

# “Sant nok fyller Kjersti 70 år, men ...”: The structure of [A NOK] disjuncts

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## 1 Introduction

Modern Norwegian has a productive sentence adverbial construction of the form adjective plus *nok* (literally:) ‘enough’, such as the expressions in (1)–(3):<sup>1</sup>

- (1) Jeg ble **sant nok** dårlig betalt, men passet godt på leilighetene.  
‘**True**, I was poorly paid, but took good care of the apartments.’
- (2) **Paradoksalt nok** er drikkevannet best i områder i landet hvor utgangspunktet er dårligst.  
‘**Paradoxically**, the drinking water is best in parts of the country where the conditions are the poorest to begin with.’
- (3) Den lå i innerlomma på skinnjakka han **tåpelig nok** hadde lagt i baksetet.  
‘It (his mobile phone) was in the inside pocket of the leather jacket that he had **foolishly** put in the back seat.’

These sentence adverbials are more specifically disjuncts and fall into several categories (see Section 2.2). The same construction is found in Danish and Swedish, the latter with *nog* rather than *nok*.<sup>2</sup> Because of the *nok* vs. *nog* difference, I refer to this element as NOK. Similar constructions exist also in English, with *enough*, and Dutch, with *genoeg* (Ramat and Ricca 1998, 210).

Except for properties of semantics and constituent order (see Section 2.2), such disjuncts at first sight look the same as manner adverbials consisting of an adjective plus NOK, as in (4):

- (4) Skilsmissem hans hadde gått **vennlig nok** for seg

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<sup>1</sup> All numbered examples in this article are from *Leksikografisk bokmålskorpus* (LBK), the Lexicographic Corpus of Norwegian Bokmål (Fjeld, Nøklestad, and Hagen 2020). This is a corpus of 100 million words of written Norwegian, with texts from the years 1985–2013.

<sup>2</sup> In Norwegian, three such disjuncts are written as one or two words, viz. *visstnok/visst nok* ‘apparently’, *riktignok/riktig nok* ‘admittedly’, and *rettnok/rett nok* ‘admittedly’. All others are written as two words. See further Section 3.6. (In Danish, *vistnok* and *rigtignok* are written as one word, all others as two words. In Swedish, all are written as two words.)

‘His divorce had gone **amicably enough**’

However, Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) has discovered that disjunct [A NOK] first appeared in Swedish in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Kinn (accepted a) has found similar results for Danish/Norwegian.<sup>3</sup> Kinn (2023) shows that such disjuncts have become very productive in contemporary Norwegian.

The source predicate complements clearly were adjective phrases, and some research (Faarlund, Lie, and Vannebo 1997; Teleman, Hellberg, and Andersson 1999) treats the disjuncts, too, as adjective phrases. However, other researchers regard disjunct [A NOK] not as phrases, but as single words, viz. adverbs. Hansen and Heltoft (2011) call them compounds, while Heggelund (1981) and Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) regard them as derivatives. On the former analysis, NOK is an adverb root, while on the latter it is an adverbializing suffix.

In this article, I study the structural properties of disjunct [A NOK] in present-day Norwegian. By comparing these properties with those of [A NOK] used in other functions, I arrive at a novel analysis of the disjuncts as (sentence) adverb phrases.

Section 2 provides an empirical and theoretical background for the study, while Section 3 contains the study itself. Section 4 concludes the article.

## 2 Empirical and theoretical background

In this section, I first provide an overview of disjunct and other [A NOK] constructions. I then discuss properties of sentence adverbials and sketch three categories of disjuncts of the form [A NOK]. This is followed by an outline of the historical origin and development of disjunct [A NOK], before I arrive at the current crux of the matter, viz. the structural analysis of these disjuncts in contemporary Norwegian.

