. In the plural the genitive and dative forms were signalled through such forms as *stana*, *scipa* and *stanum*, *scipum* respectively.

Strong Feminine was characterised by a smaller number of nominal forms. Actually one can speak in this case about four morphologically distinct nominal forms, i.e., *lar/talu* – nominative singular, *lare/tale* – genitive, dative, and accusative singular, *lara/tala* – nominative, accusative, and genitive plural, and finally *larum/talum* – dative plural. Despite the fact that nominative and accusative feminine forms were sufficiently signalled by distinct forms, this distinction seems to be additionally reinforced by the distinction *seo lar/seo talu* vs. *þa lare/þa tale*. In the plural *þa lara/þa tala* could have been interpreted either as nominative or accusative. In the singular there is a degree of indeterminacy in the case of genitive and dative singular. Despite the fact that the forms *lare/tale* could be interpreted in isolation as either genitive or dative, the demonstrative accompanying the two nouns, i.e., *þære*, is by no means interpretationally helpful since *þære lare/ þære tale* in isolation could be interpreted either as genitive or dative. The degree of inflectional indeterminacy based on the increasing degree of syncretism of forms characterising the paradigm of strong nominal forms can be presented as Fig.1.

Strong Masculine	Strong Neuter	Strong Feminine
	Singular	
<i>stan</i> { Nominative Accusative	<i>scip</i> { Nominative Accusative	<i>lar/talu</i> — Nominative
<i>stanes</i> — Genitive	<i>scipes</i> — Genitive	<i>lare/tale</i> { Genitive Dative Accusative
<i>stane</i> — Dative	<i>scipe</i> — Dative	
	Plural	
<i>stanas</i> { Nominative Accusative	<i>scipu</i> { Nominative Accusative	<i>lara/tala</i> { Nominative Genitive Accusative
<i>stanum</i> — Dative	<i>scipum</i> — Dative	<i>larum/talum</i> — Dative

Fig. 1. The inflectional indeterminacy of Old English strong nouns

In the case of weak nominal declensions, the mode of signalling Case and Gender is the same and it can be related to the high degree of syncretism mentioned above. Thus the paradigm of the weak masculine *guma* is characterised by as many as four distinct forms, i.e., *guma* – nominative sg., *guman* – genitive, dative, accusative sg. nominative and accusative plural, *gumena* – genitive plural, *gumum* – dative plural. The same set of inflectional endings except nominative singular is found on inflected forms of weak feminine *tunge* and weak neuter *eage*, the latter differing in the syncretism of nominative and accusative singular. So it seems that the forms of the demonstratives and determiners referred to above are the formal means of rendering  $\varphi$ -features of Old English nouns visible and interpretable at LF.

Let us now take a closer look at the forms of the OE determiner and contrast their forms with other Old English determiners and pronouns. It will be shown that these classes of functional words share certain elements which could be compared to inflectional suffixes. For that purpose the paradigms of such forms as: *se*, *seo*, *þæt*, *þes*, *þeos*, *þis*, *he*, *heo*, *hit*, *hwa*, and *hwæt* will be compared and contrasted with one another.

Singular											
Nom.	<u>se</u>	<u>seo</u>	<u>þæt</u>	<u>þes</u>	<u>þeos</u>	<u>þis</u>	<u>he</u>	<u>heo</u>	<u>hit</u>	<u>hwa</u>	<u>hwæt</u>
Gen.	þæs	þære	þæs	þisses	þisse	þisses	his	hire	his	hwæs	hwæs
Dat.	þæ <u>m</u>	þære	þæ <u>m</u>	þiss <u>um</u>	þisse	þiss <u>um</u>	hi <u>m</u>	hire	hi <u>m</u>	hwæ <u>m</u>	hwæ <u>m</u>
Acc.	þo <u>ne</u>	þa	þæt	þisne	þās	þis	hi <u>ne</u>	hīe	hit	hwone	hwæt
Plural											
N & Acc.	þa	þa	þa	þas	þas	þas	hīe	hīe	hīe	–	–
Gen.	þa <u>ra</u>	þa <u>ra</u>	þa <u>ra</u>	þissa	þissa	þissa	hi <u>ra</u>	hi <u>ra</u>	hi <u>ra</u>	–	–
Dat.	þa <u>m</u>	þa <u>m</u>	þa <u>m</u>	þiss <u>um</u>	þiss <u>um</u>	þiss <u>um</u>	heo <u>m</u>	heo <u>m</u>	heo <u>m</u>	–	–

Table 1. Old English demonstrative and pronominal forms (the shared elements are underscored and typed bold)

Table 1 presents forms of syntactic objects which open OE DPs, i.e., demonstratives (i.e., *se*, *seo*, *þæt*, *þes*, *þeos*, *þis*) as well as those which function as full-fledged nominal expressions, i.e., pronouns (*he*, *heo*, *hit*, *hwa*, *hwæt*). Scrutinising those forms one can notice that they are characterised by a certain affinity and, at the same time, in some respects they are dissimilar. The forms signalling nominative singular indicate the gender distinction through the same vocalic alternation, i.e., *-e- ~ -eo-* for masculine and feminine respectively. Nominative and accusative neuter are characterised by the formant *-t-* terminating these forms.<sup>4</sup> If it is assumed that such forms as *þisse* and *þissa* had descended

<sup>4</sup> This Old English formant could be associated with the formal means of signalling definiteness in Modern Norwegian, e.g., *hus-et* ‘house – Def’, *de-t store hus-et* ‘the-Def big house-def’,

from older *\*bis-re* and *\*bis-ra* through the assimilation of *-r-* to the preceding *-s-*, then it could be assumed that the form *bis* is the modified version of the older *bit-s* though it is not corroborated by what is presented in Wright & Wright (1925). The final *-s-* in *bes*, *beos* and *bas* is the vestige of the formative *-se* which in prehistorical era was added to, respectively *be-se*, *biu-se* and *ba-se* (cf. Wright & Wright 1925). Thus it could be assumed that in the case of demonstrative and pronominal formations gender was signalled through the vocalic alternation *-e*, *-eo* for masculine and feminine nominative singular while neuter nominative and accusative were signalled, in the majority of cases, through the formant *-t*. In the case of plural nominative and accusative these forms terminated in either *-a* in the case of demonstratives or *-ie* as regards pronouns. What is noteworthy is the fact that the endings of those forms were vocalic differing only in the quality of the vowels with no consonantal element.

The remaining demonstrative and pronominal forms seem to share the same endings. The ending *-s* signals genitive sg. masc. and neuter, the ending *-(u)m* expresses dative sg. masc. and neuter as well as all genders in dative plural, the ending *-ne* expresses accusative, masc. sg., the ending *-re* signals genitive and dative sg. feminine and, finally, the ending *-ra* signals genitive of all genders in the plural. It is noteworthy that these endings are found in functional constituents such as demonstratives as well as pronominal forms which syntactically function in the same way as DPs. It seems that the above described endings play a most important role as auxiliary elements expressing such grammatical categories as Gender, Case, and, in some cases, Number.

