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"Where did the noun go?

A systemic functional analysis of the Human Construction and Abstract Construction in English"

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1. Introduction

An adjective always needs a noun. Or does it? The form *the + [adjective]+ Ø* (where *Ø* is "not an (overt) noun") is well-established in language—think "the rich and the poor"—but the field of linguistics has 'done it dirty' terribly. For far too long has this semantically rich linguistic expression been glossed over and the few that have turned their attention to it lacked in comprehensiveness, scope, and/or evidence in their research. Not only did Halliday and Matthiessen (2014 [1985]) as well as Pullum and Huddleston (2002) devote less than a page to this construction in *Introduction to Functional Grammar* and *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*, respectively,; many others studying various 'missing' nouns also tend to put their attention elsewhere (for example, Panagiotidis 2003; Dixon 1982; Fawcett 2000; Günther & Auwera 2013). There are few, such as Günther (2011) and Lobeck (2006), who focus on the construction with which this thesis is concerned.

This is an unfortunate oversight because the 'missing' noun in the construction *the + [adjective]+ Ø* as it appears in cases like *the rich* is unlike other noun ellipses in that it has no antecedent referent or other contextual semantic information on the basis of which its meaning can be retrieved. In very simple terms, we might know what is meant with *the rich* but there is nothing in the syntax that can actually answer the question "the rich *what*?". Many will perhaps say that it is "people" but what, then, is the "what" in an abstract such as *the unknown*? There is no simple answer to this question, which is why this thesis is devoted to searching for an answer to the following questions:

i. What types of adjectives frequently occur in the construction *the + [adjective]+ Ø* (where *Ø* is "not an (overt) noun") and are there restrictions in which adjectives can appear here?
ii. In how far do these adjectives retain their adjectival status?
iii. What function(s) do these types of adjectives and the construction as a whole serve in communication?

These questions allowed me to do two things: 1) consider both qualitative and quantitative data, and 2) consider both structural and semantic features. Only by adopting this multi-pronged approach is it possible to take into account the various facets that make up this phenomenon.

As for terminology, based on Kester (1996) (see Section 2), I henceforth refer to the construction in question as the 'Human Construction' (HC) and the 'Abstract Construction' (AC), where the former expresses a human reading (*the rich)* and the latter an abstract one (*the unknown*). Furthermore, it is important to note that the denotation taking the form *the + [adjective]+ Ø* represents any type of noun ellipsis whereas *the + [adjective]+ nN* where *nN* stands for 'null noun' was chosen to express the HC and AC. The reason for this and the argument for a nN element will become clear in Sections 2 and 3. Furthermore, all (corpus) examples are taken from the COCA unless otherwise noted.

On the structural level, I expect distinct restrictions in both the type of adjectives available to occur in the *the + [adjective]+ nN* and in the syntactic function(s) the construction can fulfill. More importantly, I hope to discover the functional purpose of the HC and the AC on the level of meaning; as Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth referred to as 'SFG') assumes a "systemic pattern of choice" of which the structure is the outward form (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 23), it is clear that the implementation of the Human and Abstract Constructions should be just as unique in their meaning function (and hence its function in communication in general) as it is unique in its form.

This thesis has four chapters: after this introduction, Chapter 2 provides an extensive overview of the theoretical background and previous research. Chapter 3 encompasses my own study and includes the methodology, preliminary quantitative and qualitative findings, and detailed syntactic and semantic analyses of an array of clauses as well as a summary of the findings. Finally, the thesis is concluded in Chapter 4.

2. Theoretical Background

The very first concern that must be addressed in this thesis is my choice to adopt a systemic functional approach and how SFG as a whole is fitting to investigate the structure, role, and function of the HC and the AC. The theory developed by M.A.K. Halliday and extended and adapted by numerous other researchers, will be implemented, whereby the focus will be on the Cardiff Grammar (CG) that was developed by Robin P. Fawcett several years after Halliday's monumental linguistic contribution. Halliday's seminal work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (*IFG)* from 1985 (later revised several times, most recently in 2014 by Christian

Matthiessen) brought about a tremendous shift in linguistics during the 1960s and 1970s that forms the basis for a variety of functional grammars.

Because Halliday published relatively little after *IFG* (Fawcett 2008: 26-27), linguists were left to their own devices. Fawcett (2008: 26) writes that „[t]he consequence was that WE BEGAN TO DEVELOP OUR OWN DESCRIPTIONS, on the basis of the new principles. That was the birth of the Cardiff Grammar - though I didn't know it at the time" [original emphasis]. This grammar, in many ways, provides a more thorough and modular look at language. Fawcett argues that this grammar is more comprehensive and that the underlying principle of a functional grammar that nonetheless considers form is better incorporated and represented (Fawcett 2008: 14-15). Butler (2003: 471) notes that "SFG [...] has achieved a much wider coverage of English grammar than other [structural-functional] approaches, this being especially true of the Cardiff grammar". Crucial to note is that the Cardiff Grammar in no way aims to replace Halliday's original models; rather, it aims to test and confirm them by working with large amounts of texts and by taking advantage of modern technological developments (including corpora). In comparison, the Sydney Grammar which, it can be said, is more directly derived from Halliday's original proposals in *IFG* and is represented by, for instance, Matthiessen, assumes that

> the description of the grammar of English, whose outputs are described in IFG, has not been in need of improvements (and so changes) for the period since the 1970s (other than minor tinkering here and there), but it needs to be supplemented by the addition of a higher level of system networks (Fawcett 2008: 27-28).

To this end, a large amount of work in the Sydney Grammar since the 1970s has focused on languages other than English instead of advancing and improving the model itself. The result is that the Cardiff Grammar is a more comprehensive model for English and thus provides more robust and suitable model which informs this thesis.

2.1 Systemic Functional Grammar

Before exploring the specifics of SFG and the CG and how the ways they treat adjectives relates to this thesis, an albeit brief recapitulation of the theories themselves is in order. SFG was selected for this study because it aims to explain the communicative function of language by looking at it as a semiotic system of meaning choices (Webster 2014: 35). Halliday and

Matthiessen (2014: 33) explain that "functionality is *intrinsic* to language: that is to say, the entire architecture of language is arranged along functional lines. Language is as it is because of the functions in which it has evolved in the human species" [original emphasis]. Furthermore, language is also a "semogenic system", that is, one that "makes meanings" (Webster 2014: 36). A crucial aspect of a systemic theory, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 20), is that it is comprehensive and that it "seek[s] to understand the nature and the dynamic of a semiotic system as a whole".

