# Contact-induced change or dialectal relic in heritage American-Danish? The indefinite article in copula clauses with a person-identifying subject predicate

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This article analyses the use and non-use in American Danish of the indefinite article in the identifying subject predicate construction with a bare noun as the subject predicate: *hun er læge – hun er en læge* 'she is a doctor'. With a point of departure in the semantics associated with use and non-use of the indefinite article in standard and dialectal Danish, the article argues that there is a clear indication of English influence with nouns denoting profession and social status. The article further discusses to what extent the use of the indefinite article with nouns that denote an inhabitant is due to influence from English or a dialect relic. The article shows that there is a tendency for Danish immigrants in North America born in Denmark to use the Danish pattern and for descendants of immigrants to use the English pattern, but also that the pressure from English has different outcomes related to the individual speaker's inclination for using the English vs. the Danish pattern.

**Keywords**: Danish, American Danish, indefinite article, copula construction, grammatical change, contact linguistics, heritage language grammar.

## 1 A clear case of contact-induced language change?[1]

In Danish as spoken by immigrants and their descendants in USA and Canada, 'American Danish', we see occurrences of the indefinite article in person-identifying subject predicate constructions, as in (1)-(3).

(1)  *min  yngste    han    er    **en  doktor**   i    Thunder Bay*        (ALV)
     my   youngest   he     is    a    doctor      in   Thunder Bay

(2)  *min  far      var    **en  sten- og billedhugger**    på   Vesterbro*    (JHP)
     my   father   was    a    stonemason and                on   Vesterbro
                               sculptor

(3)  *min  søn    studerede  til   at   blive    **en  præst***        (EMN)
     my   son    studied     to    to   become   a    priest

Following Standard Danish, we would expect a bare noun as the subject pred-
icate in this construction, as in (4a), which gives a *description* of the subject
(Hansen and Heltoft 2011: 888). In contrast, in (4b), the indefinite article will
add an evaluative meaning to the construction: 'he is like an actor, he pretends
that he is someone else' (ibid.).

(4a)  *han    er    **skuespiller***        (descriptive)
      he     is    actor

(4b)  *han    er    **en    skuespiller***        (evaluative)
      he     is    an     actor

This function of the indefinite article is well-described in Danish grammars,
and the difference between use and non-use of the indefinite article in the iden-
tifying predicate subject construction "is carefully observed in Modern Danish"
(Hansen 1927: 53).[2] But in the variety of Danish investigated here, the identi-
fying subject predicate can be preposed by the indefinite article without imply-
ing evaluation (see examples (1)-(3)).

The use of the indefinite article in American Danish sentences such as (1)-
(3) seems on the surface to be a result of language contact with English which
obligatorily requires an indefinite article in this copula construction and which
does not distinguish between descriptive and evaluative functions in this con-
struction. This view on examples like in (1)-(3) is in line with Hasselmo's

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2.  See Høysgaard (1752: § 608, § 627.3), Mikkelsen (1911: 181–182), Hansen (1927:
    52–56), Togeby (2003: 70, 152), Allan et al. (2005: 61–62, 67–69), Hansen & Heltoft
    (2011: 888–890) and Christensen & Christensen (2014: 185–186). The terms 'de-
    scriptive' and 'evaluating' come from Hansen & Heltoft (2011: 888-890). The quote
    from Hansen (1927: 53) is translated from Danish "Denne forskel overholdes nøje
    i moderne dansk".

(1974: 215–216, 2005: 2133) observation in American Swedish and with Kinn's (2017a, 2017b) observation in American Norwegian (see Section 3).

With Pedersen (2012), however, a third semantic function, a classifying function, is suggested as a possible function of the indefinite article in this construction in Danish. This function is documented in non-standard dialectal Danish, in older Standard Danish (i.e., in sources from 1500 and later), and in modern Danish, for example:

(5) *du    er    **et**    **menneske**    *(ikke et dyr)*            (Pedersen 2012: 307)
    you   are   a     human       (not an animal)

(6) *han   er    **en**    **far**    til    en    studerende*        (Pedersen 2012: 308)
    he    is    a     father   to     a     student

In a classifying function, the indefinite article indicates or emphasises that the subject is a member or an exemplar of a group or a certain class of living beings. In (5) the subject is designated as a member of the zoological group *humans*, and in (6) as a member of a group of fathers to (a group of) students (Pedersen 2012: 307–308; see also Hansen 1927: 53, 55).

Pedersen's analysis has ramifications for the interpretation of the use of the indefinite article in American Danish in the identifying subject predicate construction. What at first sight may appear to be contact-induced English influence, as in American Swedish (Hasselmo 1974; Klintborg 1999) and American Norwegian (Kinn 2017a, 2017b), may actually be a dialect relic or a relic from older Danish. This is even more likely since Pedersen's data show examples from the late 19th century (2012: 303), and most speakers in the corpus from which the American Danish data are extracted (see Section 3) are born in the late 19th century and have migrated in the period 1890–1920, or they are children of people who have left Denmark in the late 19th century. As such, the use and distribution pattern documented by Pedersen may actually represent the usage patterns in the so-called baseline language, i.e. the language which the immigrants brought with them at the time of emigration.

In this article, we will explore the question of whether the use of the indefinite article in the copulative identifying subject predicate construction can be ascribed to English or to a dialectal or historical substratum. The following section first gives a thorough account of the rules in Standard Danish regarding the use of the indefinite article with the identifying subject predicate construction, and it shows how this rule applies across semantic noun classes in dialects

and in the standard language. Section 3 summarises research of similar phenomena in American Swedish and American Norwegian. Section 4 describes the data and the speakers, and Section 5 analyses the data from American Danish. Section 6 contains perspectives on the analysis, and Section 7 contains concluding remarks.


