PATTERN INTRODUCTION

unmodified noun	modified noun: DEFAULT	
(1) elev-en student-EN "the student"	(2) den best-e elev-en DEN biggest-W student-EN "the best student"	

(Dahl 2004, Anderssen 2005)

DEN-OMISSION

(3) Peter har mye rein. **Størst-e reinsdyr-et*** (tilPeter) veier 300 kilo.
Peter has many reindeer biggest-W reindeer-EN to Peter weighs 300 kg.
"Peter has many reindeer. The biggest reindeer of Peter weighs 300 kg"

DEN&-EN-OMISSION

(4) **Best-e elev** kommer til å fullføre skole-n ganske snart.
best-W student comes towards to finish school-EN pretty soon
"The best student is going to graduate pretty soon."

W-OMISSION

(5) Peter, Sven og Lars klatret forskjellige fjell.
Peter, Sven and Lars climbed different mountains.
Sven klatret **høyest fjell**.
Sven climbed highest mountain.
"Peter, Sven, and Lars climbed different mountains around Tromsø. Sven climbed the highest mountain."

POSSIBILITIES:	3-omission patterns out of 7 logically possible ($2^3 - 1$).
IMPLICATIONS:	if -EN is omitted, DEN has to be omitted.
	if -W is omitted, DEN&-EN have to be omitted.

LICENSING OMISSION

DEN-OMISSION:

Til-possessor, (3)
Complement to the noun, (6)
Otherwise bad, (3) without possessor, (10)

(6) **Nyest-e [versjon-en** av Windows] koster for mye, mener Lars.
newest-W version-EN of Windows costs too much thinks Lars
"The newest version of Windows costs too much, thinks Lars."

DEN&-EN-OMISSION:

"X-est possible" reading, (7)-(9)
Otherwise bad, (10)-(11)

(7) Context: *Lars is telling his friend Olaf how his daughter is doing at school*,
Hun kommer alltid hjem med **best-e karakter**.
She comes always home with best-W mark
"She always comes home with the best grade."

(8) Context: *Anika is describing to Lars a colleague of hers*,
Hun er perfeksjonist til **minst-e detalj**.
She is perfectionist to smallest-W detail.
"She is a perfectionist to the smallest detail."

(10) *Hvem har **størst-e bil**? *Jeg har **størst-e bil**!
who has biggest-W car I have biggest-W car
Intended: "Who has the biggest car? I have the bigest car."

(11) Context: *Peter has a herd of swine on his farm. He's talking to his friend Sven about his pigs and saying*,
*Jeg skal ta **størst-e gris** til en konkurranse.
I will take biggest-W pig to a competition
Intended: "I'll take the biggest pig to a competition."

Three types of Norwegian superlatives

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W-OMISSION:

Comparative reading, (5)
Question, (12)
Otherwise bad, (13)

(12) Hvem har **størst bil**? Jeg har **størst bil**!
who has biggest-W car I have biggest car
"Who has the biggest car? I have the biggest car."

Context: *Peter has two pigs on his hobby farm. He says to his friend*,
(13)*Jeg vil ta **størst gris** til en konkurranse.
I will take biggest pig to a competition
Intended: `I will take the biggest pig to a competition."

INTERPRETING THE OBSERVATIONS

> Why does the presence of a complement/possessor license DEN-omission?

DETERMINING COMPARISON SET

Howard (2011), (14), Romero (2011), (15): postnominal modifiers can determine the Comparison Set of superlatives.

(14) John read the most (*many-est*) book that **anyone ever read**.
--CompS consists of degree properties s.t. individuals are compared in terms of *the number of books they read*. "That anyone ever read" is not an ordinary relative clause: it restricts the superlative operator.

(15) John climbed the *highest* mountain **possible**.
--CompS consists of a set of degree properties s.t. individuals are compared in terms of *height of the mountain they climbed*.

> HYPOTHESIS: til-possessor/complement determines CompS.

C: comparison set	R: adjective-type denotation (takes a degree d and returns a property of individual to be no smaller than d on the relevant dimension)	x: individual
		Heim (1999)

(16) $[[-est]] = \lambda C . \lambda R . \lambda x . \exists d[R(d)(x) \& \forall y \in C[y \neq x \rightarrow \neg R(d)(y)]]$

Gajewski (2010): Presuppositions: $x \in C \& \exists y \in C \exists d[y \neq x \& R(d)(y)]$

Heim (1999): Presuppositions: $x \in C \& \forall y \in C \exists d[y \neq x \& R(d)(y)]$

CompS in (3) = $[[til Peter]] = \lambda x . x$ belongs to Peter
Referent in (3) – the biggest reindeer among objects belonging to Peter

> CONCLUSION: DEN-omission is licensed in case the CompS is syntactically expressed.

In-phrase is a complement of *-est* in English:

***X-est N* is not a constituent without PP**

(17) *I've climbed the highest mountain in Canada, and John climbed **the one in the world**.

PP is not a complement/modifier of N

(18) *I've climbed a mountain **in the world**.

Two PP-modifiers are impossible

(19) I've climbed the highest mountain **in the Carpathians** (*in the Lviv region**).

However, in-phrases don't license DEN-omission in Norwegian:

(20) Jeg klatret *(det) **høyeste fjellet i Karpatena**.
I climbed *(DEN) highest-W mountain-EN in Carpathians
"I climbed the highest mountain in the Carpathians."

Reason? Maybe in-phrases cannot be *-est* complements for a syntactic reason. DP structure in Norwegian is different from the English DP.

APPROACH TO COMPARATIVE READING

> Norwegian pattern can help decide between two approaches

Movement analysis (Heim 1999): *-est* raises over the predicate creating a property of degree. E.g. CompS would be the focus value of the property:

(21) $\lambda d. \lambda x.$ x climbed d-high mountain

In-situ analysis (Heim 1999): *-est* doesn't raise above the predicate. and the Comparison Set variable simply picks an appropriate set of individuals.

> RESEACH Q: Is the absence of all suffixes related to (obligatory) high raising of *-est*?

(DRASTIC) CONTRAST WITH SWEDISH

- Free DEN-omission with superlatives & No DEN&-EN- or W-omission

(22) Peter har mye rein. **Störst-e reinsdyr-et** veier 300 kilo.
Peter has many reindeer biggest-W reindeer-EN weighs 300 kg.
"Peter has many reindeer. The biggest reindeer weighs 300 kg"

CONCLUSIONS & Qs

- Norwegian potentially can provide evidence for the role of postnominal modifiers in setting the CompS.

- Contra Farkas & Kiss (2000), there is a "specialized" morphological pattern for Comparative reading.

- What is it about DP in Norwegian that requires CompS to be present in order to omit DEN?

- Why the absence of suffixes makes possible *-est* raising?

- Unaddressed: relation between "X-est possible" and DEN&-EN-omission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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