2.1.1 Dimensions of language (Halliday)

The first dimension of language that Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 21) discuss is that of structure, or "syntagmatic order". It refers to constituency, "[the] compositional aspect of language" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 21), which is, according to them, defined by rank and organized in an "is a part of" relationship. The hierarchies as they pertain to the different linguistic domains are:

i.	in sound	tone group > foot > syllable > phoneme
ii.	in writing	sentence > sub-sentence > word > letter
iii.	in verse (spoken)	stanza > line > foot > syllable
iv.	in grammar	clause > phrase/group > word > morpheme

Since this thesis is concerned with lexicogrammar, the fourth domain, grammar, is relevant. What they all have in common, however, is that they exist to organize the semantics of language; that is, the meaning that is encoded in the grammar.

The second dimension of language discussed is that of system, or 'paradigmatic order'. In contrast to syntagmatic order, paradigmatic order looks at "patterns in what *could go instead of* what" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014: 22). This system of alternatives governs the meaning potential and is also mutually defining. The authors explain that when we say, for instance, "*a clause is either positive or negative*" it puts forth that 'not positive' is equivalent to 'negative' and vice versa. There are further branches of this system that are, however, not necessary to explore at this point.

Systemic theory is based on "the fact that the grammar of a language is represented in the form of **system networks**, not as an inventory of structures" [my emphasis] (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 23). A 'system network' is essentially a tool that allows us to map linguistic choices in "and" and "or" relationships that, together, form the structure of language (Fawcett 2008: 96;

Halliday & Matthiessen 2014 [1985]: 24). Figure 1 illustrates a simplified version of the MOOD system network. At each 'crossroads' a linguistic choice is made which influences the outcome; in other words, "each system—each moment of choice—contributes to the formation of the structure" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014 [1985]: 24) which therefore structures meaning.

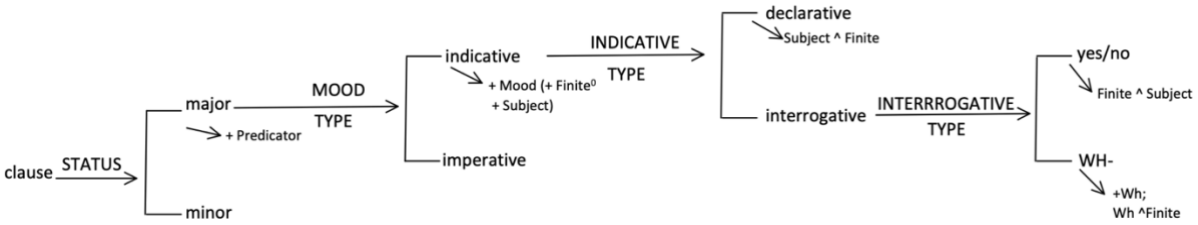

Fig. 1 *A simple system network of MOOD (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014 [1985]: 24*

The concept of this kind of (linguistic) choice is shown to be crucial according to SFG. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 23) write:

> Of course, structure is an essential part of the description; but it is interpreted as the outward form taken by systemic choices, not as the defining characteristic of language. A language is a resource for making meaning, and the meaning resides in systemic patterns of choice.

These system networks are vast and model both the meaning potential (semantics) and how these are expressed in form (through realization rules) (Fawcett 2008: 95). Yet Fawcett (2015: 140) warns that "[i]t is important to emphasize that the meanings in the network are *those that are built into the organization of the language.* [There are] many other meanings that might be built into it, but are not" [original emphasis]. In any case, the system network of any language offers a structure to model the generation of meaning (that is, semantics) systemically.

The third dimension of language according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 24-27) is "stratification". They argue that there are different strata (or levels) of language: phonology, orthography (or graphology), and grammar. Adult language (as opposed to infant protolanguage) contains many more strata that help us "make sense of our experience, and to carry out our interactions with other people" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 25). Moreover, adult language includes both lexicogrammar (which encompasses both vocabulary and grammar) and semantics, which require two tasks, namely "interfacing", which first transforms outside experiences into meaning (semantics), followed by converting those meanings into wording (lexicogrammar). How the strata relate to one another is called "realization", which

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 25) explain as "the process of linking one level of organization to another".

The fourth dimension of language according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014: 27-30) is 'instantiation'. The simplest explanation of this is that "the system of a language is **instantiated** in the form of text" [my emphasis] (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014: 27). This lets us mediate two perspectives: on the one hand that of language as a system and, on the other, that of language as text. Simply put, the relationship between text and system is rooted in instantiation.

Halliday compares the relationship between these two perspectives to the relationship of weather and climate. The two are not separate. Rather, the one is the theory of the other (the relation between climate and weather resembles that between language as system and language as text). Thus, there exists a "cline of instantiation" (2014: 28-29). From the pole of texts, patterns according to text type emerge and move to the other pole of system. Research has long shown that the use of language varies between text types, which is referred to as "register". It is crucial to be clear at which end of the cline we find ourselves and to be able to shift between them. Halliday (2014: 29-30) also emphasizes that with the rise of computer corpora this is especially important.

2.1.2 "Metafunctions" of language

According to Halliday, there are three functional metafunctions of language that work together to include "the total meaning potential of a language": an ideational function, an interpersonal function, and a textual function (Webster 2014: 36). The ideational metafunction concerns how we perceive and experience the world. Halliday (2014: 30) calls it the "theory of human experience" writing that "there is no facet of human experience that cannot be transformed into meaning". The interpersonal metafunction concerns how we use language for communicative purposes. Language enacts personal and social relationships, and every message is about something and addressing someone (Halliday 2014: 30). The textual metafunction concerns how the text itself is constructed and organized (Webster 2014: 37); this is shown through the grammar and can be seen as the facilitating function (Halliday 2014: 30). These metafunctions are argued to be "universal to every language—every language user needs to be able to use language to construe experience, enact social relationships, and create discourse" (Webster 2014: 37).

In other words, Halliday's metafunctions encapsulate three different "strands of meaning". The Cardiff Grammar also proposes a set of such strands but argues for there to be eight major ones: the **experiential**, the **interpersonal,** the **thematic**, the logical, the validity, the affective, the negativity, and the informational strands. By recognizing further levels that work together to encapsulate meaning it is possible to more easily and thoroughly 'pull apart' language. The first three strands of meaning in bold are those considered to be the most important and are reflected in the system networks of TRANSIVITY, MOOD, and THEME. These are also the strands of meaning explored most in-depth in this thesis.

