

**DET(-drop), LBC and LBE –  
a view from labeling theory**  
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It is a well-known fact that DET-categories (DET=articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, etc.) are obligatory in most complex nominals of languages like English, German, Italian and the like, cf. Stowell (1991), Longobardi (1994). DET-obligatoriness in these languages famously contrasts with the optionality of DET-categories in complex nominals of many Slavic languages (Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Polish and the like). Such contrasts have been argued to be derivable from an NP-DP-parameter (Bošković 2005, 2008 *et seq*). Following work by Uriagereka (1988) and Corver (1989), Bošković argues that this parameter also underlies the availability of DET-extraction and the absence thereof: Thus, NP-languages allow Left Branch Extraction, while DP-languages are subject to an island constraint, the Left Branch Condition (cf. Ross 1986).

I suggest replacing the NP-DP-divide with a lexical parameter of the functional nominalizing head *n* (cf. Borer 2005). Adopting labeling theory (Chomsky 2013, 2015), I argue that the mentioned pattern of obligatory/optional External Merge and (dis-)allowed Internal Merge of DET-categories is deducible in a uniform fashion from a single property of the nominal categorizer: English, German and Italian feature “weak” *n*, while the mentioned Slavic languages feature “strong” *n*. This lexical difference correlates with morphological manifestations on the nouns in these languages.

Conceptual implications and consequences will be discussed, including the discarding of the DP-hypothesis and the problem of phasehood in the nominal domain. Time allowing, I will discuss extensions of this approach to languages with affixal definiteness markers like Danish and Swedish.

**References**

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