

A quantitative exploration of SKT constructions

Jiří Zámečník (Freiburg) and David Denison (Manchester)

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Objective

- Diachronic account of development of SKT-construction family in nominal groups
- Insights into variation between two major varieties of English, BrE and AmE

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Prior research on SKT

- **Synchronic PDE**: Bolinger (1972), Aijmer (1984) and nearly 50 more.
- **Diachronic English**: Tabor (1993), Denison (1998) and some 20 more.
- **Other languages** with similar developments in *tipo* nouns: Casillas Martínez (2001), Foolen (2002), Mihatsch (2007) and more.
- We build on a scenario most recently presented by Brems & Davidse

Denison (2002), Keyser (2001), Brems & Davidse (2010)

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Constructions distinguished

- Binominal “construction”
- Quantifier
- Descriptive modifier
- Nominal qualifier
- Postdeterminer

NB. Not discussed: IModE non-nominal uses such as *I kind of like them*

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Basic structure

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{sort} \\ \text{kind} \\ \text{type} \end{array} \right] \text{ of } \left[\begin{array}{l} \text{clothes} \\ \text{flies} \\ \text{weather} \\ \text{boat} \\ \text{sin} \\ \dots \end{array} \right]$$

- Formula neglects determiner before SKT, and items (determiner, attributive noun or adjective) sometimes allowed between *of* and N.
- Formula also neglects *manner*, an important SKT noun in eModE.

Keyser (2007) for full PDE survey

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Binominal

Several kinds of kinafisher resort to the place. (CLMET, Section 3, text 204)

- SKT-noun functions as head of the binominal phrase
- *Sort of X* = ‘subtype of X’

NB1. SKT-word ≈ ‘category, class’, so cases of *type* = ‘symbol’ not counted.

NB2. Compositional string cannot be a construction in early CxG, though permissible in more recent CxG.

Fillmore (1988), Goldberg (1995) vs. Goldberg (2006), etc.

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Headedness

- The lexical noun may become head of NP rather than the SKT-word.
- Determiner showing number concord not with singular SKT-word but with plural lexical noun (*these kind of pressures*, etc.) is often treated as criterial.
- Brems & Davidsøe allow semantic and discourse considerations to override this morphosyntax in 'postdeterminer' patterns.
- We find this a helpful revision and extend it to (rarer) quantifier examples showing number mismatch.

Denison (2002), Keizer (2007), Maekawa (2015) vs. Brems & Davidsøe (2010)

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Number concord

- ± number concord not correlated with meaning [or other] differences
- Postdeterminer:

speaker 'P547D'	}	this kind of newspaper (JJS 972)	sg sg	binom
		these kinds of newspapers (JJS 1065)	pl pl	binom
		these kind of stories (JJS 1064)	pl sg	postdet
		all those kind of things (JJS 1062)	pl sg	
- Quantifier:

speaker 'Tony'	}	all sorts of things (KE3 5683)	?pl pl	binom
		all sort of things (KE3 5687)	?pl sg	?

examples from BNC (spoken)

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Quantifier (universal)

There are all sorts of wonderful jobs in London ... (LOB P03)

- Semantic equivalent: 'a large and varied collection of wonderful jobs'
- Syntactic analysis: [_{QUANTIFIER} all sorts of] [_{HEAD} ... jobs]

[all every]	[sort(s)] of	[people]
		kind(s)			birds	
		type(s)			jobs	
					adversity	
					sin	
					...	

Brems & Davidsøe (2010: 188-91); cf. Keizer (2007: 181)

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Quantifier (negative)

... I intend to retire into the country where there will be no sort of news ...

(CLMET, Section 2, Text 174)

- Semantic equivalent: 'no news at all'
- Syntactic analysis: [_{QUANTIFIER} no sort of] [_{HEAD} news]

[any no]	[sort(s)] of	[people]
		kind(s)			birds	
		type(s)			news	
					adversity	
					sin	
					...	