The experiential strand of meaning expresses what the clause is about and is primarily represented by the TRANSIVITY network. TRANSIVITY is defined by the Process, that is, the Main Verb and the Participants, that is, the Subject (and Complement) (Fawcett 2008: 46-48). The interpersonal strand of meaning is expressed by the MOOD system network and is "meaning in terms of **communication roles"** [original emphasis] (Fawcett 2008: 52). In other words, this meaning indicates the (linguistic) relationship of the Performer (P) and the Addressee (A) which is construed in terms of relations such as 'information seeker' and 'proposer of action' and expressed by the Operator and the Subject of the Clause. Finally, the THEME as proposed by Fawcett is quite different to that of *IFG* as he says that "one possible way of characterizing all of the types of theme is to say that they are all types of 'prominence in the message'" (Huang 2017: 164). This means that, unlike in the Sydney Grammar, more than one theme may appear in a clause. Two such types of 'prominence' are the Subject Theme (S-theme) and the Marked Participant Role Theme (PR Theme), of which a simplified system network is shown in Figure 2, adopted from Huang (2017: 166). Further themes are summarized very effectively in Huang (2017).

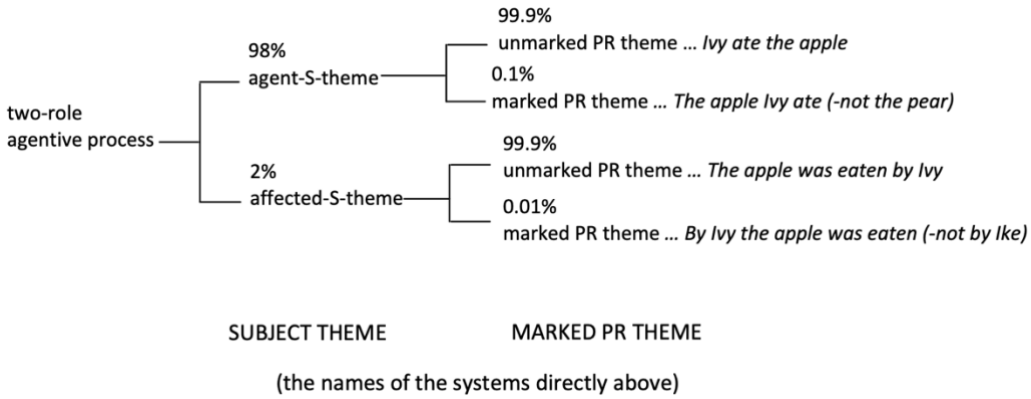

Fig. 2 *A simplified system network of THEME (Huang 2017: 166)*

Despite its importance to fully expressing meaning, my analysis of the THEME is kept relatively simple, particularly because most corpus examples have a Subject Theme which is the most common type of theme. This avoids overcomplication of the analyses and allows a wider array of examples to be included in the study.

2.2 Fawcett's theory of syntax, simplified

Fawcett's (2000: 213) grammar focuses on three fundamental categories of syntax, namely the element of structure, of unit (or 'class'), and of item (or 'word'), each of which is defined functionally. Tucker (1998: 62) summarizes Fawcett's proposal by comparing it to Halliday:

> Essentially, he [Fawcett] rejects the principle according to which a class is not a grouping of members of a given unit which are alike in their own structure. Fawcett proposes that the internal structure of a unit should determine its class, and that the elements of structure (and therefore the class of unit) are **functionally motivated**. This proposal removes the deterministic relationship between a unit and its place in the structure of the unit next above, which 'class' was originally set up to account for [my emphasis].

In simple terms, Fawcett proposes that structure and unit are separate whereas Halliday maintains that structure defines the 'class', which is the basis of his 'rank scale' (see next page).

Furthermore, he emphasizes the difference in function of each element in any given class of unit, albeit very slight at times, as well as the difference between every element in every class of unit and every element of every other class of unit (Fawcett 2000: 214). For this reason, each element of the different classes of units bears a unique name, such as 'head' (h) in the nominal group and 'apex' (a) in the quality group for their respective pivotal elements. It is critical to note that Fawcett's head in the nominal group differs from Head as understood by Halliday; only the nominal group has a head (but every group has a pivotal element).

To counter this deterministic relationship as proposed by Halliday, Fawcett posits "filling", "componence", and "exponence" as the basis of syntactic relations. Compare Fawcett's (Fawcett 2000: 10) definition to Halliday's stance:

> [The] potentiality of operation in a higher unit is not relevant at all […] [and it] obscures one of the most elegant characteristics of a grammar, namely that a relatively small number of units can carry a very large number of complex meanings precisely because there is not a one to one [sic] relationship between unit and element of structure.

This definition implies that a unit cannot be ascribed to a word class only on account of its position, or even its function within a phrase or clause. Rather, the individual elements (or components) must be looked at to determine the composition of a unit. Moreover, Fawcett does not adopt Halliday's notion of 'Heads'; rather, he focuses on a "pivotal element" of structure that is "typically filled by an item which is a member of one of the word classes" (Tucker 1999: 63).

Furthermore, Fawcett vehemently argues against the well-known 'rank scale' proposed by Halliday and the Sydney group. He criticizes it for a lack of consideration of myriad linguistic phenomena, such as clause elements being expounded directly by words. To Fawcett, certain elements like the Main Verb (M) and the Operator (O) are expounded by items (words) directly rather than being filled and composed of further units and elements, which is impossible according to the rank scale. This is also the reason why there is no verbal group in the CG (see Section 2.3.2.). Instead, Fawcett suggests one based on probabilities. He provides substantial evidence for this argument, which is a considerable deviation from Sydney Grammar. These probabilities were established via analysis using the Interactive Corpus Query Facility based on a corpus analyzed by Fawcett and Perkins. For example, Fawcett found that there is a 45 percent probability that a Subject is filled by a nominal group whereas there is only a ~ 0.5 percent probability that a quality group fills the Subject (Fawcett 2008: 251-252). These probabilities are not definitive but there has been no further research to confirm or oppose them. It is these probability statements that replace the absoluteness asserted by the rank scale (Fawcett 2000: 243). In other words, they allow for more space and variation by affording statements like 'there is a X percent probability that unit Y fills element Z'.