## 2 The function of the indefinite article in identifying copula constructions in Danish

### 2.1 The descriptive and the evaluative function

In the identifying subject predicate construction, a 'bare' noun as the subject predicate encodes (objective) description, and a preposed indefinite article encodes (subjective) evaluation, as shown with (7a-b) (same as (4a-b) and (8a-b)).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (7a) | *han* | *er* | ***skuespiller*** | (objective, descriptive) |
| | he | is | actor | |
| (7b) | *han* | *er* | ***en*** | ***skuespiller*** | (subjective, evaluating) |
| | he | is | an | actor | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (8a) | *han* | *er* | ***klovn*** | (objective, descriptive) |
| | he | is | clown | |
| (8b) | *han* | *er* | ***en*** | ***klovn*** | (subjective, evaluating) |
| | he | is | a | clown | |

The examples in (7a) and (8a) are objective-descriptive, the bare nouns designate persons who in their professional life work as an actor and a clown (for example, in a circus), respectively. The examples in (7b) and (8b), in contrast, evaluate persons as pretending (like an actor does) and being foolish (like a clown is), and they are subjective-evaluative. This distinction between these two categories is supported by the fact that only the b-examples can take the subjectively modifying phrase *synes jeg* 'I think' (German: *finde ich*), *han er skuespiller, synes jeg* and *han er klovn, synes jeg* are infelicitous. Furthermore, inherently evaluative nouns cannot appear in the bare form:[3]

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3.  The syntactic and semantic rules sketched with (7)-(10) are shared by Norwegian (Askedal et al. 2013: 67; Faarlund et al. 1997: 291, 295, 740-741) and Swedish (Teleman et al. 1999: 176-178).

(9a)  *_han_    _er_    _fjols_
  he    is    fool

(9b)  _han_    _er_    _et_    _fjols_
  he    is    a    fool

(10b)  *_han_    _er_    _geni_
   he    is    genious

(10b)  _han_    _er_    _et_    _geni_
   he    is    a    genious

Hansen and Heltoft (2011: 888), among others, point out that purely descriptive nouns ("rent beskrivende substantiver") require an evaluative adjectival attribute to become evaluating, and as evaluative noun phrases they require the indefinite article. Therefore, (11a), (11c), and (11e) are grammatical, (11b), (11d), and (11f) are not (according to Hansen and Heltoft (ibid.), but see below with respect (11b)).[4]

(11a)  _hun_    _er_    _læge_
   she    is    doctor

(11b)  *_hun_    _er_    _en_    _læge_
   she    is    a    doctor

(11c)  _hun_    _er_    _en_    _dygtig_    _læge_
   she    is    a    good    doctor

(11d)  *_hun_    _er_    _dygtig_    _læge_
   she    is    good    doctor

(11e)  _hun_    _er_    _en_    _læge_    _som_    _er_    _dygtig_
   she    is    a    doctor    who    is    good

(11f)  *_hun_    _er_    _læge_    _som_    _er_    _dygtig_
   she    is    doctor    who    is    good

With certain preposed, non-evaluative adjectives, however, Danish actually allows noun phrase constructions without the indefinite article; cf. (12a)-(12b), which are both perfectly grammatical, with (11c)-(11d).[5]

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4.  Examples (11a)-(11d) are from Hansen and Heltoft (2011: 888).
5.  The judgements regarding the constructed examples' grammaticality come from the author's introspection, and they have all been checked with various colleagues and laymen who all have Danish as their mother tongue.

(12a)  *hun*    *er*    *uddannet*    *læge*
     she    is    educated    doctor

(12b)  *hun*    *er*    *en*    *uddannet*    *læge*
     she    is    a    educated    doctor

This is, to my knowledge, an under-studied aspect of Danish grammar, and I return to a possible explanation of the function of the indefinite article in (12a)-(12b) in Section 2.2.

### 2.2 The classifying function

Pedersen's (2012) examples in (5)-(6) contradict the claimed ungrammaticality of (11b), as they show that the indefinite article can occur in constructions with nouns which are not inherently evaluating and which, like *skuespiller* and *klovn*, do not have a 'non-actual', subjective evaluative meaning or a potential for evaluative meaning. This is also possible in Modern Standard Danish, as shown with (13)-(14), which according to this author's introspection are perfectly grammatical.

(13)  *han*    *læste*    *biologi*    *og*    *specialiserede*    *sig*    *i*    *planter,*
     he    studied    Biology    and    specialised    himself    in    plants
     *så*    *nu*    *er*    *han*    ***en***    ***botaniker***
     so    now    is    he    a    botanist

(14)  *han*    *betalte*    *kontingentet*    *så*    *nu*    *er*    *han*
     he    paid    the member fee    so    now    is    he
     *blevet*    ***et*** ***medlem***    *af*    *kajakklubben*
     become    a    member    of    the kayak club

Reference grammars of Danish do not give any clear explanations of this use of the indefinite article with these nouns, but, as mentioned in the introduction, Pedersen (2012) calls attention to the fact that the indefinite article can have the function of making classification or class membership explicit, like in (5)-(6), repeated here in a slightly revised version.

(15)  *du*    *er*    ***et***    ***menneske***,    *ikke et dyr*
     you    are    a    human    not an animal

(16)  *han   er   **en    far**, ikke en onkel       til    en     studerende*
      he    is    a      father, not an uncle    to     a      student

Even though the objective-descriptive nouns *menneske* 'human' and *far* 'father' are coded with the indefinite article as if they were evaluative like (7b), (8b), (9b) and (10b), there is nothing belittling, derogatory, or appreciating about (13)-(14) or about (11)-(12). Rather, following Pedersen (2012) and Hansen (1927: 53), the function of the indefinite article is to emphasise that the subject is a one out of more members of a class. This view of Danish finds support in Faarlund et al. (1997: 740–741) and Teleman et al. (1999: 176–178) for the genetically and in this instance typologically closely related languages Norwegian and Swedish. Thus, in (15), *du* is one of more members of the zoological class humans, and in (16), *han* is one member of a group of fathers of (a group of) students. With this proposal we are able to explain (12a-b): In (12b) the indefinite article emphasises class membership, in (12a) it denotes an objectively descriptive (complex) feature of the subject.

However, as pointed out by Pedersen (2012: 310), the objective-descriptive construction without the indefinite article may also *implicitly classify* the subject; if someone is described as *botaniker* 'a botanist', as in *han er botaniker*, s/he is also naturally a member of the group of persons who have the same characteristics. *Han* is a botanist and since we know that there are other botanists in the world, he is by implication a botanist among many, although it is not syntactically marked. Thus, the function of the indefinite article with the non-evaluative nouns is to *explicitly classify* the subject; the use of the indefinite article in a classifying function can be seen as a possibility for the speaker to emphasise a certain (classifying) semantics.

Following the literature, including Pedersen's (2012) suggestion that the indefinite article can have a classifying function, Table 1 (following page) summarises the distribution of the indefinite article with different noun classes and the associated semantic functions.