### 2.1 Norwegian [A NOK] constructions

Expressions where an adjective in the positive is followed by NOK are used in several functions in Norwegian. Used as modifiers of nouns, as in (5)–(6) and as predicate complements, as in (7), they exhibit agreement inflection of the adjective. Adjectives are suffixless in the indefinite masculine/feminine singular, as in (5). The suffix *-e*, illustrated by *god-e* in (7), marks plural and/or definite forms, and the suffix *-t*, illustrated by *stort-t* in (6), is used in the indefinite singular neuter. Certain inflectional classes of adjectives, including words with the derivational suffixes *-lig* and *-ig*, do not take this *-t* (in the written standards).

- (5) Jeg synes ikke det er en **god nok** grunn  
‘I don’t think that’s a **good enough** reason’
- (6) om det fins et **stort nok** marked for et slikt passasjerfly  
‘whether there exists a **big enough** market for such a passenger plane’

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<sup>3</sup> Danish was the written language of Norway until the introduction of Landsmål (now: Nynorsk) in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the gradual split-off of Riksmål (now: Bokmål) in the decennia around 1900. The study of this part of Norwegian language history cannot, therefore, be readily separated from that of Danish.

- (7) og jeg mener at rutinene våre er **gode nok**  
‘and I think our routines are **good enough**’

Adjectives used in adverbial function are also in the indefinite singular neuter (with or without the suffix *-t* depending on inflectional class). This goes for both manner adverbials as in (8) and sentence adverbials as in (9). This use of the indefinite singular neuter may be regarded as a kind of default inflection.

- (8) Tempelherrene begynte å gjenreise festningsverkene, men ikke **raskt nok**.  
‘The temple masters began to rebuild the fortifications, but not **fast enough**.’
- (9) og **banalt nok** satte den humøret et lite hakk opp  
‘and **banally** it (an ice cream) took my mood up a notch’

While there are clear similarities between [A NOK] used as in (5)–(8) on the one hand and (9) on the other, it will be shown in Section 3 that there are a number of differences. I distinguish between these uses as adjectival [A NOK] and disjunct [A NOK], respectively.

## 2.2 Sentence adverbials and disjunct categories

Norwegian [A NOK] disjuncts exhibit the typical syntactic properties of sentence adverbials. The most neutral placement of a sentence adverbial is intraclausal, in the so-called midfield, as in example (10).

- (10) Det kan **sant nok** virke som om han har visse evner og kunnskap utenom det vanlige  
‘**True**, it may seem as if he has certain abilities and knowledge beyond the ordinary’

Sentence adverbials are also commonly placed in the prefield of main clauses, as in (11):

- (11) **Perverst nok** er det Zevs hun ser når øynene er lukket.  
‘**Perversely**, it is Zeus that she sees when her eyes are closed.’

Finally, they can also be extraclausal (left- or right-dislocated) as in (12)–(13). In such cases, they will normally be set off by punctuation in writing (and by prosody in speech).

- (12) Og **paradoksalt nok**: Det er i skildringen av den intellektuelle eliten og mediens [...] fordomsfulle og kunnskapsløse behandling av Groruddalen boka har sin store styrke.  
‘And **paradoxically**: It is in its description of the intellectual elite and the media’s prejudiced and ignorant treatment of Groruddalen that the book has its great strength.’

- (13) Fortjenesten [...] vil også variere med bilens bruktbilpris, **naturlig nok**.

‘The profit will also vary along with the second-hand price of the car, **naturally**.’

Semantically, disjuncts differ from circumstantial adverbs in not being part of a proposition, but commenting on it. For instance, the proposition of (14), including the manner adverbial, can be contradicted with ‘No, it didn’t’, while the disjunct is not refuted by ‘No, he didn’t’ as a contradiction to (15). To object to the disjunct, one would need to say something like ‘He did, but I wouldn’t call it characteristic’.

- (14) De alliertes svar på den tyske invasjonen kom **raskt nok**

‘The allies’ answer to the German invasion came **quickly enough**’

- (15) **Betegnende nok** beskriver Omar både seg selv og de høyreekstreme aktivistene som dissidenter.

‘**Characteristically**, Omar describes both himself and the extreme right activists as dissidents.’