2.2.1. Fawcett's alternative to the rank scale

As alternative to the view that "[e]ach [rank] consists of one or more units of the rank next below" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014 [1985]: 9), Fawcett uses the concepts of **componence** ("is composed of"), **exponence** ("is expounded by"), and **filling** ("is filled by") to account for the different 'levels' of syntactic relations. This also allows the relationship of "consists of" that Halliday proposes to be a much more precise description that allows us to better predict how these relations occur in natural language (Fawcett 2000: 327-375). Furthermore, Fawcett asserts that "[i]n this theory, then, there is no expectation that an element of a clause will necessarily be filled by a group" (Fawcett 2000: 239). The syntax tree (adopted from Fawcett

2008: 75) in Figure 3 represents this system of syntactic relations. The **unit** of **Clause** (Cl) **is composed** of **clause elements** (S, O, M, C, A) which are in turn **filled** by **group units** (ngp). These are **composed of** individual **elements** (h, dd, h, dd, h) that are **expounded** by **words** (Ivy, her, hair, this, evening). The **element** of **Main Verb** (M), **Operator** (O), and their associated elements (e.g., Main Verb Extension) are directly **expounded by items** (*will*, *wash*). The figure also illustrates the alternating pattern of componence and filling; a unit (for example, the level of Cl and the level of type of group) is always composed of elements and in turn elements are always filled by units. Only the final level of group elements is expounded (indicated by the triangular shapes) by items.

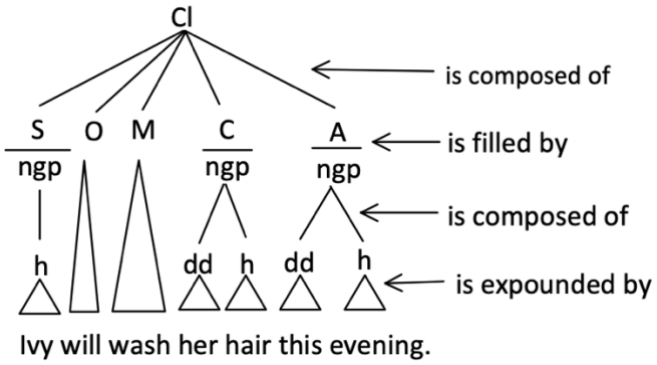

Fig. 3 *Example syntax tree illustrating the relationships of componence, filling, and exponence of elements and units (Fawcett 2008: 75). The Clause (Cl) is composed of a Subject (S) filled by a nominal group (ngp), an Operator (O), a Main Verb (M), a Complement (C) filled by a ngp, and an Adjunct (A) filled by a ngp. The S ngp is composed of a head (h) expounded by the item* Ivy, *the O and M are directly expounded by will and wash, the Complement ngp is composed of a deictic determiner (dd) expounded by* her *and a head (h)* hair, *and the A ngp is composed of a dd expounded by* this *and h expounded by* evening.

As to how these units may fill elements and vice versa, there are 'filling statements' (Fawcett 2000: 240), one bottom-up and the other top-down, which guide the process. The first of these, the bottom-up, asks the questions about units "(1) '[W]hat elements can it fill?', '(2) what is the degree of probability with which it fills each?', and (3) 'we ask with respect to each element (1) 'What units can fill it?', and (2) 'What classes of items can expound it?'" (Fawcett 2000: 240). In addition, there are, as already mentioned, more-or-less set probabilities of which units fill elements and vice versa, as well as for all classes of group and clusters. For instance, it is established that the S is filled by a ngp over 99 percent of the time (Fawcett 2000: 241).

In addition to the concepts of componence, exponence, and filling, Fawcett (2000: 175-176) posits three further realization operations, namely those of 'conflation', 're-setting preferences' in probabilities and 're-entering the system network' necessary for co-ordination, embedding,

and reiteration. For the most part, these overlap with Halliday's realization operations but do differ in a few aspects. Table 1 briefly summarizes both Fawcett's and Halliday's realization rules and is adapted from Fawcett's (2000: 180) own outline. Halliday's rules are listed in the order in which they correlate most closely to Fawcett's.

Table 1 *The realization rules of Fawcett's CG and Halliday's Sydney Grammar.*

Fawcett	**Halliday**
1. Insert a unit.	(no equivalent)
2. Locate an element in a unit.	a. Insert an element. c. 'Order' an element.
3. Conflate an element or PR with another already existing one.	b. 'Conflate' elements.
4. Expound an element (by an item). 4a. Fetch a name.	g. 'Lexify' an element.
5. Prefer certain features on re-entry into system network.	f. 'Preselect' some feature at a lower rank d. 'Classify' an element.
6. For an element, re-enter the system network	(no equivalent; included in 'Preselect' by Matthiessen and Bateman 1991)
(unnecessary)	e. 'Split' an element

The most significant difference is that there is no equivalent in the Sydney Grammar for Fawcett's Operations 1 and 6. The lack of an 'insert unit' operation is indeed illogical as this, along with Operation 2, 'locate an element in a unit', are "in a sense the two fundamental operations, in that each adds one of the two major categories to the structure […] For example, the choice of the feature [situation] is realized by inserting the unit 'Cl' (for 'Clause'), and the choice of the feature [thing] is realized by inserting 'ngp' (for 'nominal group')" (Fawcett 2000: 182). Thus, Fawcett (2000: 182) asserts that "if there is no unit, there can logically be no elements, and so no structure." Operation 6 is, in addition, also of considerable importance because it allows more layers of structures to be produced. Though Fawcett (2000: 179-185) does outline these differences at length, he argues that "they are relevant **only indirectly** to the outputs from the grammar" [original emphasis] and that "their function is to generate the **relationships** between **categories**" [original emphasis].

Componence, filling, exponence and conflation need to be briefly defined further. First, componence does not state a direct relation of a unit (nominal group 'ngp', prepositional group 'pgp', etcetera) and its place in the clause. Rather, "[t]he roles of 'places' is simply to enable the elements to be related to each other in the appropriate sequence, and it is the elements that are the 'components' of the unit" (Fawcett 2000: 244) (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014 [1985] on the rank scale).

Second, filling is central to the syntax of the Cardiff Grammar and allows it to address some of the problems in the Sydney Grammar and the rank scale. It can be considered the complement of componence. Realizing this relationship is the operation to "insert a unit to fill Element X" (Fawcett 2000: 251). Furthermore, componence and filling occur in an alternating pattern in analysis. In other words

> as your eye moves down a full tree diagram representation of a text-sentence […], you find that the relationships between categories are alternately those of componence and filling, and that these two are repeated until the point at which the analysis moves out of the abstract categories of syntax to the rather more concrete (but still abstract) category of items (via the relationship of exponence) (Fawcett 2000: 252).

To this end, several "groups" (rather than "phrases") are available. In his original theory, Fawcett posits four of these groups: the nominal group, the adverbial group, the adjectival group, and what he called the prepend group (Fawcett 2008: 164). He later revised this to combine the adverbial and adjectival groups into one 'quantity-quality group' arguing that the core element of the structure, the apex, will be filled with either an adverb or adjective, respectively (Fawcett 2000: 206-209). He also renamed the prepend group to prepositional group (Fawcett 2008: 164).