The table shows that the absence of the indefinite article renders an objective *descriptive* function – the bare subject predicate provides a labelling, characteristic description of the subject. This holds for nouns that are purely objectively descriptive, *botaniker* etc., and for nouns that have a potential for being evaluating, like *skuespiller* 'actor' and *klovn* 'clown', etc. When the indefinite article occurs, it may have a *classifying* function for all three types of

Table 1: The indefinite article with noun classes and semantic function with the matrix clause *han er NP* 'he is NP'.

|  | Descriptive function | Evaluative function | Classifying function |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inherently evaluative noun, *fjols* 'fool' | *han er fjols* | han er et fjols | han er et fjols |
| Potentially evaluative noun, *klovn* 'clown' | han er klovn | han er en klovn | han er en klovn |
| Purely descriptive noun, *botaniker* 'botanist' | han er botaniker | --- | han er en botaniker |

nouns but only an *evaluating* function for those nouns that are inherently evaluating or have a potential for being so.[6]

This is not to say that a purely descriptive noun with a preposed article cannot occur in a subjectively evaluated context. It can, as example (17) shows with *blot* 'merely', but in this case it is class of zoologists, to which *han* belongs that is being evaluated as having a lower intellectual level than botanists.

(17)  *han  er   blot   **en   zoolog**,   så   han   kan   ikke   skelne*
      he   is   merely  a    zoologist   so   he   can   not   tell
      *en   palme   fra   et   træ*
      a    palm   from   a    tree

*2.3 Usage of the indefinite article in dialects, in older Danish, and in current, spoken Danish*

As already mentioned, the indefinite article in identifying subject predicate constructions has survived in Danish dialects, according to Pedersen (2012: 303) "till in the late19th century".[7] However, the use in the dialects in the classifying

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6.  But such noun phrases with post-posed attributives are ungrammatical without the indefinite article: *\*hun er læge uden evner* 'she is a doctor without skills' vs. *hun er en læge uden evner* and *\*hun er læge som ikke er dygtig* 'she is doctor who is not good' vs. *hun er en læge som ikke er dygtig*. This aspect of Danish grammar interferes with other principles of coding of referentiality, and it goes beyond the limits of this article to explore this further. I refer to Togeby (2002: 150-154) and Hansen and Heltoft (2011: 884-898) for two theoretically different approaches to the relation between the coding of the subject predicate and referentiality in Danish.

7.   Pedersen's dialect material encompasses a large number of the major Danish dialect areas, covering most of the country: In Western Jutland, the Northernmost Jutland (Vendsyssel), and Southern Jutland (Sønderjylland), and on the islands Funen, Ærø, Langeland, Zealand, Møn, Lolland, Falster, and Bornholm. Pedersen (2012, pers. comm.) does not report any patterns with respect to which examples of attestation

function is not attested equally in all those semantic noun classes that Pedersen lists (examples here given by their English glosses):[8]

- Profession and social status ('stand' in Danish) ('botanist', 'priest', 'teacher', 'widow', 'duke', 'king', etc.)
- Inhabitant ('Dane', 'Norwegian', 'Zeelander', etc.)
- Age ('child', 'schoolboy', 'boy', etc.)
- Confession ('Lutheran', 'Jew', 'heathen', 'socialist', etc.)
- Diagnosis ('cripple', 'handicapped', etc.)
- Zoology ('human', 'devil', 'werewolf', 'boy', etc.)
- Relational ('father of NP', 'member of NP', etc., for example, *han er en far til* en studerende 'he is a father of a student')

Pedersen finds "relatively many examples" of the indefinite article's classifying function in the classes *Inhabitant* (*han er en fynbo* 'he is a Fyn'ian') and *Age* (*da jeg var en dreng* 'when I was a boy'), but only few in the noun class *Profession and social level* (*så blev æ en forsikringsmand* 'then I became an insurance man') (2012: 313). Pedersen also includes Modern Standard Danish in her study, and in this variety, following Pedersen, nouns in classes *Zoology* and *Relation* as in (15)-(16) can still be coded with the indefinite article with a classifying function. In contrast, the classifying function of indefinite article is "almost out of use" (2012: 312) for the classes *Profession and social level*, *Inhabitant* and *Diagnostic* where.[9] Table 2 summarises Pedersen's analysis of the

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come from which dialect areas. In fact, 'dialect' in Pedersen's study is better to be understood as 'non-standard Danish influenced by local ('dialectal') features to varying degrees'.

8. Notice that *Relational* is syntactically defined, with the (syntactic) relation expressed by a preposition following the head noun of the NP (Pedersen 2012: 305–308). The noun classes are ad hoc and established by Pedersen as the best way of grouping the relevant nouns in the dialect and historical sources, and the class *Zoology* may also be termed *Biology* (Pedersen, pers. comm.). In order to be able to compare my results with Pedersen's, I have kept this noun class inventory even though there may be instances where a membership may be questionable. Some nouns are candidates for two noun classes, for example *dreng* 'boy' for *Age* (denominating period of childhood) and for *Zoology/Biology* (denominating genetic disposition). Nouns that were not easy to categorise according to Pedersen's definition of the semantic classes are ignored.

9. Pedersen's observation of the indefinite article being out of use with these noun classes is supported by Hansen (1927: 53-54) whose most recent example with the indefinite article from 'Modern Danish', "nydansk" ("new-Danish"), is from 1811. Also Mikkelsen (1911) supports Pedersen's observation, quoting an example from

use of the indefinite article in the dialects and the standard language. For the sake of comparison, the table also presents the use of nouns in Pedersen's noun classes in the LANCHART corpus of spoken Danish (Gregersen 2009; Gregersen et al. 2014).[10]

Table 2: Usage patterns across semantic noun classes in dialectal and standard Danish for the use of the indefinite article with descriptive nouns (using Pedersen's 2012 noun classes).

| Noun class | Classifying function | Dialect | Standard language (Pedersen 2012) | Standard language (LANCHART, n=4543) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Profession and social status | *han er en lærer* 'he is a teacher' | Poorly attested | Attested in 19th century – almost out of use | Almost out of use: 0.4% (10 out of 2817 tokens) |
| Inhabitant | *han er en dansker* 'he is a Dane' | Well attested | Attested in 19th century – almost out of use | Still in use: 4.7% (33 out of 702 tokens) |
| Age | *hun er et barn* 'she is a child' | Well attested | Attested in 19th century – almost out of use | Almost of out use: 0.8% (3 out of 375 tokens) |
| Confession | *han er en kristen* 'he is a Christian' | Attested | Attested in 19th century | Still in use: 1.8% (3 out of 165 tokens) |

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the author Steen Steensen Blicher (1782-1848) as an example with the indefinite article from "the older literature" (Mikkelsen 1911: 182).