### 3. Strong adjectival inflection

Strong adjectival inflection will be illustrated by the forms of two adjectival LIs, i.e., *blind* ‘blind’ and *hwæt* ‘active’ (cf. Campbell 1959).

(3)

Sg.	Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
Nom.	<i>blind</i> ,	<i>hwæt</i>	<i>blind</i> ,	<i>hwæt-u/hwæt</i>	<i>blind</i> ,	<i>hwæt</i>
Gen.	<i>blind-es</i> ,	<i>hwæt-es</i>	<i>blind-re</i> ,	<i>hwæt-re</i>	<i>blind-es</i> ,	<i>hwæt-es</i>
Dat.	<i>blind-um</i> ,	<i>hwæt-um</i>	<i>blind-re</i> ,	<i>hwæt-re</i>	<i>blind-um</i> ,	<i>hwæt-um</i>
Acc.	<i>blind-ne</i> ,	<i>hwæt-ne</i>	<i>blind-e</i> ,	<i>hwæt-e</i>	<i>blind</i> ,	<i>hwæt</i>

---

*e-t stor-t hus* ‘a big house’. The last example shows that the formant *-t* functions as an adjectival suffix in the indefinite context.

Inst.	<i>blind-e,</i>	<i>hwat-e</i>			<i>blind-e,</i>	<i>hwat-e</i> <sup>5</sup>
Pl.						
Nom.	<i>blind-e,</i>	<i>hwat-e</i>	<i>blind-e/-a,</i>	<i>hwat-e</i>	<i>blind,</i>	<i>hwat-u</i>
Acc.						
Gen.	<i>blind-ra,</i>	<i>hwæt-ra</i>	<i>blind-ra,</i>	<i>hwæt-ra</i>	<i>blind-ra,</i>	<i>hwæt-ra</i>
Dat.	<i>blind-um,</i>	<i>hwat-um</i>	<i>blind-um,</i>	<i>hwat-um</i>	<i>blind-um,</i>	<i>hwat-um</i>

The above paradigm shows a certain symmetry. Campbell (1959) as well as Wright & Wright (1925) observe that the paradigm of strong adjectival declension consists of forms which are partly nominal and partly pronominal. In all the accounts the ending *-es* is treated as nominal.<sup>6</sup> In the current analysis it is treated as pronominal since the final element *-s* is also found on the forms of demonstratives and pronouns, which is shown in Table 1. Thus, ignoring instrumental, comparing the data presented in Table 1 with what is shown in (3), it can be noticed that there is a considerable parallelism between demonstrative, pronominal endings and the endings characteristic of the OE adjectival strong inflection. The only forms which do not fit this parallelism are nominative singular masculine, feminine, and neuter, as well as nominative and accusative plural all genders. Noteworthy is the observation that the form *hwatu*, nom. sg. fem., has the same ending as the nominal feminine plural form *talū*, which would point to the nominal character of this ending. That is why it will be assumed that this is a nominal ending.

One of the peculiarities of the Old English strong adjectival inflection is the absence of the formant *-t* in nominative singular neuter. In Old High German strong adjectival forms additionally signalled the neuter nominative/accusative singular specification through the suffix *-az*, e.g., *blint (-az)* (Salmons 2012). It could be hypothesized that this formant was originally characterised by the presence of *-t* which changed into *-z* due to the Second Consonant Shift. Nowadays this formant is still existent in strong adjectival inflection in Modern High German, i.e., *ein blindes Tier* ‘a blind animal’. Thus the presence or absence of this formant seems to have been characterised by a diversified dialectal distribution obtaining in West Germanic.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell (1959) presents the instrumental only for masculine sg. while in Wright and Wright’s (1925) and Hogg’s (1992) accounts instrumental is also a part of the neuter sg. paradigm.

<sup>6</sup> This way of classifying the ending *-es* is determined by the data coming from reconstructed Proto-Germanic. According to Wright & Wright (1925) Proto-Germanic nouns and Proto-Germanic adjectives shared certain forms, e.g., nom. and acc.sg. *\*dazaz* OE *dæg* ‘day’ *\*blindaz* OE *blind* ‘blind’, but the accusative sg. was *\*blindanōn* OE *blindne*. Thus Proto-Germanic nominal and adjectival inflections were based on nominal as well as adjectival formatives. Due to manifold phonological processes affecting PG forms longer word formations reappear in OE as shorter, which, in the majority of cases, had led to a kind of parallelism between nominal and strong adjectival inflections.

As regards the ending *-u* in neuter plural *hwatu*, this ending patterns with the ending *-u* in Strong Neuter plural nominative and accusative *scipu*. It is hard to determine whether nominative and accusative forms *blinde*, *blinde/-a* in masculine and feminine plural pattern with *þa* are continuations of Proto-Germanic nominal or, possibly, adjectival inflections. To be on the safe side let us divide the forms of the strong adjectival inflectional formations into unequivocally demonstrative and pronominal [+ dem-pron] and non-demonstrative and pronominal [– dem-pron]. The distribution of the two types of strong adjectival forms can be presented as follows:

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Singular			
Nominative	[– dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]
Accusative	[+ dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]
Genitive	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]
Dative	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]
Plural			
Nom.& Acc.	[– dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]	[– dem-pron]
Genitive	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]
Dative	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]	[+ dem-pron]

Table 2. The distribution of Old English strong adjectival forms

As can be seen from Table 2, it is possible to make an observation to the effect that, except for one case, the distinction between adjectival forms classified as [– dem-pron] and those classified as [+ dem-pron] correlates with the distinction into Structural Case, i.e., nominative and accusative, and Inherent Case, genitive and dative, alluded to in Chomsky (1995). The exception to this generalisation is accusative masculine singular. This distinction may be related to the function a given DP with an adjective plays in the proposition, i.e., the [– dem-pron] specification unequivocally is connected with the subject. The syncretism between nominative and accusative feminine and neuter singular and all genders in plural remains unaccounted for. It can be hypothesised that such cases are a residue of the older IE ergative system replaced by the accusative system found in Old English (cf. Alscher 2001). This issue will not be pursued here any further and suffice it to say that the strong adjectival paradigm is based on nominal endings in the case of nominative and accusative, bar accusative masculine singular, and pronominal endings in the remaining cases.

## 4. Weak adjectival inflection

As said at the beginning of this paper, the Old English weak adjectival paradigm was characterised by a considerable syncretism. Apart from the contrast in nominative sg, i.e., *-a* for masculine, and nominative sg., i.e., *-e* for feminine and neuter, the only case forms that are different from the rest of the forms of this paradigm are *-ra* for genitive for all genders in the plural and *-um* for dative in all genders in the plural. Actually the last ending seems to be a universal signal of dative plural in all genders for both nouns and adjectives. The ending *-ra* in genitive plural of all genders seems to be in free variation with the nominal ending *-ena*. Taking the above into consideration, it can be said that weak adjectival declensions are almost formally identical to weak nominal declensions. This formal affinity will be presented in Table 3 below.