This brings us to the concept of exponence ('lexify' in Sydney Grammar), in which phonological or graphological 'items' expound an element, thus bringing the more concrete occurrence of language closer. For example, *mountain* simply expounds the element head (h) which is in the unit of ngp.[1]

[1] There are two further features to note. First, at times one item may expound two meanings, such as *goose* > *geese*. Second, Fawcett does away with the notion of a 'word' base having a suffix; instead, he argues that this is expounded by a "expound as suffix" operation (Fawcett 2000: 255).

Finally, conflation is when two elements 'merge' into one, for example, the Main Verb (M) and Operator (O) being conflated into what is notated as O/M (Fawcett 2000: 249-250). This happens, for instance, in the clause *Dan held the baby* wherein the item *held* expounds both the O (essentially, in simple terms, that what marks the past tense) and the Process of *to hold* (compare this to the "polarity seeker" (interrogative) form *Did Dan hold the baby?* wherein *Did* is the O and *hold* is the M).

2.3. A closer look at elements, units, and items

2.3.1 The Head

Before continuing with a closer look at clause elements and units, let us briefly consider the concept of the Head as purported by *IFG* amongst many other linguistic traditions. Of course, this concept spans across linguistic theories; yet, it is not always defined and interpreted the same way, and linguists from different schools modify it often to align with their theories and perspectives. Keizer (2007: 9) writes that "[t]hus the choice more or less remains between the rather vague, but intuitively appealing, semantic approach and the more systemic, but also more abstract and semantically less revealing, formal approach".

However, it can be said that in the simplest terms, it is the constituent around which everything else revolves and which determines the category of the phrase (or clause). As the Head is regarded as mandatory element, Halliday (2014 [1985]: 390), for instance, asserts that "there is always a Head in the nominal group (unless it is 'branched', like *one brown* in *one blue eye and one brown* […] but there may be no Thing".

In contrast, Fawcett (2000: 196) argues that "the concept of an element that is **typically** present in a given class of unit is useful", which he refers to as the 'pivotal element' (reminding of Jespersen referring to a 'word of supreme importance' (1924: 96)) [original emphasis]. This pivotal element differs from the traditional Head in that it does not (necessarily) control the syntactic qualities of the (class of) unit and the clause it is in. Thus, it can be said that, for example, the element h is the pivotal element in the unit ngp because it is **typically** present, but is not mandatory. As the Cardiff Grammar, including this concept, is based on large quantities of natural language texts (as opposed to the formal language assumed by many traditional linguists), a pivotal element can be regarded as much more suitable for the analysis proposed in this thesis, particularly because Halliday (2014 [1985]: 391) glosses over the construction

here described as HC and AC. He mentions it only briefly in *IFG*, writing that "a few adjectives occur simply following *the*, like *the rich*; but this is not a productive configuration", followed by a brief footnote:

> In Modern English, this is restricted to certain abstractions (And then the inevitable happened and general classes of beings (e.g. *Instead he goes down and lives among and with the poor and oppressed)*; but in German and other Germanic languages, such wordings can be used to refer not only to general classes of people but also to particular members of a class (cf. Günther 2018: 77-112).

Yet, such a hasty dismissal is especially troublesome because the construction may be much more productive than Halliday anticipates.

In order to determine the Head of a group (phrase), Keizer (2007: 12-19) outlines a number of (morpho)syntactic 'tests' that can be useful. She does warn, however, that these criteria are not without problems and should be used with caution. The first criterion is subject-verb agreement, but it is shown to be quite unreliable in certain constructions such as in pseudo-partitives. The second is determiner-head agreement which, although useful in simple cases, raises difficulties when the determiner and the verb do not agree with the same noun, as in, for example, *They won't last long, mate, these type never do* (Keizer 2007: 18). The third is the morpho-syntactic locus. According to Zwicky (1985, 1993) "all we need to determine headedness is to establish which element within a complex NP bears inflectional marks" (Keizer 2007: 19) which is, in English, the plural marker. Yet not every noun in English has a plural inflection. The last morphosyntactic test is that of stress which should indicate which element is the Head but is quite unreliable in binominal constructions. Keizer (2007: 20) proposes one final test based on discourse factors which combines formal and semantic features. This is done, in the context of binominals, through "discourse reference and pronominalization" but is shown to be "relevant only in those cases where the two nouns differ in number and where this difference in number is reflected in the choice of pronoun" (Keizer 2007: 20). In the end, Keizer recommends using a 'cluster approach', that is, using multiple tests and the element which fulfills the most, 'wins'. In the study of this thesis, I use a series of carefully chosen syntactic and semantic tests to help determine 1) what most likely would fill the pivotal element (that is, which element is most likely expected based on the probabilities proposed by the Cardiff Grammar) and 2) which element actually fills this. This is also expanded upon in Section 3.1.

2.3.2. Subject (S), Main Verb (M), and Complement (C)

It goes without saying that a clause needs a subject and a process, that is, a verb (whether overt or implied), which are expressed as the Subject (S), Main Verb (M), and Operator (O) in the Cardiff Grammar (the O is similar to but not fully equivalent to Halliday's 'finite' and will be expanded on presently); any object is subsumed under Complement (Fawcett 2008: 47-55; 136-149). Of course, there are further clause elements but these four are its central and most necessary ones, for reasons that will become clear in this section.

In essence, it can be said that the subject of a clause is the 'doer' of the verb (that is, after all, what we learn in elementary school). However, as linguists we know that much more detail is required. Yet, a definitive account is difficult to identify; as Fawcett (1999: 243) points out "[t]he term 'Subject' is one of the most frequently used of all grammatical terms, and yet there is no clear agreement on what a 'Subject' is - in English or in any other language".

Nonetheless, generalized notions emerged already in the second half of the 19th century. Grammarians posited three kinds of subjects: the psychological subject ("that which is the concern of the message"), the grammatical subject ("that of which something is predicated"), and the logical subject ("doer of the action") (Halliday 2014: 79).

As an example, in *The duke gave my aunt this teapot* (from Halliday 2014: 76), *the duke* performs all three functions. Rearranging the clause to *This teapot my aunt was given by the duke* creates dissonance: the psychological subject is *this teapot*, the grammatical subject is *my aunt*, and the logical subject is *the duke*. To account for the way language is actually used (rather than only being concerned with idealized language), Halliday posits three specific functions that correspond to the three kinds of subjects: theme (psychological subject), subject (grammatical subject), and actor (logical subject). These elements can be moved around to create "subtly but significantly different" meanings (2014 [1985]: 81). The Cardiff Grammar considers the Subject to be "an **element of structure** in its own right" rather than "a sub-component of a constituent" [original emphasis] (Fawcett 1999: 250; cf. to Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar).* Fawcett's Subject is critical to the three most significant system networks, namely the MOOD, TRANSIVITY, and THEME.