In other words, circumstantial adverbs are part of what is presented as objective, while disjuncts are overtly subjective. Diachronic developments from the relatively objective to the more subjective part of meaning is what is known as subjectification (Traugott and Dasher 2005, 22–23).

As discussed by Kinn (2023; accepted a), disjunct [A NOK] can be sorted into three broad categories: content-oriented, event-oriented, and participant-oriented disjuncts. (See Ramat and Ricca (1998) for a discussion of categories of sentence adverbs.)

Participant-oriented disjuncts evaluate a referent (normally that of the subject) on the basis of its actions. Thus, in (16), *fantasiløst nok* characterizes the citizen as unimaginative based on his decision.

- (16) Det hele begynte med at en av byens borgere **fantasiløst nok** hadde bestemt seg for å feire bryllup mens konferansen pågikk i byen.

‘It all began when one of the town’s citizens, **unimaginatively**, had decided to celebrate his wedding while the conference was going on in the town.’

Event-oriented disjuncts evaluate the state of affairs described with the clause. Thus, *merkelig nok* in (17) characterizes the event (and not the subject referent) as strange:

- (17) Jeg begynte **merkelig nok** på skole da jeg var seks og et halvt år.

‘**Strangely**, I started school when I was six and a half years old.’

With participant- and event-oriented disjuncts, the truth of the proposition is not under discussion. Content-oriented disjuncts, on the other hand, comment on its truth or falsity.

Several of them have concessive meaning (see Section 3.1). In (18), *rett nok* ‘admittedly’ admits that the proposition is true.

- (18) Opplevelsen var **rett nok** en smule sjokkartet, men overmåte ekstatisk  
‘**Admittedly**, the experience was a bit shocking, but extraordinarily ecstatic’

### 2.3 Historical development

Research on Scandinavian [A NOK] disjuncts has shown that such sentence adverbials appear in the sources in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Malmgren 2002; 2014; 2020; Kinn accepted a). Malmgren and Kinn both find that content- and event-oriented disjuncts appear earlier than participant-oriented disjuncts.

Malmgren (2014; 2020) speculates that disjunct [A NOK] may come from manner adverbials or from predicate complements in biclausal structures of the type ‘It is A enough that ...’. He does not discuss this further, however.<sup>4</sup>

Ramat and Ricca (1998, 242) note that univerbation (the development of one word from two or more) and lexicalization is particularly common for sentence adverbials of the content-oriented kind. I return to this in Section 3.7.

Heggelund (1981, 81 and 153) observes that Norwegian [A NOK] is a productive sentence adverbial construction, in fact the only one of the language. Telemann, Hellberg, and Andersson (1999 vol. 4, 87 and 110) also note that Swedish [A NOK] is productive. Kinn (2023) finds that the number of [A NOK] disjunct types (i.e. with different adjectives) grew throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and documents 183 types in the modern-language LBK corpus (see footnote 1).

### 2.4 Structural analyses

Three different structural analyses of Scandinavian disjunct [A NOK] can be found in the literature. The first analysis treats the disjuncts as structurally the same as adjectival [A NOK], while the other two recognize a difference.

Faarlund, Lie, and Vannebo (1997, 811) mention disjunct [A NOK] briefly, noting that NOK is necessary in order for some adjectives to function as sentence adverbials. They refer to the constructions as adjective phrases. Telemann, Hellberg, and Andersson (1999) make several observations on Swedish [A NOK] in Chapters 15 and 30. They, too, regard these disjuncts as adjective phrases.<sup>5</sup> Neither of these contributions discuss the structure of disjunct [A NOK] any further.

The works of Heggelund (1981) and Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) view the NOK of disjuncts as a derivational suffix deriving sentence adverbs from adjectives. Heggelund (1981, 81) regards NOK as a suffix on the basis of functional similarities with other adverbializing suffixes, notably *-vis*, a cognate of e.g. English *-wise* and German *-weise* (Tiisala 1990; Kinn 2005;

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<sup>4</sup> Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) also assumes that the structures may have been developed under influence from English. I discuss this idea in Kinn (accepted a). While English influence cannot be ruled out, language-internal developments seem more likely.