Sg.	masculine		feminine		neuter	
	noun	adjective	noun	adjective	noun	adjective
nominative	gum-a	blind-a	tung-e	blind-e	ear-e	blind-e
genitive	gum-an	blind-an	tung-an	blind-an	ear-an	blind-an
dative	gum-an	blind-an	tung-an	blind-an	ear-an	blind-an
accusative	gum-an	blind-an	tung-an	blind-an	ear-e	blind-e
Pl.						
nom. & acc.	gum-an	blind-an	tung-an	blind-an	ear-an	blind-an
genitive	gum-ena	blind-ra/ -ena	tung-ena	blind-ra/ -ena	ear-ena	blind-ra/ -ena
dative	gum-um	blind-um	tung-um	blind-um	ear-um	blind-um

Table 3. Old English nominal and adjectival weak inflection

As can be seen from Table 3, the Old English weak adjectival inflections are characterised by the same endings as those found on the Old English weak declensions with the exception of genitive plural, where the ending is typically adjectival *-ra*. According to Campell (1959) the nominal ending *-ena* in the weak adjectival inflection is rare except in early West Saxon where it is always used. Thus it can be safely assumed that weak adjectival inflection is formally almost identical to weak nominal inflection.

The historical material presented in Wright & Wright (1925) sheds some light on the formal affinity between weak nominal and adjectival inflections. According to Wright & Wright (1925: 215): “[t]he so-called weak declensions of adjectives is a special Germanic formation by means of the suffixes **-en-**, **-on-**, which were originally used to form nomina agentis, and attributive nouns”. Thus, according to Wright & Wright (1925), Gothic *blinds* corresponds to OE *blind*, an adjective, while Gothic and OE *blinda* originally meant ‘the blind man’ and was characterised as a noun. The authors also maintain that such nominal

formations came to be used attributively quite early and later on they came to be analysed as adjectives. The fact that those Germanic attributive nouns came to be felt to be adjectives in Old English comes from the inflection of the comparative and the superlative. According to Campbell (1959) the comparative forms were inflected weak while the superlative forms could assume either weak or strong endings. This problem, however, will not be pursued here any further because of space limitations.

Ending this part of the present paper concerned with inflectional properties of Old English adjectives it can be said that, in contrast to verbs and nouns, in whose case the strength or weakness of the inflection was connected with the lexical properties of lexical items belonging to the two syntactic categories, this dual adjectival specification was the matter of syntax. The Old English adjective could feature either the strong inflection, characterised by a number of inflectional contrasts, or the weak one, whose hallmark was a considerable syncretism of forms. What is peculiar about the two paradigms is the fact that they are connected with the attributive function. Strong adjectival forms open OE DPs if such nominal expressions do not feature any determiners or demonstrative pronouns. When a DP opens with a determiner or a demonstrative pronoun, adjectives assume their weak inflection forms. Thus it would be interesting to find out if this paradigmatic duality was reflected in the syntax of the OE DP.

##### 5. Strong vs. weak adjectival inflections

Before any attempt is made at postulating the role reflected by the dual inflectional paradigm of the Old English adjective in the syntax of the Old English DP, a few words must be said about the syntactic contexts in which strong and weak forms are found. The survey of syntactic contexts characteristic of the two adjectival inflection starts with the observation that the predicative position is reserved for strong inflection, where the agreement between the adjectival form in the predicate and the subject reflects Number. According to Mitchell (1985) the formal contrast is between the endingless form and the form with the ending *-e*, e.g.,

- (4) *þu*                      *eart*    *mere*                      *and*                      *micel*<sup>7</sup>  
 thou-2nd p. sg.    art    famous-sg.    and                      great-sg  
 ‘you are famous and great’

*ÆChom* ii. 20. 34 (Mitchell 1985: 62)

<sup>7</sup> The adjective *mere*, *mære* ‘famous, great’ terminates in *-e* and this vowel is not an ending. It belongs to the stem of this adjectival form.

- (5) *ge*                    *sind*            *ældæodige*  
 you-2nd p. pl    are            strange-pl  
 ‘you are strange’

*ÆChom* ii. 484. 29 (Mitchell 1985: 62)

Fischer (2001) observes that adjectives inflected strong even in the attributive function are characterised by predicate-like interpretation, which Fischer terms ‘verbalness’, in contrast to their weak counterparts whose interpretation is that of an adjunct. This property of the Old English adjectives may be related to the observational fact presented in Mitchell (1985), Fischer (2001), as well as Pysz (2009), that the adjectival forms belonging to the weak inflection are, in the majority of cases, preceded by demonstrative forms, i.e., *se*, *seo*, *þæt*, and forms of *þes*, *þeos*, *þis*, as well as the forms of possessive determiners. In other cases adjectives assumed strong forms.

At this point a question obtrudes itself whether or not the syntactic context, i.e., what precedes weak adjectival forms, offers an explanatorily satisfactory explanation of the weakness of the Old English adjective. The relation between the presence of demonstrative pronouns or determiners with weak adjectival forms may be a reflection of a deeper phenomenon connected with the syntactic derivation which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with on the basis of mere formal analysis, hence the recourse to the Minimalist Program as a theoretical perspective. Due to the overall architecture of the Minimalist Program, which assumes coupling morpho-phonological material (PF) with logical interpretation (LF) through the narrow syntax, we expect to be able to find the sources of the strength as well as weakness of the Old English adjectival inflection.

As regards the adjective in the attributive function, in Old English adjectives could assume either prenominal or post nominal position. Let us have a look at a couple of examples contrasting strong adjectival forms with the weak ones:

Strong forms

- (6) *ne scyle nan mon siocne*                    *monnan*            *and*  
 not must no man [a] sick-acc.masc.sg. man-acc.masc.sg. and  
*gesargodne*                    *swencan ac hine*                    *mon scel lædan*  
 wounded-acc.masc.sg. distress but him-acc.masc.sg. one must lead  
*to þæm læce*  
 to the doctor  
 ‘No one should distress a sick and wounded man but one must take him to the doctor’

Fischer (2001: 261)

(7)

*Ɔær mihton geseon winceastre leodan*  
 there-Expl. could see Winchester-gen.pl. people-nom.pl.fem.  
*rancne here and unearhne*  
 proud acc.masc.sg. army-acc.masc.sg. and uncowardly-acc.masc.sg.  
 ‘The people of Winchester could see a proud and dauntless army’

(Fischer 2001: 264)

(8)

*Ɔonne se swile gewyrmed tobyrst nim gate meoluc*  
 When the swelling festering bursts take goat’s milk-acc.sg.fem.  
*swa wearme niwan amolcene sele drinkan*  
 so warm-acc.sg.fem. newly milked give to drink  
 ‘When the festering swelling bursts, take goat milk so warm and freshly  
 milked and give it to drink’

(Fischer 2001: 262)

(9)