10. The LANCHART corpus of spoken Danish encompasses speech from Southern Zealand, Western Funen, Western Jutish, Eastern Jutish, and Southern Jutish as well as from (areas in) the major cities Copenhagen (Northeast Zealand), Århus (Eastern Jutland), and Odense (Central Funen). The data stem from recordings of spontaneous speech in semi-structured interviews from 1970 to the present. At the time of writing, it contains approximately 9 million words. The sample from LANCHART corpus encompasses only copulative constructions with the word forms *er* 'is' and *var* 'was', i.e. not other word forms of the copula verb *være* 'be' or of *blive* 'become'. With *er* and *var* there are 4,798 examples of the copulative construction. A number of these occur with nouns that do not easily fit into Pedersen's categories and which therefore are excluded from this survey, or they occur with nouns in non-actual usage, which are not included by Pedersen, e.g., *jeg er en pladsnarkoman* 'I'm a space-drug-addict', meaning 'I need to have space around me' (*Diagnosis*, non-actual).

| Diagnosis | *han er en krøbling* 'he is a cripple' | Attested | Attested in 19th century | Still in use: 2.9% (2 out of 68 tokens) |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Zoology | *han er et menneske* 'he is a human' | Attested | Still in use | Widely used: 38.3% (46 out of 120 tokens) |
| Relation | *han er en far til  …* 'he is a father of   …' | No examples | Still in use | Out of use: 0% (0 out of 296 tokens) |

The table shows that in both dialectal Danish and Standard Danish there are differences with respect to in which noun classes the classifying function of the indefinite article occurs. The classifying function of the indefinite article is not likely to occur with objective descriptive (see above) nouns in the class *Profession and social status*, but more so with nouns in the classes *Inhabitant*, *Age* and *Zoology*. It may be that the nouns in these classes to a larger or clearer extent divide 'the world' in a taxonomic world, with classes or groups that an individual can be a member of.

The table reveals only few discrepancies between Pedersen's (2012) evaluation of the use in current Standard Danish and distribution in the LANCHART corpus. One example is with nouns in the syntactic *Relation* class, where the indefinite article simply does not seem to occur in the corpus of modern spoken Danish. Another example is with nouns in the *Inhabitant* class, which with 4.7% cannot be said to be out of use, although not particularly frequent in modern spoken Danish.

The indefinite article in the class *Profession and social status* is almost out of use. Of the 10 examples from the LANCHART corpus, 5 are with an evaluative noun (*bondeknold* 'bumpkin', *klovn* 'clown', *bonderøv* 'bumpkin', *luder* 'prostitute', *gangster* 'gangster'), 1 is in an evaluative function (with *skuespiller* 'actor'), and only 4 examples (0.001%) show the indefinite article in a non-evaluative function with nouns of profession: *tømrer* 'carpenter', *pædagog* 'social educator', *forretningskvinde* 'business woman' and *automekaniker* 'motor mechanic'. These examples show that fluent Standard Danish speakers *can* use the indefinite article with a classifying function with nouns in this semantic class, but only do so extremely rarely.

Also close to being out of use, in line with Pedersen's observations, is the occurrence with nouns in the *Age* class, whereas use of the indefinite article with nouns in the classes *Confession* and *Diagnosis* is still possible, albeit infrequent, like in the *Inhabitant* class. In contrast, the use with nouns in the ob-

viously taxonomic *Zoology*/*Biology* class is common in modern spoken Danish.

*2.4 Envelope of variation and research question*

The focus of the analysis, the envelope of variation, is the Standard Danish identifying subject predicate construction with a bare noun as the subject predicate. The variation in this construction consists of absence or presence of the indefinite article. The variation depends on style (dialectal or standard speech) or the semantic class of the noun. When used with subjective-evaluative or potentially evaluative nouns, the indefinite article is obligatory, thus, identifying subject predicate constructions with these nouns fall out of the envelope of variation. When used with objective-descriptive nouns, following Hansen and Heltoft (2011), the indefinite article has a classifying function. Occurrence with nouns in classes *Inhabitant, Confession* and *Diagnosis* will not be unexpected, but it is expected to be very frequent if the Denmark Danish pattern is replicated.

When used in a non-evaluative function with nouns where the indefinite article is not expected, for example in the noun class *Profession and social status*, this may either be an extension of a classifying function (to a new noun class), or an instance of influence of English. In some cases, a classifying function cannot be ruled out (as we will see below). If a classifying function cannot be ruled out for nouns in this noun class, we have either an unexpected dialect relic, a very unexpected historical relic, or an example of English influence.

## 3 American Swedish and American Norwegian

In his analysis of American Swedish, Hasselmo (1974: 215–216, 2005: 2133) sees the phenomenon analyzed here as a clear example of English influence on "Scandinavian syntax" in North America. Hasselmo finds that the "indefinite article is used in accordance with English rules with nouns that denote "consisting class" (1974: 215–216).[11] According to his examples, this noun class consists of what is here called *profession* nouns, *snickare* 'carpenter', *präst* 'priest', and the loanwords *pilot* and *druggist*. Also Klintborg (1999) mentions this phenomenon and its "frequent occurrence" in American Swedish, calling it "a characteristic English influence" (1999: 57). Klintborg draws attention to

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11. My translation of "obestämd artikel i enlighet med engelskans reglar används vid substantiv som betecknar "bestående klass"". Later, in Hasselmo (2005: 2133), he talks about "nouns denoting "permanent class"".

the fact that nouns in his semantic classes *nationality, religion, politics* and *occupation* are not preceded by the indefinite article in Standard Swedish, but that they can be in American Swedish.

Hasselmo does not give any quantitative documentation for the distribution of the English feature, but he presents the results of an acceptability test. This shows that the language of the predicate noun correlates with the syntactic pattern: The use of the indefinite article is more acceptable among American-Swedish speakers when the predicate noun is English, so rather *han var en pilot* 'he was a pilot' than *han var pilot* 'he was pilot'. With a Swedish noun, the absence and presence of the indefinite article is just as acceptable by Hasselmo's speakers, for example, *han var en/Ø snickare* 'he was a/Ø carpenter' (1974: 216).

Kinn's (2017a, 2017b) preliminary work is, to my knowledge, the only work on the same phenomenon in American Norwegian. With 182 examples of the subject-identifying copula construction (from 48 speakers, most 3rd generation immigrants with English as the dominant language), Kinn finds that the indefinite article, i.e. the English pattern, is used in 25 occurrences (13.7%), thus bare nouns "are used in the majority of cases" (2017b). In contrast to Hasselmo's results, however, Kinn does not find a significant correlation between occurrence of the indefinite article and English loanwords, but she does observe inter- and intra-speaker variation. In general the distribution seems (for Kinn) to be "unsystematic" rather than "a direct consequence of grammatical borrowing" (2017a) or a "restructuring" (2017b) of the system.