<sup>5</sup> Some are regarded as participle phrases, since participles are treated as a separate word class, e.g. *skrämmande nog* ‘frighteningly’, with a present participle.

accepted b). Malmgren (2002) writes that NOK is almost a suffix, and in Malmgren (2020), it is referred to as a suffix. One argument for such status is mentioned, viz. the impossibility of insertions between the adjective and NOK. Hansen and Heltoft (2011, 1095–1097) speak of Danish disjunct [A NOK] as compound sentence adverbs. This appears to imply that NOK is seen as an adverbial root. These two approaches have in common that [A NOK] is regarded as a word, not a phrase. Both also imply that NOK is the morphological head of [A NOK], since it is this component that determines the adverb status of the word. They differ in treating NOK as a suffix and a root, respectively. These morphological analyses and the syntactic analyses of Faarlund, Lie, and Vannebo (1997) and Telemann, Hellberg, and Andersson (1999) differ not only in regarding [A NOK] as a word or a phrase, respectively, but also in what must be the morphosyntactic head – NOK or the adjective.

In a typological study of European languages, Ramat and Ricca (1998, 211) find that in languages where adjectives have the same form when used as circumstantial adverbials and in typically adjectival functions (modifiers of nouns, predicate complements), this form is rarely also used in sentence adverbials. Norwegian is arguably such a language, using the indefinite singular neuter for manner adverbials (see Section 2.1). Therefore, Norwegian disjuncts may be expected to take a different form from manner adverbials. But Ramat and Ricca (1998, 203–206) also show that specialized morphology for sentence adverbials is, in general, uncommon.

### 3 The structure of disjunct [A NOK]

The structural analyses reviewed in Section 2.4 disagree on several points. The aim of the following discussion is to clarify this issue. Is disjunct [A NOK] headed by the adjective or by NOK? Is the disjunct a phrase or a word? If it is a word, is it a compound (and NOK, a root) or a derivative (and NOK, a suffix)? The alternative analyses, including my own, are arranged in Figure 1. Some analytic details are supplied by me, not having been specified in the literature.

Diachronically, disjunct [A NOK] appears to have been developed from adjectival [A NOK], as indicated by Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020). Adjectival [A NOK] is uncontroversially composed of a head adjective and a modifier NOK, which may be categorized as a quantifier.

The leftmost alternative in Figure 1 is that of Faarlund, Lie, and Vannebo (1997) and Telemann, Hellberg, and Andersson (1999). It is also the structure of adjectival [A NOK].

My own analysis below (boxed in the figure) and those of Hansen and Heltoft (2011), Heggelund (1981), and Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) have in common that they presuppose that a structural change has taken place, differentiating disjunct and adjectival [A NOK]. Here, NOK has become the (morphological or syntactic) head, and since the function of this restructured [A NOK] is sentence adverbial, NOK must be categorized as an adverb root or an adverbializing suffix. My analysis differs from the others in regarding disjunct [A NOK] as a phrase rather than a word. Thus, NOK is an adverb root and word, and the adjectival constituent is a complement of the adverb.