*ac hi sindon ealle gastas swiðe*  
 but they are all-nom.pl.masc spirits-nom.pl.masc. very  
*strange and mihtige and wlitige*  
 strong- nom.pl.masc. and mighty- nom.pl.masc and beautiful- nom.pl.masc  
 ‘but they are all very powerful and effective and beautiful spirits’

(Mitchell 1985: 77)

Weak forms:

(10)

*ac he teah forð þa his ealdan wrenceas*  
 but he drew forth then his old-WK tricks-acc.sg.masc.  
 ‘He then brought forth his old tricks’

(Mitchel 1985: 52)

(11)

*...oð he mette ða graman metena*  
 ...until he met the-acc.pl.fem. fierce-WK goddesses-acc.pl.fem.  
*ðe folcisce men hatað Parcas*  
 that folk-nom.pl.masc. men call Parcas

(Treharne 2010: 20)

‘...until he found the fierce goddesses who are popularly called Parcas’

(translation Treharne 2010: 21)

(12)

*under þam cealdan wætere ond*  
 under the-dat.sg.neut cold-WK water-dat.sg.neut. and  
*þam wætan*  
 the-dat.sg.neut. wet-WK  
 ‘under cold and wet water’

(Quirk &amp; Wrenn 1958: 68)

As said above, Fischer (2001) as well as Pysz (2009) point to the verb-like, i.e., predicate-forming, character of the strong adjectival inflection and noun-like features of the weak one. Adjectives in strong forms feature predicational formations, as shown in (4) and (5), can take negative prefix *un-*, as in *un-earhne* in (7), and could be modified by adverbs *swa* ‘so’ and *swiðe* ‘very’. These two features are not found with the weak adjectival formations. The modification through adverbs could be treated as a fairly telling diagnostic feature pointing to the adjectival character of a given LI.<sup>8</sup> Fischer (2000) claims that such formations as ‘a very old man’ or ‘the man is very old’ are extremely common in Old English texts but such a formation as ‘the very old man’ is not likely to be found in all extant Old English text. If what Fischer (2000, 2001) claims about the collocability of weak adjectival forms with adverbs is correct, then it should be assumed that such unattested formations as *\*under þam swiðe cealdan wætere* ‘under the very cold water’ were unacceptable in Old English and this unacceptability cannot be accounted for on the semantic grounds but through searching for syntactic constraints.

The weakness of the Old English adjective seems to be related to a categorial specification different from that characterising strong adjectival forms. This seems to be corroborated by two negative properties presented above, i.e., unattested occurrences of weak adjectival forms in the predicative position and unattested occurrences of weak adjectival formations premodified by adverbs. These two negative syntactic specifications must be related to some inherent properties characterising weak adjectival forms.

## 6. Strong and weak adjectival inflections – two different derivations

In this section it will be claimed that the strength and weakness of the Old English adjectival inflection is the reflection of two different derivations responsible for generating the DP in Old English. The analysis which is going to be proposed in

<sup>8</sup> However, this feature would not be feasible in the case of all adjectives. While the so called ‘gradable’ adjectives can be modified by adverbs, the so called ‘relational’ adjectives are not normally found with modifying adverbs. Thus such formations as, e.g., *quite historical* or *very industrial* are not likely to be found.

the current section may lead to the stipulation that, actually, one should speak about one adjectival inflection since the weak adjectival inflection is not adjectival, at least formally, whatsoever. First let us tackle the problem of strong adjectival inflection.

It is indicated in Section 3 that there is a kind of parallelism between the forms of demonstrative as well as pronominal forms and certain strong adjective forms, especially those which signal the so-called Inherent Case. Accusative masc. sg. is an exception. However if one takes a look at (6) one can find there three forms bearing the accusative masculine singular specification, i.e., *sioc-ne monnan* and *gesargod-ne* and *hi-ne*. This example shows that the case, gender, and number specifications are superordinate in relation to the lexical material within DP in the sense to be presently explained. Namely *hi-ne*, an autonomous syntactic object, and *sioc-ne*, a constituent functioning as the initial part of the DP *sioc-ne monnan*, are characterised by a similar distribution of lexical, in the case of *sioc-ne*, and functional, in the case of *hi-ne*, material and have the same ending as *þo-ne* (cf. Table 1). In other words such forms as: *sioc-ne monnan*, *þo-ne siocan monnan* enjoy the same syntactic status as *hi-ne*. The difference between such DPs as *sioc-ne monnan*, *þo-ne siocan monnan* and *hi-ne* is the fact that the exponent of accusative masculine singular *-ne* is present either in the constituent opening DPs with lexical contents or in the final position in pronominal DPs. It must be kept in mind that the information carried by *-ne* and other exponents of Case, Gender, and Number is vital in the interpretation of the function a given DP plays in the propositional and semantic dependencies. Thus a kind of parallelism is to be expected between such forms as *sioc-ne* and *þo-ne*.

Another intriguing property of the constituents bearing the case, gender, and number specification alluded to above is that such a constituent is found as the opening element of the OE DP. If one were to adopt the nanosyntactic theorising as presented in Baunaz & Lander (2018), in which inflectional suffixes are treated as syntactic objects, such forms as *þis-ne*, *þo-ne*, *hi-ne*, *hwo-ne*, and  $LI_{Adj-ne}$ , i.e., *sioc-ne* in the case under consideration, could be possibly treated as syntactic objects of the same derivational type.

If it is assumed that the above described forms are formations consisting of some functional stem, i.e., *þæ-/þo-*, *þis-*, *hwo-*, *hi-* and the said ending *-ne*, and *hine* and *hwone* are capable of functioning as full-fledged autonomous syntactic constituents, then it could be assumed that such elements function as Ds in the case of the former constituents or as DP in the latter. It could be hypothesised that adjectival stems in the strong inflection, i.e., *sioc-*, function in the analogical way to the functional stems *þæ-/þo-*, *þis-*, *hwo-*, *hi-*. The problematic issue that appears at this point is how to accommodate the data concerning the strong adjectival inflection and the forms of demonstratives and pronouns presented above through one consistent and uniform paradigm.

The problem with finding a solution to the problem posed above is connected with the theoretical issue concerning the way in which adjectives or adjectival phrases appear in the derivation. Leu (2015) as well as Pysz (2009) speak about four possibilities accounting for the appearance of adjectival expressions in the derivation. All of them are characterised by pros and cons which are presented and discussed in Leu (2015) and Pysz (2009). We will confine ourselves to mentioning the four options without discussing them because of the space limitation and deciding on one of them. According to Leu (2015: 60) one can speak about four analyses as regards the status of the adjective within DP:<sup>9</sup>

- i. Adjectives as adjuncts
- ii. Adjectives as heads
- iii. Adjectives as specifiers
- iv. Adjectives as (reduced) relative clauses.