In the MOOD network, which expresses the interpersonal strand of meaning, the Subject is

important in that its relative position to the Operator (the element that communicates modal and/or attitudinal information, also including tense) directs the way we "travel" through the system network and thus embodies whether the clause expresses an 'information seeker', 'polarity seeker', 'proposal for action by self', 'proposal for action by self and addressee', 'request', 'simple directive' or even an ambiguous mood (Fawcett 2008: 257). Figure 4 illustrates a simple example of the system network of MOOD.

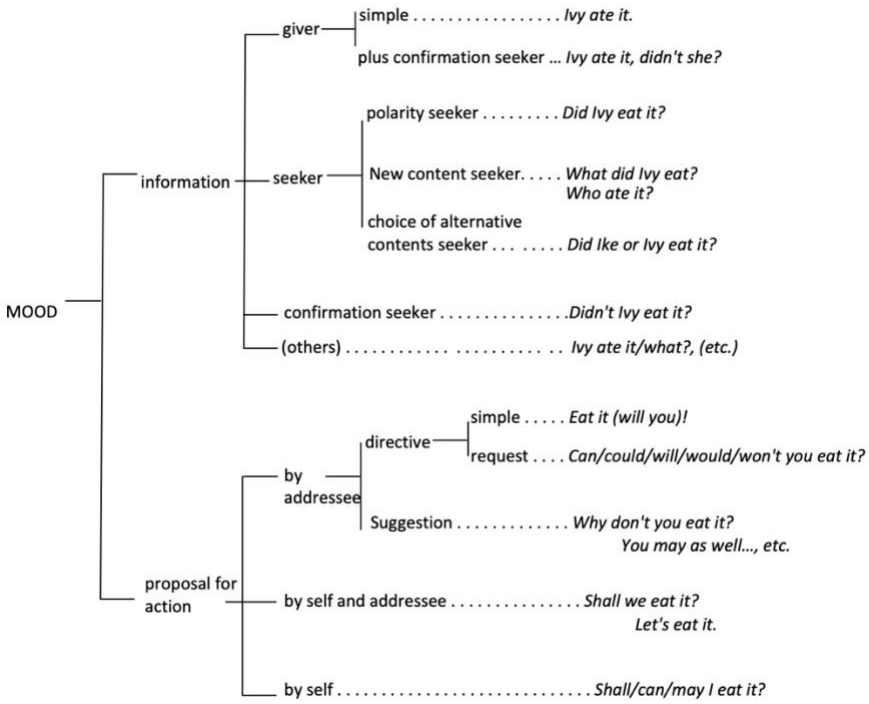

Fig. 4 *Example of a simplified MOOD system network (Fawcett 2000: 24)*

From this illustration of the system network of MOOD, it is clearly recognizable that this model provides more details and provides a clearer picture than the traditional Hallidayan speech functions. Therefore, moving through the MOOD system network allows us to recognize the process of constructing any given mood (for example, the declarative mood which is here referred to as the "giver") and provides additional information of how that MOOD is realized in forms. For example, the 'polarity seeker' in the information seeker network indicates a yes-or-no question while the 'new content seeker' indicates a want or need for unknown information which, of course, needs lexical material other than "yes" or "no" to construct a (meaningful) answer.

The Subject also plays a determining role in the TRANSIVITY system network which expresses experiential meaning. Here, it fills the primary Participant Role (over 99 percent reliable) that is dictated by the Process (expressed by the M). In Fawcett's (2008: 138) words, "a Participant Role is a role which we expect to occur in the clause, as a result of knowing what the Process is". As such, Complements, which also complete the meaning expressed by the M, are also PRs (99 percent reliable). In opposition to PRs are Circumstantial Roles (CRs). These are always Adjuncts (although not every Adjunct expresses a CR) and therefore express non-necessary, additional information.

This means that Processes take a predictable number of PRs: most are associated with two PRs, some have one or three associated PRs, and an extremely small number have no PRs at all. It follows that clauses have an expected, predictable number of Cs: most have one and some have two or none. These Cs can be filled by 'things' as well qualities, attributives, places, events, and may be a clause in itself. Figure 5, taken from Fawcett (2008: 141), illustrates these three options. The left-most column shows Processes that are only associated with one PR, that is, the S, and thus have no C. The middle column represents most Processes, which have two PRs, and hence one C. The right-most column has three PRs and thus two Cs. The very bottom line (12) shows the atypical case of no PR as the '*it'* (in the 'environmental' process) does not refer to anything (Fawcett 2008: 139).

At this point it must also be mentioned that PRs are often covert. In other words, "A PR THAT IS PREDICTED BY THE PROCESS IS QUITE OFTEN NOT ACTUALLY PRESENT AT THE LEVEL OF FORM" [original emphasis] (Fawcett 2008: 194). This phenomenon occurs frequently in some forms of printed media, for example in a public notice like *Tiredness can kill!*, in some directives ("proposal for action") like *Enjoy!*, and in recipes like *Simmer gently for ten minutes* (Fawcett 2008: 194-195). Figure 5 shows an overview of how Complements and Participant Roles are related.

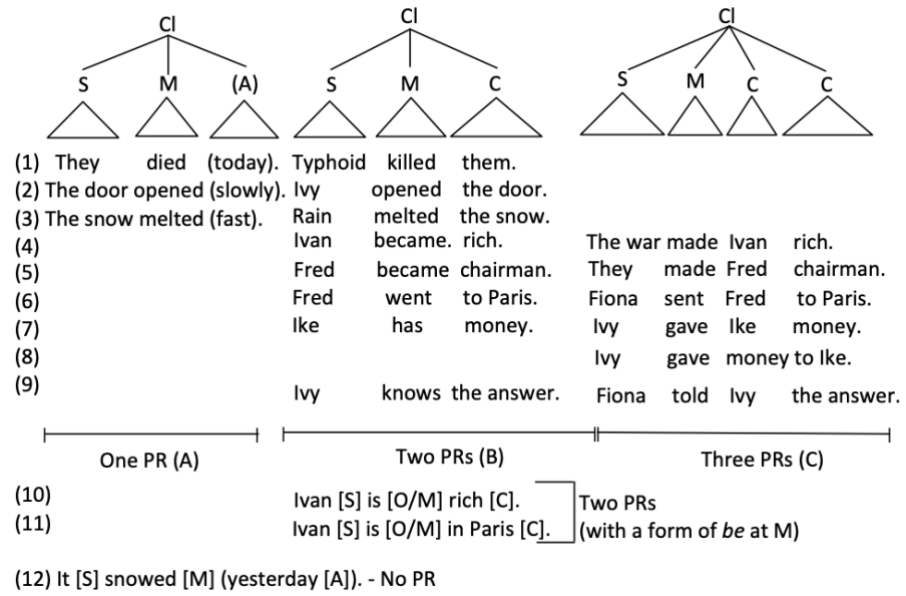

Fig. 5 *A summary of the major types of Processes and Participant Roles (Fawcett no year: 73)*