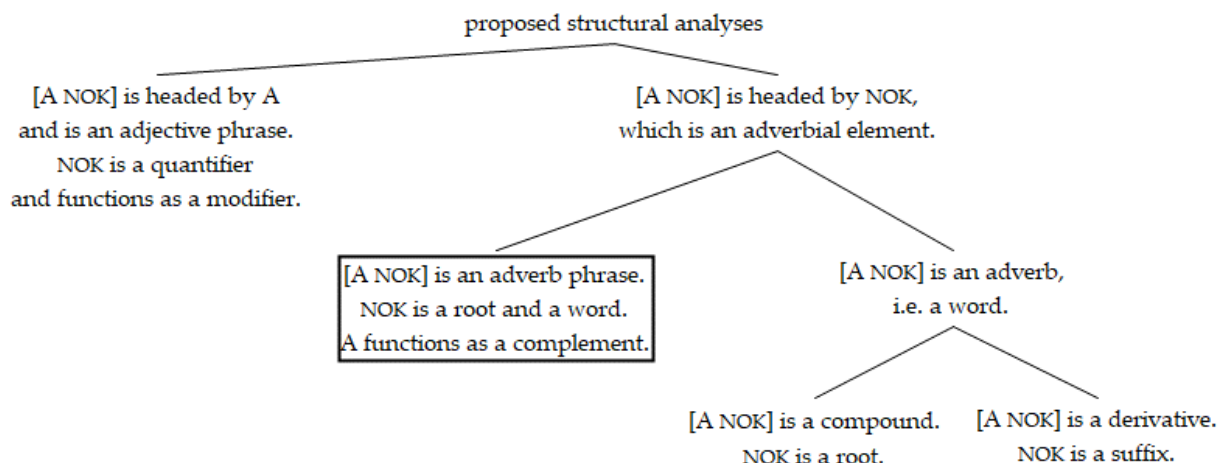


Figure 1. Existing structural analyses and my analysis (boxed)

My argument below is structured as follows. In Sections 3.1–3.5, I compare disjunct [A NOK] to adjectival [A NOK]. This comparison leads me to conclude that their internal structures are different – in spite of the similarities seen in Section 2.1. Since disjunct [A NOK] only has (sentence) adverbial function, it follows that its head is an adverb or adverbializer – i.e. NOK. In Section 3.6, I draw on evidence from this comparison and conclude that [A NOK] disjuncts should be regarded as phrases rather than as a words. The head of such phrases must be NOK, an adverb that takes an adjectival complement.

### 3.1 Obligatoriness and meaning of NOK

The word NOK is not obligatory in adjectival [A NOK]. Thus, it can be omitted in (5)–(8) above. There, NOK conveys its basic meaning, viz. ‘enough, sufficiently’. The evaluation of sufficiency is here related to something in the described situation, e.g. in (5), the argumentation is not good enough to convince the ‘I’ of the utterance. In other cases of adjectival [A NOK], such as (19), NOK is used concessively, where the evaluation often concerns the proper use of the adjectival description; Jonathan’s listening was attentive enough to be called attentive.

- (19) Jonathan lyttet **oppmerksomt nok**, men virket bare interessert i én del av historien  
 ‘Jonathan listened **attentively enough** but seemed interested in only one part of the story’

Such expressions, too, are grammatical without NOK, but are then not in themselves concessive. Differently from adjectival [A NOK], NOK in disjunct [A NOK] cannot be omitted.<sup>6</sup> This is illustrated in (20)–(21):

- (20) **Absurd nok** [/\***Absurd**] følte jeg lettelse over å høre dette.

<sup>6</sup> There are some exceptions, e.g. *knapt (nok)* ‘scarcely’. These are peripheral as disjuncts; see discussion in Kinn (2023).

‘**Absurdly**, I was relieved to hear this.’

(21) **Sant nok** [/\***Sant**] var det ikke han som drepte min datter.

‘**True**, it was not he who killed my daughter.’

The meaning of sufficiency in adjectival [A NOK] is not found in disjunct [A NOK]. It is hard to identify any lexical meaning conveyed by NOK here; rather, it appears merely to signal the status of [A NOK] as a disjunct, an overtly subjective part of the utterance. In addition, concessive meaning of NOK can be observed in content-oriented disjuncts, such as *sant nok* ‘true (enough)’ in (21).

Thus, NOK is obligatory in disjunct [A NOK] but can be omitted in adjectival [A NOK]. While NOK in adjectival [A NOK] means ‘sufficiently’ and may be concessive, NOK in disjunct [A NOK] is a sentence-adverbializer with added concessive meaning only in some content-oriented disjuncts.