In order to account for the strength and weakness of the Old English adjectival inflection one should decide on one account which would best pertain to the moment at which the adjectival expression enters the derivation assuming that adjectives, or phrases headed by them, make their appearance in the derivation in the uniform way. The last option, i.e., adjectives as reduced relative clauses does not offer any satisfactory grounds for tackling the problem of the strength as well as weakness of the Old English adjectival inflection. Despite the fact that it is desirable from the point of view of Universal Grammar, as Pysz (2009) claims, it would be hard to explain why the adjective should start its derivation life as the predicate of a relative clause, i.e., a part of a proposition whose logical essence is that of ascription in relation to the subject, as it is put forward in Liebesman (2017).

Moreover the structural dependence characterised as predication should not be equated with the structural dependence characterised as modification. Traugott (1972), setting her argument in Standard Theory, claims that the formation *the old man* is the product of two-step transformation in which the initial state is the formation *the man who is old* which is reduced to *the man old* with the adjective *old* landing in the prenominal position. In the current account it is assumed that the interpretation of *the man who is old* is different from *the old man* and the former cannot be the basis of the derivation of the latter. The interpretation of *the man who is old* can be presented as ‘the man to whom being old is ascribed’. No such interpretation is present in *the old man*, whose interpretation can be

---

<sup>9</sup> It can be assumed that adjectives in accounts pertaining to their status presented in Pysz (2009) and Leu (2015) stand for phrases headed by adjectives as assumed by Cinque (2005), but for the simplicity of exposition such phrases are reduced to adjectives.

presented as ‘there exists an individual with the quality characterised as oldness’. This quality is not ascribed to this individual but attributed, two different interpretational properties reflected in different structural dependencies.

The only options which are left are those based on adjunction of adjectives to NP, N, and [Spec, NP]. If one wants to be in concert with Emonds’ (1976) structure preserving principle, one would have to assume that either AP is adjoined to NP or Adjectives are adjoined to Ns (head to head adjunction). However the adjunction of the adjective to the noun, i.e., head to head adjunction, will be rejected here because it is assumed here that the nominal head can be organised into one constituent, i.e., N’, if the constituent adjoined to N is somehow required due to its s-selection or c-selection. The only option which could be adopted for the analysis pertaining to adjectives and the place where they are e-merged is [Spec, NP]. This would be in keeping with the main tenets of the Minimalist Program as regards the monotonic character of e-merge and feature checking.

What has been said may seem to be a proposal which is a bit simplified in comparison to what is postulated in Larson & Marušič (2004), Haumann (2010), or Fischer (2012). However, it must be kept in mind that DP- and NP-modifiers in Larson & Marušič (2004) and  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ -adjectives in Haumann (2010) are mainly concerned with the interpretational properties of adjectives such as intersectivity vs. non-intersectivity, genericness, new information vs. given information, stage-level reading vs. individual-level reading. The stance adopted here pertains to the distribution of adjectival expressions in the proposition as characterised in Liebesman (2017). In contrast to Chomsky (2008) or Hinzen (2009), where, roughly speaking, proposition is treated as a generalised argument structure as one component of a dual semantics whose structure is determined by the sequence of e-merge of constituents participating in the derivation, Liebesman (2017) analyses proposition as a hierarchical thought construct in which the relation of ascription of the VP functioning as the predicate to the DP functioning as the subject plays a crucial role. It is assumed here that this relation surfaces in PF in form of inflectionally marked ‘subject-verb’ agreement which is also visible on the form of adjectives in the predicative function, which can be seen in (4) and (5). Moreover, this assumption will also be vital in explaining why weak adjectival forms are banned from the predicative function.

Thus in the light of what is said above, the distinction between predicative and attributive readings of adjectives as presented in Haumann (2010) appears to be totally irrelevant here since in the cases analysed in Larson & Marušič (2004), Haumann (2010), and Fischer (2012) adjectives actually function as attributive constituents of DPs whose role in a given proposition can be either that of the subject or a part of the predicate which is ascribed to the subject. An adjectival phrase in the predicative function is a part of the VP headed by the copula *beon* ‘to be’.

Let us concentrate on a hypothetical derivation of the nominal expression *siočne monnan* which is a part of a coordinated nominal structure *siočne monnan and gesargodne* in (6). The whole expression will not be analysed here because of space limitation. We are going to confine ourselves to the first conjunct, i.e., *siočne monnan*. As noticed above, *siočne monnan* as well as *hine* refer to the same individual. What is shared is only the ending *-ne* which signals the fact that this nominal expression functions as the direct object to the verb, i.e., is a part of the predicate. The first thing to be observed is the fact that both *siočne monnan* as well as *hine* function as full-fledged syntactic object, i.e., a fully referential expression, that is the one with denotational contents as well as the full grammatical specification. In the case of nominal expression it is the formal means of signalling such grammatical categories as Case, Gender, and Number. As said earlier, in the Minimalist Program these are given the guise of formal features, interpretable and uninterpretable.<sup>10</sup> The initial stage of the derivation of this nominal expression would consist in e-merging the nominal LI *manna* ‘man’ and the adjective *seoc* ‘sick’ thus deriving the set {*seoc, manna*}. Curly brackets indicate that the two e-merged elements form an unordered set. Thus the position of the adjective in relation to the noun is determined either by successive derivational steps, as will be presently indicated, or through PF conditions.<sup>11</sup> The two constituents form the denotational contents of the prospective nominal expression. However, they are not capable of functioning as an autonomous syntactic constituent, i.e., they cannot be either e-merged or i-merged. In other words, {*seoc, manna*} in the case under consideration is not a referential expression and, as such, cannot function as an argument.<sup>12</sup> However, there is a kind of inconsistency with what has been said above. Namely if the unordered set {*seoc, manna*} is assigned the label N’, then it could be assumed that such a constituent contains only elements which are somehow related to the meaning of N reflected through its c-selection and s-selection.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, such an unordered

<sup>10</sup> The issue of interpretability or uninterpretability of formal features will not be addressed in this paper.

<sup>11</sup> PF conditions pertain to those aspects of the derivation within the narrow syntax responsible for the word order which fail to be explained through e-merge and i-merge, the issue dealt with in Malak (2019).

<sup>12</sup> An anonymous reviewer notices that *seoc manna* is a constituent and a referential expression. It is true but only if this expression functions as the subject of a clause or a part of the predicate featuring the copula *beon* ‘to be’. However in the case under consideration what is analysed is the derivation of an inflected form *seocne mannan* in (6) which is a part of the predicate, i.e., the direct object of the verb *swencan*.

<sup>13</sup> This remark is meant to indicate the general characteristic features of nominal lexical items. As far as English is concerned, the c-selection of N is characterised by the observation that it cannot select another N, e.g., *student chemistry*. The only option accounted for by c-selection of N is a PP, e.g., *student of chemistry*. S-selection of N pertains to the semantic selectivity of N, e.g., *student of chemistry* vs. \**boy of chemistry*.

set as  $\{N' \text{ seoc, manna}\}$  would be reminiscent more of Lexical Array (LA) rather than the first step of the derivation in the narrow syntax. That is why this option as the first stage of the derivation of *siočne monnan* will be rejected here.