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Descriptive modifier (attributive)

He was an odd sort of chap. (LOB: L14)

- Semantic equivalent: 'He was an odd chap'
- Syntactic analysis: [_{DET} an] [_{MODIFIER} odd + sort of] [_{HEAD} chap]

[a an ...]	[odd]	[office]
		scandalous			prayer	
		stubborn			shot	
					sin	
					...	

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Nominal qualifier

She hastened into one of the passages which branched in various directions from this spot, and formed a sort of Labyrinth. (CLMET, Section 2, Text 219)

- Semantic analysis: 'something like a labyrinth'
- Syntactic analysis: [_{QUALIFYING COMPLEX DET} a sort of] [_{HEAD} Labyrinth]

[a some ...]	[rush]	[Eden]
		some			shock	
					boat	
					affair	
					...	

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Postdeterminer (but problematic)

But it costs a lot of money to have a hobby. I haven't got that kind of money. (Brown F06)

- Semantic analysis: 'such money'
- Syntactic analysis: [_{DETERMINER} that kind of] [_{HEAD} money]

$\begin{bmatrix} \text{this} \\ \text{the} \\ \text{that} \\ \dots \end{bmatrix}$
 $\begin{bmatrix} \text{sort} \\ \text{kind} \\ \text{type} \end{bmatrix}$
of
 $\begin{bmatrix} \text{money} \\ \text{guy} \\ \text{world} \\ \text{day} \\ \text{case} \\ \dots \end{bmatrix}$

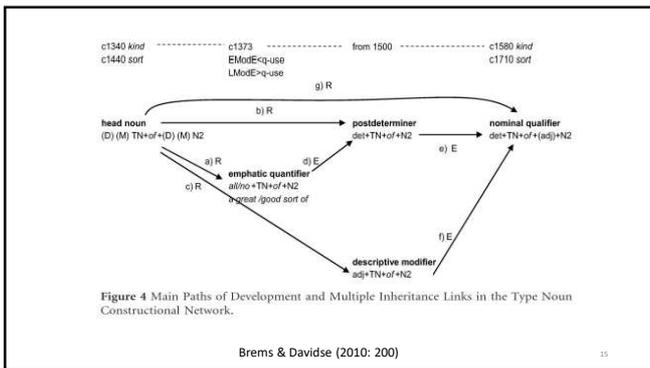
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Postdeterminer

- First posited Denison (1998), but Keizer and Denison both expressed discomfort.
- Keizer (2007) finds postdet analysis often helpful semantically, but still problematic in some cases.
- She only includes number mismatch exx, and because this is criterial, she also has ICE-GB exx with *all SKT_{sg} of N_{pl}*

and there were all kind of things came out
 We used to break all kind of speed limits getting out of the door
 he used to expect erm all sort of reports to be presented (HDM 255)
 then there were all sorts of odds and ends (HDM 314)

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Data

Samples of 200 words/period/SKT-noun

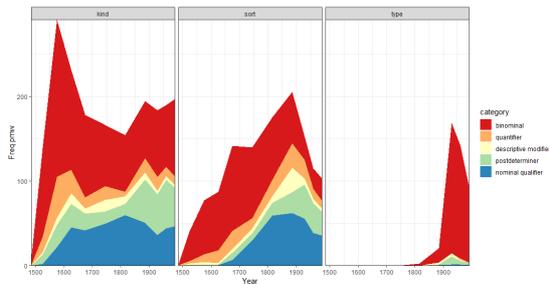
- Early English Books Online
 - 1470-1700
 - Periods of 50 years (and pre-1500 period)
- CLMET 3.1
 - 1710-1920
 - Periods of 70 years

Full data

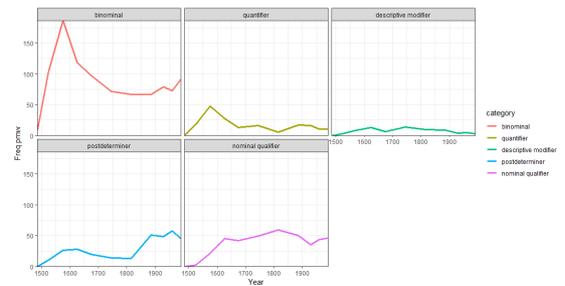
- BrE
 - B-LOB 1931
 - LOB
 - F-LOB
- AmE
 - B-Brown
 - Brown
 - Frown