### 3.2 Modification

Both adjectival and disjunct [A NOK] may be modified by a prepositional phrase with *for* ‘for’ indicating perspective, often an experiencer. This is illustrated for a predicate complement in (22) and a disjunct in (23):

(22) Jeg er tydeligvis ikke **god nok for Den norske kirke**

Evidently, I’m not **good enough for the Norwegian Church**’

(23) **Forsmedelig nok for dem** ble det vunnet av en amerikaner

‘**Disgracefully for them**, it was won by an American’

This is, as far as I can tell, the only form of modification found in disjunct [A NOK]. Adjectival [A NOK] allows more types of modification. Example (24) illustrates both domain modification (with *mentalt* ‘mentally’) and consecutive modification (with *til* ‘to’ + ‘that’-clause):

(24) Heldigvis er venninnen min **mentalt stabil nok til at hun ikke har løpt ut og giftet seg**

‘Fortunately, my friend is **mentally stable enough that she hasn’t run off and got married**’

In adjectival [A NOK], NOK can be modified by a degree adverb placed in front of the adjective, as in (25)–(26):

(25) han var **nesten gammel nok** til å være bestefar

‘he was **almost old enough** to be a grandfather’

(26) Uansett reagerte han **akkurat raskt nok**.

‘In any case, he reacted **just fast enough**.’



The types of modification illustrated in (24)–(26) are impossible in disjunct [A NOK]. Thus, disjuncts allow fewer types of modification than adjectival [A NOK].

### 3.3 Coordination of adjectives

In adjectival [A NOK], there can be coordination of adjectives. Four different possibilities are illustrated in (27)–(30):

- (27) Det øker risikoen for at de ikke får rett hjelp **effektivt og raskt nok**.  
‘That increases the risk that they do not get appropriate help **effectively and quickly enough**.’
- (28) De som ikke var **raske eller samarbeidsvillige nok**, ble henrettet på stedet  
‘Those who weren’t **fast or cooperative enough**, were executed on the spot’
- (29) Karen Ingvaldsen var så visst **både hederlig og tekkelig nok**  
‘Karen Ingvaldsen was certainly **both honourable and decent enough**’
- (30) men unge trøndergutter var **verken modige eller pene nok** til å kopiere ham  
‘but young boys from Trøndelag were **neither brave nor handsome enough** to copy him’

Coordination of adjectives in disjunct [A NOK] is infrequent, but the LBK has the examples in (31)–(32):<sup>7</sup>

- (31) “Men er du syk?” Og det var, **latterlig og rystende nok**, de siste ordene Bjarne Gade sa i sitt liv  
‘“But are you ill?” And those were, **laughably and shockingly**, the last words that Bjarne Gade said in his life’
- (32) Men hans gjennombrudd som maler kom, **paradoksalt eller typisk nok**, da han gav sitt non-figurative maleri et innhold som virket rotfast norsk  
‘But his breakthrough as a painter came, **paradoxically or typically**, when he gave his nonfigurative painting a content that seemed genuinely Norwegian’

These examples involve the simple coordinators *og* ‘and’ and *eller* ‘or’, and I doubt that expressions with ‘both ... and’ or ‘neither ... nor’ are ever used as disjuncts. Thus, disjunct [A NOK] seems to allow a narrower range of coordination types than does adjectival [A NOK].

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<sup>7</sup> These examples show that Malmgren’s claim that nothing can intervene between the adjective and NOK is not quite true, at least for Norwegian, since two words intervene between *latterlig* and *nok* in (31) and correspondingly for (32). On the other hand, this does not rule out the possibility that NOK might be a derivational suffix, since there are other examples of omission of such suffixes in coordination.

### 3.4 Stress and toneme

Adjectival [A NOK] and disjunct [A NOK] differ in their stress assignment. In general, any Norwegian word can have primary stress on only one syllable, and primary stress is accompanied by a toneme.<sup>8</sup> In connected speech, however, potential primary stress may be reduced to secondary stress or no stress, in which cases there is no toneme. Adjectival [A NOK] typically has primary stress on the adjective, while the primary stress on NOK is optional. Thus *tydelig nok* in (33) is pronounced [²ty:dəli ,nok] or, more emphatically, [²ty:dəli ¹nok].