Finally, the THEME strand of meaning is quite complex and is explained at length by Fawcett in his 2007 conference paper "The Many Types of 'Theme' in English: their Syntax, Semantics and Discourse Functions". The SUBJECT THEME which "is the aspect of the meaning of a typical Subject that tells the Addressee 'what the clause is about'" (Fawcett 2008: 109) occurs in 70 to 80 percent of clauses. An example of a less common THEME is the thematization of the Complement in the Marked PR Theme which serves to highlight a contrast or particularly strong emotion, for example *Those truffles* in *Those truffles I just couldn't resist*.

In addition to the Subject, there is one final crucial element of the clause that has already been mentioned frequently: the Main Verb (M) expressing the Process (Fawcett 2000: 48-52). It is noteworthy to consider that Fawcett views the M as an element of the Clause which is directly expounded by an item, rather than being part of a 'verbal group' like Halliday argues (Fawcett 2000: 49-50). As already mentioned, it is the M that dictates the number of PRs required (2000: 137-141). For instance, the M *sent* in *Lee sent the letter* requires at least two PRs: *Lee sent* leaves the mandatory question *what did he send?* Unanswered. Thus, it is clear that the process *to send* requires two PRs. Furthermore, the M may combine with other elements like the Main Verb Extension (Mex) (for example, *brought [M] up [Mex])*. Lastly, it is very common for the M to be conflated with the O (Fawcett 2008: 156; 2000: 249-250).

2.3.3. Word classes and groups

The classification of word classes is a way to "simplify our description of the structure of the language" (Crystal 1967: 26), but it is not an easy task. As of yet, there is no definitive, overarching, fully agreed upon set of criteria for classification and every theory has its own set of criteria. One such classification of nouns and adjectives is proposed in Crystal (1967: 46) which suggests the following features of nouns:

> It may act as a Subject.
> It can inflect for number.
> It can co-occur with an article.
> There is morphological indication.

For (central/prototypical) adjectives he proposes (1967: 51):

> It can become an adverb by adding *-ly*.
> It inflects for degree.
> It can take intensifiers (especially *very*).
> It has the ability to occur in the construction "a/the X noun".
> It can occur in predicative position after the subclass of verbs including *be, seem,* and *become.*

Of course, there has been much progress since 1967 but current criteria are not all that different. Pullum and Huddleston (2017: 528) suggest that central adjectives have the following properties:

> They can appear in attributive, predicative, and postpositive functions.
> They take degree modifiers and have inflectional/analytic comparatives and superlatives.
> They take adverbs as modifiers.

Certainly, it is well-recognized that some items fulfill all properties and some fewer. However, how concrete these boundaries are is a matter of conflict. This thesis will make use of the concept of gradience (Aarts 2004). Of particular relevance for this thesis is the assertion that some items differ from others as they have more lexical content, that is that they contain more meaning, for example, *thin* versus *utter* (Aarts 2004: 7) where the latter has lost much of its meaning content as adjective.

In simple terms, it can be said that a class is simply "a set of items that are in some respect alike" (Halliday 2014: 74). This assertion also leaves room for the fact that some items in the set of items are more alike than other items in the set; in other words, the idea of prototypicality

(see, for example, Hengeveld 1992: 79-88; Aarts 2004: 9-94). The word classes recognized by Halliday are visualized in Figure 6.

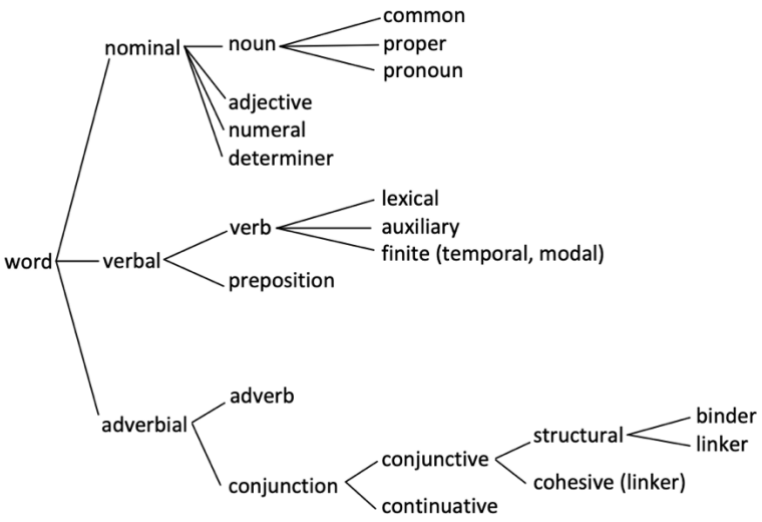

Fig. 6 *Word classes recognized in SFG according to Halliday (2014: 75)*

The items in the word class 'nominal' have certain characteristics in common, as do those in the class 'verbal' and those in the class 'adverbial'. However, as already established, the boundaries are not always cut and dry. That is, items of one category do not necessarily have identical characteristics to other items in that category. Halliday (2014: 75) gives the example of *upper* and *lower*. They are both part of the adjectives class but do not function in the same manner: *lower* is a comparative adjective and, thus, akin to *higher*, whereas *upper* is not the comparative of *up*. Yet, through the process of conversion, *lower* can also function as a verb, whereas *higher* has not undergone conversion and therefore cannot function as verb. This shows that "the criteria on which classes are defined tend to be rather mixed, and membership of the classes rather indeterminate, with some items clearly belonging and others whose status is doubtful" (Halliday 2014: 75). For Halliday (2014: 76), it is the "potential range of grammatical functions" which a class indicates.

However, this is not the only classification of word classes in SFG. For instance, Halliday's model subsumes adjectives in the nominal group while the Cardiff Grammar recognizes a separate quality group. The latter also does not include a verbal group like Halliday (although there are, of course, verbs; they are simply classified as clause elements directly expounded by items rather than a group (see Figure 3 above)).