## 4 Data and speakers

The data sample analyzed in this article is extracted from CoNAmDa (Kühl et al., accepted). At the time of extraction the corpus consisted of 189 biographic interviews with 222 speakers, Danish immigrants to USA and Canada and their descendants, and it encompassed 351.541 words.[12] For this study, the data sample has been annotated for a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors,

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12. The interviews are conducted by the Danish linguists Iver Kjær and Mogens Baumann Larsen during five field expeditions in the period from 1966 to 1980 and, for most of the interviews from New Denmark, by the American linguist Christopher Hale (University of Alberta). In terms of language proficiency, the speakers in the corpus range from fully fluent in Danish with no or only little noticeable influence from English, over speakers with some or many lexical, morphological and syntactical features from English, to speakers who prefer to speak English in passages or throughout the interviews.

such as copula verb (*være* 'be' or *blive* 'become'), language of predicate noun (English or Danish), semantics of predicate noun (profession, inhabitant, identity, relational), as well as speakers' gender, age, country of birth, and residence (town, state, country).

The speakers come from a variety of locations in USA and Canada, many from localities where many Danes traditionally settled, such as Chicago, Minneapolis, New Denmark in New Brunswick, Canada, and Blair in Nebraska. Other speakers are from lesser-known Danish settlements, such as Croton-on-Hudson in New York State and Calgary and Winnipeg in Canada. Most of the speakers in the sample are first generation immigrants, i.e. they are born in Denmark, or second-generation immigrants, i.e. they are born in USA or Canada in the period 1890–1920 by immigrants born in Denmark. There are very few third and fourth generation immigrants in the sample and in the corpus as a whole, which is not surprising since Danes have been known to give up speaking Danish relatively early in the integration process in the new country, although New Denmark seems to be an exception to this. According to the Canadian Census in 2011, there were still 35 people in New Denmark who reported that they spoke Danish.

The literature on Danish immigration to North America mentions a number of reasons for rapid assimilation to the American society.[13] First, the number of Danish immigrants was much smaller than, for example, the number of Norwegian and Swedish immigrants, respectively. Second, there were only few stable Danish strongholds. Third, the Danish emigration was largely individual rather than family or community based like a good portion of the Norwegian and Swedish emigration. Fourth, many Danes married people from other nations to larger extent than Norwegians and Swedes. To this, Kjær and Baumann Larsen (1976: 190) adds 'motivation for emigration' as a crucial factor for the tendency not to maintain the Danish language. Danes did not in general emigrate for financial, political, or religious reasons, but in order to find "greater possibilities for realizing their social ambitions", a motivation that would facilitate a rapid cultural and linguistic integration (ibid.).

These cultural and demographic characteristics had fatal consequences for the status of the Danish language in USA. As early as 1976, Kjær and Baumann Larsen (1976: 189) state about Danish as a heritage language from the period

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13. See Hvidt (1971) and Grøngaard Jeppesen (2005) for historical perspectives on the Danish immigration to the U.S. and Kühl (2014) for an overview of examples of the linguistic outcome of the immigration. For the early Danish immigration to Canada, see Larsen and Bender (1991).

of immigration before World War II: "Spoken Danish is almost never heard in the United States outside a few family circles … and Danish speech communities no longer exist. Even in the Danish-American institutions for the elderly people Danish is hardly ever used today". Even though Danish may have been the L1 for many of the speakers, the language recorded and documented is in most cases a remembered language, and it is expectable that a bilingual speaker in this situation has transmitted features from the dominating L2 (here American English) to the weaker L1 (Danish).

In CoNAmDa we do not in general find that the Danish speech is strongly or particularly dialectal. This overall picture with respect to dialectal Danish in North America is in contrast to the picture that Haugen draws for American-Norwegian (Haugen 1953: 337–360) where the inherited dialect plays a more conspicuous role. Already Kjær and Baumann Larsen (1976) noted this 'dialect-poor' status of the Danish language in USA. Baumann Larsen & Kjær point out that only in very few cases did speakers of the same dialect settle together. A known exception to this pattern is speakers from an area in South Dakota where the Northwest Jutish Thy dialect is dominating (Kjær and Baumann Larsen 1976: 189; Kjær and Baumann Larsen 1981; Heegård Petersen 2018). Furthermore, dialectal speech, 'flat Danish', had low prestige (fast acquisition of American English had high prestige) according to Kjær and Baumann Larsen (1976: 190–191), who also point to the fact that there had been an influence from the written standard language and from Standard Danish speaking ministers and teachers at theological seminaries (ibid).

Although not mentioned by Kjær and Baumann Larsen, another reason for the only slightly or incidentally dialectal component in the American-Danish corpus may be the fact that the process of dialect levelling, regiolectification, gathered speed in Denmark already from the 1860s (Pedersen 2003). This had the consequence that the dialects were already levelled in various degrees when the emigration from Denmark took place, not least for the many emigrants from the major cities. This assumed relatively little dialectal component in the Danish spoken by the Danish immigrants makes it less likely that the use of the indefinite article is a dialectal relic. This said, it should be stressed that except for Heegård Petersen's (2018) study of Northwestern Jutish in South Dakota, no systematic survey of the distribution of dialectal or non-standard features has yet been conducted based on the data from CoNAmDa. The question of how dialectal local varieties of North American Danish actually were, remains generally unanswered.

## 5 Analysis: The use of the indefinite article across noun classes

In the data sample analyzed here, there are 291 examples of the identifying subject predicate construction (a perhaps surprisingly small number given the size of the sample). The indefinite article occurs with the predicate noun in 63 (21.6%) examples of these. There are no examples of the indefinite article used with an evaluating function among the 63 examples (e.g., *han er en klovn* 'he behaves foolishly'), and there are no occurrences with an inherently evaluative noun (e.g. *et fjols* 'fool'). There are also no occurrences of the indefinite article with nouns in the classes *Zoology* (*human, devil, werewolf* etc.) and *Diagnostic* (*cripple*, *handicapped*, etc.). There are only three examples in the *Relation* class (*han var en ven af min mors* 'he was a friend of my mother', two examples with *medlem af NP* 'a member of NP', see (18), and only four examples in the *Confession* class (with the nouns *socialist* 'socialist', *katolik* 'catholic', *afholdsmand* 'non-drinker' and *grundtvigianer* 'Grundtvigian').[14]

(18)  *men  han  var  **en  ven**  af  min  mors*        (Relation, MLU)
      but   he   was   a    friend   of   my    mother's

Examples (19)-(22) show examples of the other noun classes. Table 3 below shows the distribution of the indefinite article in the subject predicate noun classes as defined by Pedersen (2012). The following paragraphs discusses only the distribution in the classes *Profession and social status*, *Inhabitant*, and *Age*.