Basing her reasoning on Higginbotham's (1985) idea of theta-marking or theta-binding and its relation to R(eference) position within a NP, Osawa (2000) claims that a given nominal expression becomes an argument if the R-role in an NP is discharged either through the case marking or through syntactic binding by means of determiners. We are going to adopt this view, however we do not subscribe to the point of view presented in Osawa (2000) that OE did not have DP and NP was a fully referential nominal expression. According to Osawa (2000), the English DP was the consequence of the gradual loss of inflectional case marking.<sup>14</sup> As presented in Section 2, the Old English nominal paradigms were characterised by a certain degree of syncretism which led to some indeterminacy in signalling case distinctions. The presence of determiners in Old English nominal formations may have been helpful in determining the case marking. It is assumed without further analysis that OE had DPs as fully referential expression with D functioning as the carrier of grammatical information not found on the noun itself.

It will be assumed here that the structure of the OE DP can be presented as follows:

(13)  $[DP [D' D [NP [N' N]]]]$

In this structure one can notice the division of labour between denotational part, i.e., NP, and the referential part, i.e., D and its projection. Taking the above into consideration, let us take a look at the derivation of the DP *siočne monnan* in (6). When the DP whose denotational part consists of two elements, i.e., one *manna* and the other *seoc*, is associated with the LI *swencan* which is a transitive verb in the narrow syntax, the accusative marking on *manna* is activated in order to form the predicate. It is assumed here that the adjective *seoc* is e-merged in [Spec NP] because N' contains only those elements which are s-selected by N, i.e., complements. The noun *manna* is a weak noun and its paradigm is characterised by a high degree of syncretism. Thus the unequivocal accusative specification must be signalled through additional means, i.e., D, which in this case has phonologically nil realisation, but inherits, as it were, the grammatical specifications of N. Thus the structure of DP after the e-merge of *manna* and *seoc* and associating it with *swencan* looks as follows, *swincan* ignored:

(14)  $[DP [D \text{ nil(sg. masc. acc.)} [NP \text{ sioc} [N' \text{ monnan(sg. masc. acc.)}]]]]$

<sup>14</sup> The facts and examples corroborating this claim can be found in Osawa (2000).

As said above, the hypothetical form *sioe monnan* could be interpreted either as genitive or dative, masculine singular. One should not forget the fact that in OE verbs took objects not only with accusative specification, but also with the dative specification, e.g., *genealæcan* ‘to approach’, or with the genitive specification, e.g., *þyrstan* ‘to crave’. Thus the only way to guarantee the unequivocality of the grammatical and referential interpretation of this nominal expression is to make the masculine singular accusative specification phonologically visible through displacing the adjectival phrase form [Spec NP] to [Spec DP].

The derivation of *sioe monnan* could be presented as follows:

(15)  $[DP \textit{sioe}_{i \text{ (sg.masc.acc.)}} [D' D_{\text{(sg.masc.acc.)}} [NP t_i [N' \textit{monnan}_{\text{(sg.masc.acc.)}}]]]]]$

There is, however, one snag with this account. It is not clear how the adjective *sioe* acquires the ending *-ne*. The tenets of Distributed Morphology, as postulated in Halle & Marantz (1993), are not particularly helpful in this case. Thus, as has been mentioned earlier, it will be assumed after Chomsky (1995) that lexical items appear in the derivation in inflected forms. It could, therefore, be assumed that the Lexical Array (LA) for *sioe monnan* contains the following items, lexical and functional:

(16) LA:  $\{D_{\text{nil}}, \textit{sioe}, \textit{monnan}\}$

Due to Numeration the first to appear in the narrow syntax is the form *monnan*, assuming that the first LI to appear in the narrow syntax of the whole clause is a verb, whose meaning determines the number of arguments. The form *sioe* must wait in [Spec NP] till D is e-merged. Its nil phonological guise determines the i-merge of *sioe* in [Spec DP], since this ending disqualifies it in the [Spec NP] position. It plays no interpretational role in this location.<sup>15</sup> Thus it would function as Goal to  $D_{\text{nil}}$  functioning as Probe. It could be postulated here that  $D_{\text{nil}}$  is an aggregate of  $\lambda$ -features and  $\varphi$ -features void of  $\pi$ -features. The  $\lambda$ -feature of  $D_{\text{nil}}$  would be interpreted as [definite] at LF. As regards the  $\varphi$ -feature of  $D_{\text{nil}}$ , it is [referential] which, in this case, is uninterpretable and needs to be valued and checked in order to become interpretable at the interfaces. This can be achieved

<sup>15</sup> An anonymous reviewer claims that it is hard to assess the validity of this statement without examples of adjectives in [Spec NP]. The problem is that it would be hard to find any diagnostic features of an AP being e-merged in [Spec NP]. The speculation concerning the specifier of NP as the locus of e-merge of an AP comes from logical reasoning. Assuming that N' contains only material semantically related to the sense of N (s-selection) and further assuming that APs are not obligatory constituents of a NP, which is a characteristic feature of modifiers, then the only logically feasible conclusion is that the locus in which AP is e-merged is [Spec NP] if the X'-format is adopted.

through matching and valuing the nominal feature of the adjective *siočne*, which inherits the nominal features of the noun *mannan* and thus represents this NP, as it were, against the features of  $D_{\text{nil}}$  thus achieving two goals, i.e., one – the disposal of the uninterpretable feature [referential] and two – providing this constituent with the phonological and inflectional form. This appears as the seeming shift from [Spec NP], i.e., the denotational part of the derivation to [Spec DP] as its referential part thus completing the derivation cycle resulting in the derivation of DP as a phase.<sup>16</sup> What is presented in Section 5 indicates that the adjectival expression when attested in the strong form should be analysed as an adjectival phrase since the adjective can be premodified, as shown in examples (8) and (9).

OE weak adjectival formations pose a certain problem. As mentioned above, adjectives in the weak forms are not found in the predicative function and are not premodified by adverbs. According to Wright & Wright (1925) these properties of weak adjectival formations may be related to the etymological sources of the OE forms *blind* ‘blind’ and *blinda* ‘the blind one’, the two descending from Gothic *blinds* and *blinda* respectively. Thus the OE weak adjectival forms could possibly be analysed as nouns converted from adjectives. Such deadjectival nouns are preceded by determiners which can be found in such an appositional formation as e.g. *Wulfmær se geonga* ‘Wulfmær the young’. Analogical appositional formations are also found in other Germanic languages, e.g., Gothic *ahma sa weiha* ‘ghost the holy’ or Old High German *Ludowig ther snello* ‘Ludwig the brave’. Moreover, the OE weak adjectival formations are found in the functions attributed to nouns as in, e.g.,

(17)

*Gif se blinda blindne læt, hie feallaþ begen on*  
 If the blind-Wk blind-ST leads, they fall both in  
*anne pytt.*  
 one pit

‘If the blind one leads another blind (man), they both will fall into one pit’

Reszkiewicz (1971: 6)

Noteworthy is the fact that this sentence features two adjectival forms, i.e., *se blinda* and *blindne*. The strong form could be treated as a formation whose function is analogical to that of a pronoun, i.e., *hine*. The form *se blinda* functions as a noun phrase, or DP, as it is the subject of the subordinate clause.