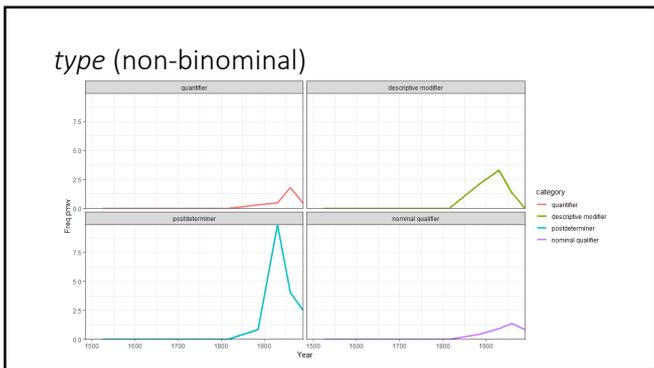
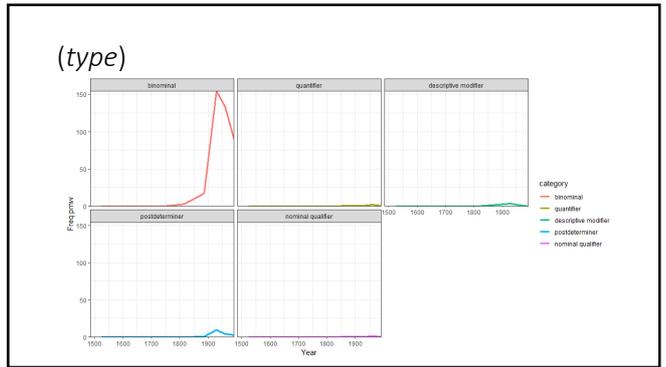
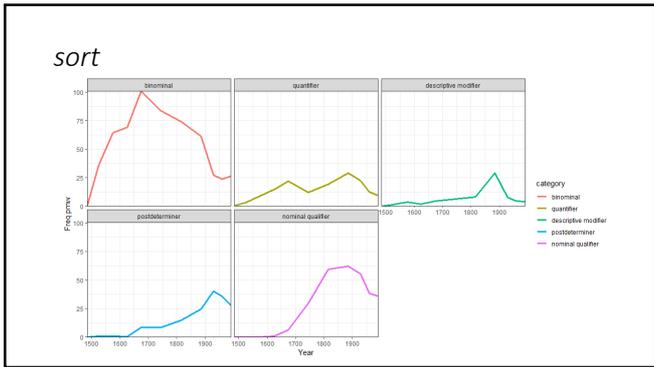
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Diachronic development

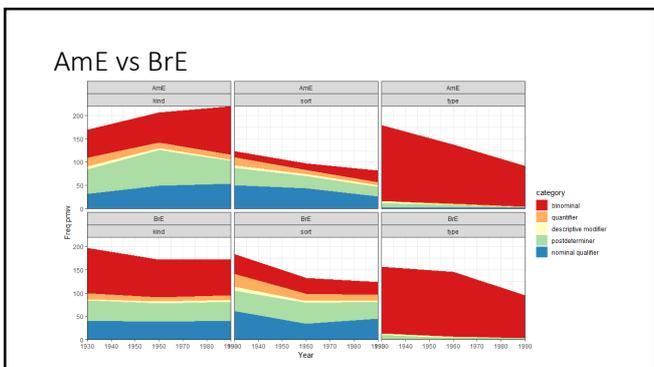


kind





- ### Diachrony
- In general, all constructions seem to develop almost in parallel
 - Major lag for *type* due to semantic differences
 - Some lag for Postdeterminer and Nominal qualifier for *kind*
 - Pmw frequencies of binominals decrease after 1700s
 - Postdeterminer established with a delay; becomes very frequent afterwards