(19)  *jeg    skulle  have  lært   noget*                  (Profession, HCN)
      I      should  have   learnt   something

      *men  jeg  er    bare  **en   farmer***
      but   I    am    just   a     farmer

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14. A Grundtvigian is a follower of the influential Danish philosopher Grundtvig's (1783-1872) thoughts. An anonymous peer-reviewer questions *afholdsmand* as a member of the Confession class. In older times in Denmark, however, an *afholdsmand* (whether a man or a woman) was not only a person who (at a given occasion) did not drink alcohol. It was a person who for moral and, not least, political reasons refrained from drinking alcohol at all. In many instances an *afholdsmand* was a member of the former politically influential *Danmarks Afholdsforening* 'an organisation for non-drinkers' (established through influence from North America). The moral – and political – purpose of this organisation was to persuade people to not drink alcohol because it may lead to drunkenness and that would – in the opinion of an *afholdsmand* – demoralise a person and prevent him or her from contributing effectively to the society.

(20) *der    havde  vi    en    gammel    kone*          (Social status, JTM)
     there  had    we    an    old       woman
     *som    var    **en**  **enkekone***
     who    was    a     widow

(21) *han    tog    over   i    64*                      (Inhabitant, HCN)
     he     went   over   in   (19)64
     *der    var    han    bleven  **en**  **Canadian***
     there  was    he     become  a     Canadian

(22) *da    jeg    var    bare    **en**    **dreng***      (Age, GOH)
     when  I      was    just    a       boy
     *der    havde  min    far     han     havde  hest*
     there  had    my     father  he      had    horse

Table 3: Distribution of the indefinite article across Pedersen's (2012) noun classes in American Danish.

| | With indefinite article | Without indefinite article | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Profession and social status | 35 (15%) | 199 (85%) | 234 (100%) |
| Inhabitant | 21 (77.8%) | 7 (22.2%) | 28 (100%) |
| Age | 6 (28.6%) | 16 (71.4%) | 22 (100%) |
| Confession | 0 (0%) | 4 (100%) | 4 (100%) |
| Relation | 1 (33.3%) | 2 (66.7%) | 3 (100%) |
| Total | 63 (21.6%) | 230 (78.4%) | 291 (100%) |

The class *Profession and social status* is the most frequent class in the sample, and since the indefinite article is not expected in this class following a Denmark Danish pattern, it is a good candidate for a possible English influence. The number of examples with indefinite articles in this noun class is not overwhelming, but in contrast to the Denmark Danish pattern shown in Table 2, which shows that the indefinite article is practically out of use in both dialects and in the standard language, there are surprisingly many examples with the indefinite article. (With 15% the use of the indefinite article is slightly stronger than what Kinn finds in her study of American Norwegian, see above.) This indicates either a clear instance of English influence or of a surprising over-generalisation of the classifying function.

With only 28 examples, the identifying subject predicate construction with a noun in the *Inhabitant* class is not particularly frequent. But with 77.8% we have a remarkably high number in relation the standard language (Table 2). Since Pedersen (2012) does not give any figures, it is not quite clear how 77.8% corresponds to "well attested", but the high percentage in American Danish points in the direction of it being quite dominating. We may speak of an over-generalisation of a dialect relic, probably through an enforcement due to influence from English.

The six examples (28.6%) with the indefinite article in the *Age* class is not unexpected from Pedersen's (2012) estimation of its use in the dialects, "well attested", but it is in contrast to the usage pattern in the standard language. We may here see a preservation of dialectal pattern without enforcement due to influence from English since 28.6% does not stand out in relation to Pedersen's estimation.

Like in Kinn's (2017a, 2017b) study of American Norwegian, there is not a clear indication from the examples that the English-like use of the indefinite article is more likely if the subject predicate noun is English, as observed by Hasselmo in American Swedish (Hasselmo 1974: 216). (Examples of English loanwords in the sample are 'clerk', 'farmer', 'nurse', 'maintenance man', 'cook', 'waitress', 'treasurer'.) The difference between the tendencies for English and the Danish nouns to co-occur the indefinite article is not statistically significant (p=0.2621).[15]

There are also no differences between speakers who are born in Denmark, '1st generation immigrants' and speakers born in North America, '2nd' and 3rd generation immigrants (p=0.9372) when considering the use of the indefinite

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15. For the statistics, I have used a mixed effect multi-linear regression analysis in the R-environment. This analysis gives an estimate of an independent variable (here English lemma or not) on a dependent variable (here presence or not of indefinite article), while at the same time estimating the influence on the outcome of the dependent factor of a *random factor* (here the individual speaker). In non-technical words, even though an individual speaker may prefer a certain usage, the p-value that the statistical test generates includes this tendency in the calculation. See Baayen (2008: 241-330) for an introduction to this way of doing statistics. There are no statistical differences with respect to the sociolinguistic factors age and immigrant generation (i.e. born in Denmark (= 1st generation) vs. born in North America (= 2nd and 3rd generation)). There are also no statistical differences with respect to linguistic factors such as whether the subject is a pronoun or a noun, 1st, 2nd or 3rd singular, or whether the copula verb is *være* 'be' or *blive* 'become', or whether it is in the present, preterite, or perfect tense.

Table 4: Distribution of the indefinite article with English and Danish predicate nouns in American Danish; all noun classes.

|  | With indefinite article | Without indefinite article | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English noun | 13 (29.5%) | 31 (70.5%) | 44 (100%) |
| Danish noun | 50 (20.2%) | 197 (79.8%) | 247 (100%) |
| Total | 63 (21.6%) | 228 (78.4%) | 291 (100%) |

article in the noun class *Profession and social status* and in the noun classes *Age* and *Inhabitant*.

Summing up, in the three best-covered noun classes, we see a clear over-generalisation of the use of the indefinite article in the identifying subject predicate construction in American Danish with nouns in the class *Profession and social status*. For the noun classes *Inhabitant* and *Age* one should take caution because of the low number of examples, but we also see an over-generalisation in relation to the pattern in the standard language for the *Inhabitant* class. This can be interpreted as an enforcement of the patterns observed in the dialects. For the *Age* class, we see a replication of the dialectal Denmark Danish pattern.