- (33) siden omtalen min ikke var **tydelig nok** når det gjaldt mitt eget syn  
 ‘since my report wasn’t **clear enough** with respect to my own view’

Most [A NOK] disjuncts, however, typically have primary stress on both words.<sup>9</sup> Thus, *tydelig nok* in (34) is usually pronounced [²ty:dəli ¹nok], but [²ty:dəli ,nok] is also a possibility. Thus, primary stress on NOK is more typical of disjunct [A NOK] than of adjectival [A NOK].

- (34) Hun hadde **tydelig nok** tenkt tanken flere ganger  
 ‘She had **clearly** thought the thought several times’

### 3.5 Summary of comparison

Disjunct [A NOK] has been shown to differ from adjectival [A NOK] in a number of ways. The differences pertain to:

- the obligatoriness of NOK
- the meanings of NOK
- domain modification
- consecutive modification
- degree modification
- adjective coordination
- stress and toneme assignment to NOK

These differences between disjunct [A NOK] and adjectival [A NOK] show that the constructions are distinct in contemporary Norwegian, although they are historically related. The disjuncts are limited to the syntactic function of sentence adverbials. Thus, it seems justified to regard them as (sentence) adverb phrases or words rather than as adjective phrases, *pace* Faarlund, Lie, and Vannebo (1997) and Teleman, Hellberg, and Andersson (1999).

### 3.6 One or two words?

Some researchers (Heggelund 1981; Malmgren 2002; 2014; 2020; Hansen and Heltoft 2011) see disjunct [A NOK] as one word, while the orthographies treat NOK as a separate word.<sup>10</sup> The question, then, is whether there is any evidence to decide between an analysis where disjunct

<sup>8</sup> The tonemes are transcribed with “¹” or “²” in front of the stress-bearing syllable.

<sup>9</sup> Some expressions more commonly have only one stress. See Section 3.6.

<sup>10</sup> With some exceptions in Norwegian and Danish. See footnote 1 and Section 3.7.

[A NOK] is one word (derived or compound adverb) and one where NOK is a separate word (heading adverb phrases and taking adjectival complements).

A clear indication that NOK in disjunct [A NOK] is a word has to do with stress and tonemes (see Section 3.4). The fact that both the adjective and NOK in disjuncts commonly carry primary stress and are associated with separate tonemes is evidence that the adjective and NOK should be regarded as separate words.<sup>11</sup> This in turn means that [A NOK] is a phrase – an adverb phrase.

Another argument against one-word analyses comes from the order of morphemes. If it is assumed that [A NOK] disjuncts are single words, then those with the suffix *-t*, such as *paradoksalt nok* ‘paradoxically’ and *naivt nok* ‘naïvely’, have an inflectional morpheme between other morphological elements. If compounding is assumed, the first element of the compound would regularly be inflected, which would be exceptional for Norwegian. If derivation is assumed, the inflectional *-t* would appear closer to the morphological base than the (putatively) derivational NOK. While not quite unprecedented, this too would be very unusual, since inflectional affixes are normally more peripheral in a word than derivational ones.

### 3.7 Univerbation?

As mentioned in footnote 1, three [A NOK] disjuncts are written alternatively as one or two words in Norwegian. In usage, the spellings *riktignok* and *visstnok* are more frequent than *riktig nok* and *visst nok*, while *rett nok* is more common than *rettnok* (Kinn 2023)

These are all content-oriented disjuncts (see Section 2.2). Ramat and Ricca (1998, 242) find that univerbation and lexicalization is particularly common for such sentence adverbs. *Riktignok* ‘admittedly’ and *visstnok* ‘apparently’ are the two most frequent [A NOK] disjuncts in modern Bokmål, and *rett nok* ‘admittedly’ is also a frequent expression (Kinn 2023). Are these also phrases rather than words?

We may first note that *visstnok*, in particular, has noncompositional meaning. The adjective, whose base form is *viss*, means ‘certain’, while contemporary Norwegian *visstnok* means ‘apparently’. The expected meaning ‘certainly’ is only found in older texts. Thus, there has been a change of meaning – the semantic aspect of lexicalization (Brinton and Traugott 2005). *Riktignok* and *rett nok* (both ‘admittedly’) deviate just slightly in relation to *riktig* and *rett* (both ‘correct’); they can be paraphrased as ‘it is admittedly correct that ...’.