- ### AmE vs BrE
- AmE preference for *kind* is there and increasing
 - BrE preference for *sort* only in the reanalysed (non-binominal) patterns
 - Overall decline of *sort/type of*

Number concord

- For *sort/kind/type* only about 40 examples in the whole dataset with number mismatch
- All of those labelled as postdeterminer
- Largely restricted to *sort/kind*:
 - *sort*: 13
 - *kind*: 25
 - *type*: 2

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Dealing with indeterminacy

- Some examples indeterminate between particular pairs of our 5 structures
- Qualitatively: apparently only pairs that are connected diachronically
- Quantitatively: how best to deal with them statistically?

Keizer (2007: 180; 176-80) on ambiguous examples

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Quantifier (*manner*)

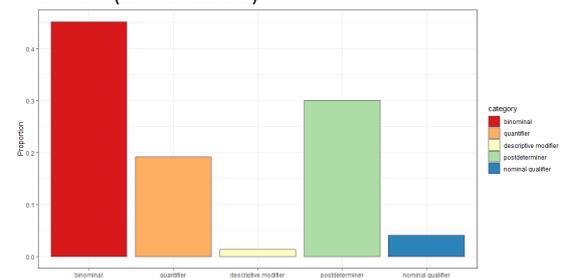
- In eModE quantifier patterns, *manner* is by far the commonest SKT word, decreasing later
- *kind* only catches up around 1550, and *sort* around 1600

the last dayes shall be very perilous, wherein all manner of sins, and sinners shall abound
impunity breeds blasphemy, and all manner of sin

(EEBO: A practical and polemical commentary ..., 1658)

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manner (1470-1500)



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Number concord (*manner*)

- *manners of* is rare overall (<5% of occurrences of *manner of* in EEBO)
- Both observations of plural *manners of* in the sample of 1470-1500 are in binominal construction
- Number mismatch observed in various constructions (binominal, postdeterminer, quantifier)

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Open questions

- Ambiguous (or indeterminate?) cases:
 - ...in the high strength Al-Zn-Mg-Cu alloys, stress-corrosion failure can occur when very little evidence of corrosive attack is to be detected. In developing tests for the susceptibility of this type of alloy to intercrystalline attack, Ketcham and Taylor do not mention stress-corrosion... (LOB J77)
 - Needham, however, admits its role as an intermediary, and would even have viewers believe that Bugle Boy is somewhat uninformed as to what they are doing in the company's name. This sort of tongue-in-cheek mockery of convention is as refreshing as it is creative. (Frown E30)

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Hybrid pattern

the sort of ... acidy sort of alcohol smell ... it's not a beer sort of smell (BNC KCT 9852)

- Semantic equivalent: '(subtype of) smell with that characteristic'
- Syntactic analysis: also unclear

[a an the ...]	[authoritarian beer no-nonsense Oxford ...]	[sort kind type]	of	[chap office person shot smell ...]

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Hybrid pattern

It's the authoritarian know-it-all, lots-of-rules kind of person. (Frown R01)

- longer, free-form material preceding SKT; can include proper names
- Labeled 'semi-suffix' by Brems & Davidse, redefining Denison's term

- But depending on the example, not easily distinguished from binominal, attributive modifier or postdeterminer

NB. the term 'semi-suffix' was intended for hyphenated examples without *of*, as in:
It is quite a hefty spade, with bicycle-type handlebars (BNC AOG 2202)

Denison (2002: 4, 2011: 17), Brems & Davidse (2010: 187-8)

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Further plans

- Further investigation of early part played by *manner* in SKT family
- COHA for more in-depth insight into the development in AmE
- Separate treatment of ambiguous and indeterminate cases (?)

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Take-home messages

- Quantitative pattern seems crucial in early reanalysis of binominals
- True of *manner*, then *kind*, then *sort* (but not *type*)
- And *manner* seems to be the first member of the "SKT" set, with the others only joining in later.

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Last slide

- Presentation and bibliography on DD's download website shortly

THANK YOU

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