Two explanations of the over-generalised use of the indefinite article seem possible: 1) The over-generalisation is a result of influence from English, in which case the speakers have copied English syntax and use the indefinite article in a *descriptive* function. 2) The speakers over-generalise the classifying function, which is, after all, possible although not very often used in standard Danish and only expected as a dialect relic in the noun classes *Inhabitant* and *Age*.

The answer, however, is not straightforward since the nearest context can only disambiguate the function in some examples, in others it cannot. Of the 36 examples with indefinite articles in the class *Profession and social status* seven occur with a place adverbial, see examples in (1)-(2) above and (23)-(24) below. This renders a classifying function unlikely because it is not probable that the speaker intends to denominate group membership in a (small) specified place.

(23)  *Doolittle   han   var   **en   attorney**   i   Racine*                    (EJE)
      Doolittle   he   was   an   attorney   in   Racine

(24)   *hun   er   **en   sygeplejerske**   i   Randers*                     (HFB)
      she   is   a   nurse   in   Randers

For other examples with a place adverbial a classifying function is not unlikely, for example when talking about a priest in a church community or a type of employee in a company.

(25)   *min   ældste   dreng   han   er   ude   i   Calgary*                     (ALV)
      my   eldest   boy   he   is   out   in   Calgary
      *han   er   **en   præst**   i   den   lutherske   kirke*
      he   is   a   priest   in   the   Lutheran   church

(26)   *han   er   **en   territory manager**   for   Northrup King and Co.*   (EMN)
      he   is   a   territory manager   for   Northrup King and Co.

But in the other examples there is nothing in the immediate syntactic context that points decisively in the direction of a possible classifying function, for example:

(27)   *vi   var   så   fattige   sagde   hun*                     (ACN)
      we   were   so   poor   said   she
      *hendes   far   var   **en   husmand***
      her   father   was   a   smallholder

(28)   *han   var   **en   landmand**   og   havde*                     (DGM)
      he   was   a   farmer   and   had
      *en   stor   farm*
      a   big   farm

These, and other, examples are ambiguous with respect to having copied an English syntax or extended an existing possible syntax to a new semantic class, here *Profession*, due to pressure from English. However, there is, in my opinion, no obvious reason why speakers of American Danish compared to speakers of 'Denmark Danish' should use a classifying function for nouns in, for example, the *Profession and social status* class. The 'pragmatic' load, so to speak (see Section 2.3), for an explicit coding of a membership of a group or a category is not stronger in an English context. I am therefore inclined to see the use of the

indefinite article with nouns in the *Profession and social status* class as an example of English influence.


# 6 Perspectives

## 6.1 Can a dialectal bias be isolated?

If there is a dialect relic in the data, as Pedersen's (2012) observation may suggest, it is with nouns in the classes *Inhabitant* and *Age*, where more than 77% and 28%, respectively, of identifying subject predicate constructions have an indefinite article. (But again, caution should be taken due to the low number of tokens.) Further (indirect) support for a dialectal relic rather than English influence may come from taking a closer look at the individual speaker. If s/he is in general dialectal, it is probable that his/her use of the indefinite article in these noun classes is a dialect relic. If s/he is not dialectal to a noticeable degree, it suggests an English influence rather than at a dialect relic. A dialect screening of all or even of a reasonably large selection the speakers, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper, and it is not without considerable methodological problems either (see Section 3). But we may be able to approach the question of a dialect relic or not in a different albeit indirect way by looking at distributional tendencies in settlement locations that are relatively well represented in CoNAmDa.

We know from speakers' self-reports and from the historical literature that the settlement area in South Dakota around the towns Lake Norden and Arlington was predominantly Northwestern Jutish. Heegård (forthc.) documents this from a linguistic perspective in his analysis of 15 phonological variables. We do not have clear personal or anecdotal or even linguistic evidence from other settlements areas that are represented in CoNAmDa. Rather, the general impression is that Danish settlements in North America were heterogenous with respect to dialects, and, as pointed out by Kjær & Baumann Larsen (1981) that they relatively fast became Standard Danish-like.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the indefinite article in the noun classes *Inhabitant* and *Age* for those settlement areas that were relatively tight and that are reasonable well represented in the data sample. South Dakota, the isolated enclave New Denmark (in New Brunswick, Canada), Blair in Nebraska, Solvang in California (established in 1911 by descendants of Danish immigrants, cf. Kristiansen et al. 1991). The residual group 'Rest of NA' encompasses: 1) speakers from rural settlements that are not well represented in

CoNAmDa and that are located all over USA and in other provinces in Canada than New Brunswick; 2) speakers from big cities (New York, Minnesota, Chicago, Des Moines, etc.) who seem not to have had any interaction with each other, based on the information from the interviews. If the speakers from South Dakota are particularly dialectal, or more so than speakers from other places, we would expect to see that reflected in their use of the indefinite pronoun in the classes *Inhabitant* and *Age* (cf. "well attested", Pedersen (2012), Table 2).
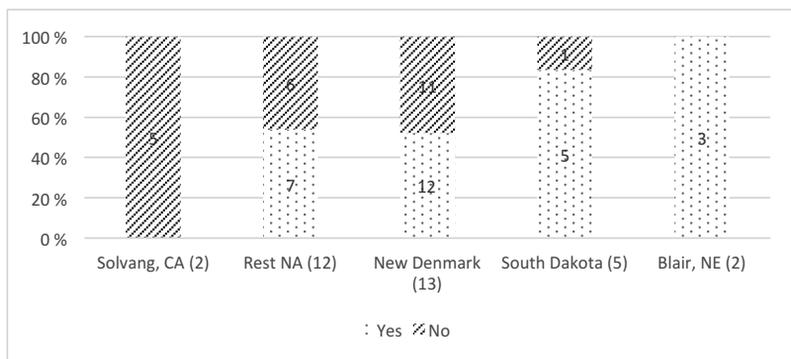


Figure 1: Distribution of indefinite article in the noun classes *Inhabitant* and *Age* in place groups; n=50; no. of speakers in parentheses.

The comparison in Figure 1 suffers from the infrequent examples from Solvang, South Dakota and Blair, and a finer statistical analysis is not possible. Tentatively then, the figure shows a tendency for the (well-known five) dialect speakers in South Dakota to primarily use the indefinite article. But the indefinite article is also reasonably well represented in New Denmark and in the remainder of North America. The comparison in Figure 1 cannot rule out that the use of the indefinite article is stronger in (assumed) strong dialect settlements because of the dialectal bias, but it stresses the need for future research on the distribution of (traditional) dialect features in settlements such as New Denmark and in other places in North America.