What little evidence regarding the formal side of the expressions pertains mostly to prosody: the use of primary stress and toneme (see Section 3.4). It is probably most common to pronounce these three disjuncts with only one primary stress and toneme (associated with the adjective), which might indicate a status as single words. But syllables with potential main stress are often unstressed, and it is certainly possible to stress NOK in addition to the adjective. This indicates a status as two words. This leaves primarily the noncompositional meaning of *visstnok* arguing for a one-word analysis. But noncompositional meaning in itself is not hard evidence for lexicalization to one word – it can just as well be classified as idiomatization, i.e. the development of a fixed phrase rather than a single word.

In sum, it seems that these disjuncts have departed somewhat from other [A NOK] disjuncts. But it is not evident that they have yet become single words.

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<sup>11</sup> See also the observation on words intervening between the adjective and *nok* in coordination (footnote 7).

## 4 Concluding discussion

Against the discussion in Sections 3.6 and 3.7, it might be objected that the divide between syntax and morphology, and thus between phrases and words, is actually fuzzy. This is more or less a necessary aspect of language change: Unless a construction changes from phrase to word instantaneously, there has to be a grey area between syntax and morphology for some time.

The clearest outcome of the present discussion is that disjunct [A NOK] has a different structure from adjectival [A NOK]. The necessary presence of NOK in specialized disjunct functions, along with its clear desemanticization compared to the NOK ‘enough, sufficiently’ of adjectival [A NOK], strongly indicates a status as head and (sentence) adverb. The step from adverb-headed phrase to adverb-headed complex word may be a minor one. Given that the NOK of disjuncts is found only in these constructions,<sup>12</sup> an innovated morphological structure should arguably be regarded as deadjectival derivation. The element NOK should in that case be regarded as an adverbializing derivational suffix, as assumed by Heggelund (1981) and Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020), rather than as a root, as implied by Hansen and Heltoft (2011). Following my reasoning above, Norwegian has not yet reached that stage, but it may very well do so in the future.

Disjuncts of the form [A NOK], such as *sant nok* ‘true’, *paradoksalt nok* ‘paradoxically’, and *tåpelig nok* ‘foolishly’, resemble truly adjectival [A NOK] expressions. However, I have identified a number of properties that differentiate the two constructions. I have argued that the disjuncts are (sentence) adverb phrases with NOK as a head taking adjectival complements. Research by Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) appears to indicate that disjunct [A NOK] has been developed, as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, from adjectival [A NOK]. This implies that a reanalysis from adjective phrase to adverb phrase must have taken place. The reassignment of head status from the adjective to NOK is the major part of this change. In the process, the NOK of disjuncts has been grammaticalized, from a quantifier meaning ‘enough, sufficiently’ to an adverbializer that merely signals that the complement adjective is part of the speaker’s subjective evaluation. The meaning of the adjective is the same as elsewhere (with some exceptions, as in *visstnok*), but it has undergone subjectification (cf. Traugott and Dasher 2005): In other constructions, it is typically presented as an objective description, but its use in [A NOK] disjuncts is overtly marked as subjective.

The innovated adverb phrases may possibly, in time, become deadjectivally derived adverbs, as Heggelund (1981) and Malmgren (2002; 2014; 2020) assume that they already have. But as I have argued, that time has not yet arrived.

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<sup>12</sup> This word is then regarded as historically related to, but synchronically distinct from, the quantifier found in adjectival [A NOK] and various other constructions. The quantifier has also given rise to another *nok* which can be categorized as a sentence adverb, e.g. in *Han er nok ute* ‘He is **probably** outside’. Differently from disjuncts, this *nok* has the syntax of a discourse particle (e.g., it is not normally used in sentence-initial position in Norwegian) and should probably not be identified with the NOK of [A NOK] disjuncts synchronically.

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