Taking the above into consideration, it could be assumed that OE weak adjectival forms are, in actual fact, deadjectival nominal expressions with their

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed analysis of DP as a phase cf. Svenonius (2004).

own determiners.<sup>17</sup> This would explain why such adverbs as *swa* ‘so’ or *swiðe* ‘very’ are not found with weak adjectival formations. Adverbs do not modify nouns. This assumption would also account for the fact that the OE weak adjectival formations are not found in the predicative position. The strong adjectival form in the predicative position would be interpreted as an adjective denoting a quality ascribed to the subject. No such interpretation would be available in the case of weak adjectival formations which would denote a being characterised by the quality denoted by a given adjective. If such a weak adjectival expression were to be found in the predicative position as in such an unattested clause as *\*wæter is þæt cealde* then it would be totally uninterpretable because of the predicational character of such a copulative clause in which the relation between *wæter* and *þæt cealde* would be that of identity obtaining between the referents of the two nominal expressions.

If one takes into account the appositional formation *Wulfmær se geonga*, it could be assumed that the coordinated weak adjectival formations in (12), repeated here as (18)

(18) *under þam cealdan wætere ond þam wætan*

are deadjectival nominal expressions and the first conjunct is a compound which may have been formed on the basis of a hypothetical appositional formation *\*under wætere þam cealdan ond þam wætan*. If it is assumed that OE nominal compounds were right-headed as in:

(19)	<i>lufu</i> ‘love’ + <i>taken</i> ‘token’	<i>lufutaken</i> ‘love-token’
	<i>heafod</i> ‘head’ + <i>gemaca</i> ‘mate’	<i>heafodgemaca</i> ‘companion’
		Minkova (2006: 96)

where such nouns as *taken* and *gemaca* are interpretationally central constituents of the compound forms, then such nouns as *lufu* and *heafod* in the two respective cases should be treated as modifiers of the central constituent, i.e., head. If this reasoning is on the right track then it can be assumed that *\*under wætere, þam cealdan*, which could be analysed as an appositional formation, serves as the basis for forming a compound nominal expression, i.e., *under þam cealdan wætere* which, as shown in (19), in Old English was right-headed<sup>18</sup>. In the case under consideration the noun *wætere* would function as the head while DP *þam cealdan* is the modifier of *wætere* in the first conjunct of (19).

<sup>17</sup> It is noteworthy that nouns could also be derived in this manner from verbs, e.g., *cuman* ‘to come’ : *cuma* ‘one who comes, a guest’ (cf. Kastovsky 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Witness a similar phenomenon in present day Polish. Thus *under wætere þam cealdan* would correspond to Polish ‘pod wodą, tą zimą’, an expression typical of a formal and literary register, and *under þam cealdan wætere* ‘pod tą zimą wodą’.

If it is assumed that Old English DPs with weak adjectival formations are nothing else but compounds formed on the basis of DP featuring a deadjectival noun and the head noun, then the derivation of *þam cealdan wætere*, the role of the preposition *under* ignored, would be based on the LA containing such items, both functional and lexical, as:

(20) LA = {D<sub>nil</sub>, *þam*<sub>(sg.dat.neut)</sub>, *cealdan*<sub>(sg.dat.neut)</sub>, *wætere*<sub>(sg.dat.neut.)</sub>}

It should be borne in mind that the dative specification is related to the function of the preposition *under* which, as signalled above, is ignored here. The first stage of the derivation of this DP would be as follows:

(21) [DP D<sub>nil</sub> [NP [N' [DP *þam*<sub>(sg.dat.neut)</sub> [NP *cealdan*<sub>(sg.dat.neut.)</sub>]]] *wætere*<sub>(sg.dat.neut.)</sub>]]]

Due to the fact that the two nominal expressions, i.e., *þam cealdan* and *wætere*, refer to the same object and they carry the same number and gender specifications, the determiner *þam* is moved and replaces the determiner with the nil phonological realisation thus imparting the referential status to the whole expression, which can be presented as follows:

(22) [DP *þam* [NP [N' [DP *t*<sub>þam</sub> [NP *cealdan*]]] *wætere*]]]

The i-merge of the determiner *þam* with D<sub>nil</sub> as the means of providing it with phonological material brings about the redundancy of DP and NP specifications of the nominal expression featuring *cealdan* which can be presented as the reduction of bracketing as in:

(23) [DP *þam* [NP [N' *cealdan wætere*]]]

The result of these derivational operations is one full-fledged referential expression capable of functioning as an argument.

## 7. Conclusions

As signalled at the beginning of this article, strength and weakness of inflection in Old English is characterised by a kind of inconsistency. While in the case of nouns and verbs the two inflectional properties could be said to be elements of lexical set-ups of nominal and verbal LIs, it is not the case as regards adjectives. The strength and weakness of nominal and verbal inflections were the result of various phonological processes affecting nominal and verbal roots and stems

operating in Proto-Germanic. Thus Old English nouns and verbs are traditionally classified as either strong or weak and this classification is consistent. In other words, the Old English strong nouns and verbs and the Old English weak nouns and verb belonged to two separate, mutually exclusive, sets. The traditional accounts of Old English have it that almost all adjectival LIs could be inflected either strong or weak. So what is a lexical property for nouns and verbs appears to be a functional property for adjectives. Thus, as regards Old English, the inflectional classification into strong and weak based on many morphological contrasts as opposed to syncretic paradigms appears to be superficial because it takes into account the morphological differentiation totally ignoring the lexical and functional factors of nominal, verbal, and adjectival lexical items. The analysis postulated in this article is an attempt to obviate this classificational and descriptive inconsistency. The inflectional strength or weakness is the part of a given lexical entry and this pertains to Old English nominal as well as a verbal lexical items. In the case of Old English adjectives one could speak about one adjectival inflection, neither strong nor weak, the adjectival endings corresponding, in majority of cases, to the forms of Old English determiners, pronouns, both anaphoric and demonstrative. This formal correspondence would be the means of compensation for the absence of the element within the Old English DP which would unequivocally render it a fully referential expression. If such an element features the Old English DP, the modification is achieved on the basis of a compound consisting of the central nominal constituent and a deadjectival noun modifying it.