*6.2 Sporadic or systematic use?*
Kinn (2017a, 2017b) speculates whether the distribution of the indefinite article in American Norwegian is a "sporadic and seemingly unsystematic" or whether it is a sign of "restructuring" (of the grammar). With an overall occurrence of 21.5% (Table 3) in contrast to American Norwegian 13.7% in Kinn's data, the

Danish data may seem a bit more on the way to become 'systematic', but there is a long way for the use of the indefinite article to become a sign of 'restructuring' if this is to be understood as a predominant use. However, disregarding for a moment the relatively low actual numbers in the class *Inhabitant* (Table 3), 77.8% is a high percentage. In itself this would be a strong indicator for a restructuring of the system so that the choice between coding an *Inhabitant* noun as 'descriptive' without the indefinite article or 'classified' with the indefinite noun would be eliminated and that use of the indefinite noun was the preferred and dominating *for this noun class*.

This distribution and the possible influence from dialectal Danish in this noun class emphasises the importance of distinguishing between noun classes, at least for Danish. For the noun class *Profession and social status* the distribution, 14.9%, is similar to what we learn from Kinn's data. This distribution pattern seems more 'sporadic', and of the speakers with more than four instances of the identifying subject predicate construction with a noun in this class, there are only two speakers who use the indefinite article consistently, as Table 5 (next page) shows.

From the table we can learn that a good number of speakers have a consistent Denmark Danish pattern, and that a number of speakers use the English system to a varying degree. The individual preferences across the place groups is not inconsistent with the insignificant differences between the place groups illustrated with Figure 1; for example, a New Denmark speaker has a very consistent Danish pattern, and another New Denmark speaker has a consistent English pattern. (The table suggests a small tendency for speakers born in North America to have more examples with the indefinite article, but as mentioned above, this factor is not significant when all speakers are considered.) Rather, the data suggest that the English influence affects the individual speakers in different ways, which in heritage language research is often regarded as a(n unsystematic) sign of attrition, by which is meant the phenomenon that a linguistic property once acquired is lost during the lifespan of a speaker. This loss may be due to lack of exposure to or use of a language and to the fact that another language, an L2, has become the speaker's dominant language (see, for example, Montrul 2008 and references therein).


## 7 Conclusion

This article first showed some examples of what seems to be a contact-induced change in American Danish, the use of the indefinite article in the identifying

Table 5: Occurrence and non-occurrence of the indefinite article for speakers with most tokens in the noun class *Profession and social status*.

| | Gender | Birthplace | Residence | With indefinite article | Without indefinite article |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AUH | F | New Denmark | New Denmark | 0 | 9 |
| ART | M | DK | Rest NA (Omaha) | 0 | 9 |
| DOP | F | DK | Rest NA (Minneapolis) | 0 | 7 |
| HAJ | M | Iowa | Rest NA (Iowa) | 0 | 6 |
| ARU | F | DK | Blair, NE | 0 | 5 |
| HIP | F | Iowa | Rest of NA (Iowa) | 0 | 5 |
| JNB | M | DK | Rest of NA (Iowa) | 0 | 5 |
| OBO | F | DK | Rest of NA (Minneapolis) | 1 | 8 |
| HFB | M | Nebraska | Blair, NE | 1 | 4 |
| REY | M | New Denmark | New Denmark | 3 | 3 |
| HCN | M | New Denmark | New Denmark | 3 | 8 |
| RIP | M | Nebraska | Rest of NA (Nebraska) | 3 | 1 |
| EMC | F | DK | Rest of NA (New York St.) | 4 | 0 |
| ALV | M | New Denmark | New Denmark | 6 | 0 |

subject predicate construction. It then proceeded by outlining and re-formulating the rules in (Standard) Danish for the use and non-use of the indefinite article in this construction, including Pedersen's (2012) emphasis on what is called a classifying function. The article then summarised Pedersens' (2012) observation on the use of the indefinite article in this classifying function in older Standard Danish and in non-standard Danish ('dialects'). Pedersen's rough quantitative estimation as to the significancy of the use of the indefinite article across a set of noun classes was compared with this author's own observations in a corpus of modern spoken Standard Danish. The following analysis of the distribution of the indefinite article in American Danish was then compared to the 'Denmark Danish usage patterns' considering also the distribution across Pedersen's semantic noun classes.

The analysis showed a clear indication of English influence in the noun class *Profession and social status*. The analysis also showed also an over-generalisation of the indefinite article with nouns in the class *Inhabitant*. With caution due to the relatively low number of tokens in these classes, the distribution in this noun class indicated a replication of a dialectal tendency enforced by influence from English. For the noun class *Age*, the speakers replicated the dialectal tendency. The results of the statistical tests did not point to any obvious factors behind the observed variation, use and non-use of the indefinite article. The comparison between patterns of use between those settlement that are relatively well represented in the data sample showed that they all influenced by English to a similar extent or had preserved a dialect Danish pattern to a similar extent. The analysis then turned to look at individual speakers' distribution and it showed that individuals differ highly from speakers who use the Danish pattern consistently over speakers who can use both the English and Danish pattern to speakers who seem to prefer the English pattern. This is in line with the findings by Kinn (2017a, 2017b) for American Norwegian.

Statistical tests showed no significant correlations with linguistic or social factors; instead, a comparison between selections of individual speakers indicated the relevance of what we may call 'the individual factor' in the distributional pattern: Individual speakers differ quite significantly with respect to their use and non-use of the indefinite article in the identifying subject predicate construction. This factor may be undermining the assumed dialectal bias, as it points to the possibility that it is the individual speaker's dialectal bias or his/her individual bias towards English influence that lie behind the observed distribution. It remains for future studies of the speakers in CoNAmDa to investigate to what degree 'high-frequency users' of the indefinite article in the identifying subject predicate construction also has (many) other potential dialectal features, or to what degree they in general are influenced by English.

More specifically, the article has also shown the relevance of considering the classifying function that the indefinite article has with certain noun classes and the difference distribution patterns across dialectal Danish vs. Standard Danish. The combined functional and dialectal perspectives have qualified the insight into the nature of the English influence in American Danish. In a wider perspective, the study has emphasised the importance of analyzing a possible English-caused variation pattern in the light of a complex and semantically subtle pattern of distribution in a baseline language, in this case as documented by (Pedersen 2012).

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