Thus the apparent division into strong and weak adjectival inflections is the result of the two alternative ways of signalling the structure of modification. The selection of the mode of signalling this type of dependence was determined by presence or absence of the elements providing the grammatical information missing in the nominal paradigms without which nouns could not function as full-fledged referential expressions, i.e., arguments. Thus it could be said that what is traditionally referred to as strong and weak adjectival inflections is the reflection of two different syntactic derivations which are characterised by two different modes of rendering  $D_{\text{nil}}$  visible at PF and legible at LF, i.e., either through moving the inflected form of the adjective to [Spec DP] or through displacing the phonologically realised D of the deadjectival noun in the nominal compound to D of the whole DP, two different modes of terminating the derivational cycle responsible of forming the OE DP as a phase. This would also account for the predominantly pronominal/determiner character of the OE strong adjectival inflection and the nominal character of its weak variant.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Cynthia L. 1995. *Case marking and reanalysis: Grammatical relations from Old English to early Modern English*. Clarendon Press.
- Alscher, Hans-Joachim. 2001. *Origin of the verbal endings*.  
<http://homer.members.pgv.at/indoeuro/verbend.htm>
- Baunaz, Lena & Eric Lander. 2018. Nanosyntax: The basics. In Lena Baunaz, Liliane Haegemann, Karen De Clerq & Eric Lander (eds.), *Exploring nanosyntax*, Oxford University Press. 3–56. DOI: [10.1093/oso/9780190876746.003.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190876746.003.0001)
- Campbell, Alistair. 1959. *Old English grammar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1995. *The minimalist program*. The MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2000. Minimalist inquires: The framework. In Roger Martin, David Michaels, Juan Uriagereka & Samuel Jay Keyser (eds.), *Step by step. Essays on minimalist syntax in honor of Howard Lasnik*, The MIT Press. 89–155.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2001. Derivation by phase. Michael J. Kenstowicz (ed.), *Ken Hale: A life in language*, The MIT Press. 1–52.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2008. On phases. In Robert Freidin, Carlos. P. Otero & Maria Luisa Zubizarreta (eds.), *Foundational issues in linguistic theory: Essays in honor of Jean-Roger Vergnaud*. The MIT Press. 133–166.
- Cinque, Guglielmo. 2005. *The dual source of adjectives and phrasal movement in the Romance DP*. MS. University of Venice.
- Emonds, Joseph. 1976. *A transformational approach to English syntax: Root, structure-preserving, and local transformations*. Academic Press.
- Faarlund, Jan Terje. 1994. Old and Middle Scandinavian. In Ekkehard König & Johan van der Auwera (eds.), *The Germanic languages*, Routledge. 38–71.
- Fischer, Olga. 2000. The position of the adjective in Old English. In Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, David Denison, Richard, M. Hogg & C. B. McCully (eds.), *Generative theory and corpus studies: A dialogue from 10 ICEHL*, De Gruyter Mouton. 153–181.  
 DOI: [10.1515/9783110814699.153](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110814699.153)
- Fischer, Olga. 2001. The position of the adjective in (Old) English from an iconic perspective. In Olga Fischer & Max Nänny (eds.), *The motivated sign*, Benjamins. 249–276.  
 DOI: [10.1075/ill.2.19fis](https://doi.org/10.1075/ill.2.19fis)
- Fischer, Olga. 2012. The status of the postposed ‘and-adjective’ constructions in Old English: Attributive or predicative?. In David Denison, Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, Chris McCully & Emma Moore (eds.), *Analysing older English*, Cambridge University Press. 251–284.
- Halle, Morris & Alec Marantz. 1993. Distributed Morphology and the pieces of inflection. In Ken Hale & Samuel Jay Keyser (eds.), *The view from Building 20: Essays in linguistics in honor of Sylvian Bromberger*, The MIT Press. 111–176.
- Haumann, Dagmar. 2010. Adnominal adjectives in Old English. *English Language and Linguistics* 14(1): 53–81. DOI: [10.1017/S1360674309990347](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674309990347)
- Higginbotham, James. 1985. On semantics. *Linguistic Inquiry* 16(4): 547–593.
- Hinzen, Wolfram. 2009. Hierarchy, merge, and truth. In Massimo Piatelli-Palmarini, Juan Uriagereka & Pello Salaburu, *Of minds and language: A dialogue with Noam Chomsky in the Basque Country*, Oxford University Press. 123–141.

- Hogg, Richard M. 1992. Phonology and morphology. In Richard M. Hogg (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the English language. Vol. I: The beginnings to 1066*, Cambridge University Press. 67–167. DOI: [10.1017/CHOL9780521264747.004](https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521264747.004)
- Kastovsky, Dieter. 2006. Typological changes in derivational morphology. In Ans van Kemenade & Bettelou Los (eds.), *The handbook of the history of English*, Wiley-Blackwell. 151–176. DOI: [10.1002/9780470757048.ch7](https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757048.ch7)
- Larson, Richard K & Franc Marušič. 2004. On indefinite pronoun structures with APs: Reply to Kishimoto. *Linguistic Inquiry* 35(2): 268–287.
- Lehmann, Winfred P. 1994. Gothic and the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic. In Ekkehard König & Johan van der Auwera (eds.), *The Germanic languages*, Routledge. 19–37.
- Leu, Thomas. 2015. *The architecture of determiners*. Oxford University Press.  
DOI: [10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199945238.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199945238.001.0001)
- Liebesman, David. 2017. Sodium-free semantics: The continuing relevance of the concept *Horse*'. In Piotr Stalmaszczyk (ed.), *Philosophy and logic of predication*, Peter Lang. 167–198.
- Malak, Janusz. 2019. Word order typology and the minimalist program: What do parameters belong to? In Joseph Emonds, Marketa Janebova & Ludmila Veselovská (eds.), *Language use and linguistic structure: Proceedings of the Olomouc Linguistic Colloquium 2018*, Palacký University. 299–318.
- Minkova, Donka. 2006. Old and Middle English prosody. In Ans van Kemenade & Bettelou Los (eds.), *The handbook of the history of English*, Wiley-Blackwell. 95–124.  
DOI: [10.1002/9780470757048.ch5](https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757048.ch5)
- Mitchell, Bruce. 1985. *Old English syntax. Vol I: Concord, the parts of speech, and the sentence*. Clarendon Press.
- Osawa, Fuyo. 2000. The historical emergence of DP in English. *English Linguistics* 17(1): 51–79.  
DOI: [10.9793/elsj1984.17.51](https://doi.org/10.9793/elsj1984.17.51)
- Pysz, Agnieszka. 2009. *The syntax of prenominal and postnominal adjectives in Old English*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Quirk, Randolph & C. L. Wrenn. 1958. *An Old English grammar*. Methuen.
- Reszkiewicz, Alfred. 1971. *Synchronic essentials of Old English: West Saxon*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Reszkiewicz, Alfred. 1973. *A diachronic grammar of Old English*. Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Salmons, Joseph. 2012. *A history of German: What the past reveals about today's language*. Oxford University Press.
- Svenonius, Peter. 2004. On the edge. In David Adger, Cécile de Cat & George Tsoulas (eds.), *Peripheries: Syntactic edges and their effects*, Kluwer Academic Publishers. 259–287.  
DOI: [10.1007/1-4020-1910-6\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-1910-6_11)
- Traugott, Elisabeth Closs. 1972. *A history of English syntax: A transformational approach to the history of English sentence structure*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Trehearne, Elaine (ed.). 2010. *Old and Middle English c.890–c.1450: An anthology* (3rd edn.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wright, Joseph & Elizabeth Mary Wright. 1925. *Old English grammar*. Oxford University Press.