2.3.3.1 Criteria for categorizing adjectives

Let us now consider more closely what exactly makes an adjective an adjective. As mentioned in the previous section, there are various possibilities to determine what items fall into the group 'adjective'. For simplicity, let us first consider one of the most straight-forward and clearly delineated that is presented by Pullum and Huddleston in both *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002: 525-595) and *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar* (2005: 112-122), which is already provided in the previous section. In brief, a (prototypical) adjective is characterized by 1) its ability to occur in the three functions of attributive, predicative, and postpositive positions, 2) being gradable (by comparative and superlative and/or degree modifiers such as *very*), and 3) being modified, typically by an adverb. Of course, peripheral items may not possess all these properties but be an adjective nonetheless (Pullum and Huddleston 2002: 527-528).

Another factor to consider is that of the functional and the structural environment. Tucker (1998: 54) delineates four typical environments for adjectives in English more precisely than Pullum and Huddleston (from Tucker 1998: 54):

(i.) Pre-head modifiers in nominal structures (*a big parcel*) (attributive);
(ii.) Complements of a copula in clause structure (*he is kind*) (predicative);
(iii.) Complements expressing the result of the process denoted by the verb (*he shot him dead, he pulled the tooth loose*);[2]
(iv.) Postpositive modifiers of certain types of nominal expression (*something nice*) (postpositive).

There are several further environments in which adjectives can occur, as proposed by, amongst others, Quirk et al. (1985) and Downing & Locke (1992). These are (from Tucker 1998: 54):

(v.) Complements of prepositions *(in short, for good,* etc.)
(vi.) Premodifiers of certain adjectives (*pale blue, red hot*)
(vii.) Adjuncts in Clauses (*I'm receiving you loud and clear*)
(viii.) Contingent adjective clauses (*Strange, I never suspected him*)
(ix.) Supplementive adjective clauses *(Soaking wet, he walked into the room*)

[2] While Tucker (1998: 54) considers these complements, they can also be regarded as adjuncts.

In any case, Tucker (1998: 55) expands that specifying the environment of an adjective "involves establishing which elements or constituents are present, their optionality, obligatoriness, potential for co-occurrence, and their ordering with respect to the adjective and (in a functional approach) the function of these elements".

The availability of modification and complementation of adjectives must also be considered. Not every item has the potential to be modified and/or complemented. This includes intensification and/or comparison which typically occurs with gradable adjectives (*happy-happier; very happy*) or non-gradable adjectives treated as gradable ones (*impossible-most impossible; nearly impossible*). Yet, some adjectives that cannot be graded and/or intensified as readily are still indubitably adjectives; for instance, the present participle adjective *living* cannot, strictly speaking, be graded or intensified (certainly there are exceptions in natural language use, as with most instances of language). If adhering to the principle of prototypicality/centrality, it is reasonable to assert that such an adjective simply lies more in the periphery.

In a similar vein, Aarts (2004: 7) points out that some adjectives contain more lexical content than others. He gives the example of *thin* versus *utter*, writing that

> [t]hin is semantically and communicatively much more versatile: it has clear lexical content, and can be used both literally (*This wall is so thin: we can hear everything the neighbours say*) and metaphorically (*His arguments were a bit thin*). By contrast, *utter* is semantically almost depleted of meaning, and close to having only an intensifying function, much like *very*.

Assuming Aarts is correct, it can be argued that this leads *utter* to have more 'adverb-ness', causing a move toward the adverb group of word class on the 'cline' from adjective to adverb. This assertion is not unproblematic, though: first, there exists already the regular adverb *utterly*; second, a lack of 'adjectival' semantic content does not equal to a change of word class. Instead, *utter* can be regarded as "having a semantic **resemblance** to another word class" [my emphasis], in this case "having an intensifying meaning" typically expressed by an adverb (Aarts 2004: 30). This observation complements the concept of prototypicality as both imply that some items are closer to the 'center' and others, as they move away from the center, may begin to 'look' like other groups of class.

Finally, it can be said that the group of the adjective class is made up of semantically distinct 'types' which can be classified according to their properties. Dixon & Aikhenvald (2006;1982: 16) posit seven of these semantically distinct adjective types: dimension (e.g., *big, large, small*), physical property (e.g., *hard, soft, light*), color (e.g., *blue, black, green*), human propensity (e.g., *jealous, happy, clever*), age (e.g., *new, young, old*), value (e.g., *good, bad, perfect*), and speed (e.g., *fast, quick, slow*). Dixon and Aikhenvald (2010 [1982]: 8) prioritize semantics, working from "the assumption that the syntactic properties of a lexical item can largely be predicted from its semantic description. Semantics is thus held to be prior to syntax". In other words, their classification system is based on the meaning content of items.

There are numerous approaches to and perspectives on the classification of adjectives (and all other word classes) and therefore not every one of them can be included. My own study uses the criteria discussed and are briefly summarized below for convenience.

i.) A prototypical adjective can occur in the attributive, predicative, and postpositive function;
ii.) it can be graded by a comparative and a superlative;
iii.) it can be intensified by an adverb like *very;*
iv.) it can be otherwise modified by an adverb, and often also by another adjective;
v.) it is semantically meaningful and can be classified according to its properties into a distinct semantic type.

2.3.3.2. Adjectives according to Halliday

In the Sydney Grammar, adjectives do not form a group in their own right and are instead included as an element of the nominal group (excepting in predicative use). The nominal group is organized into different functional elements of which the Epithet and Classifier are typically filled by an adjective. The other elements of the nominal group are the Deictic, the Numerative, and the Thing. Halliday (2014: 364) provides the example in Figure 7 which includes each of these:

those	**two**	**splendid**	**old**	**electric**	**trains**
Deictic	Numerative	$Epithet_1$	$Epithet_2$	Classifier	Thing
determiner	numeral	adjective	adjective	adjective	noun

Fig. 7 *Functional elements of the nominal group according to Halliday (2014: 364)*

As the figure shows, the experiential aspects (Deictic, Numerative, $Epithet_1$, $Epithet_2$, Classifier, and Thing) of the nominal group prototypically correspond to specific grammatical elements (determiner, numeral, adjectives, and noun). As a grammar that adheres to the typical concept of a Head, it is the Thing which very often fills this function. The label 'Thing' refers to the element expressing the class(es) of thing(s) which is being expressed. It is typically filled by a noun, which may be a common noun, proper noun, or (personal) pronoun including the generalized pronoun *one.*

Grammatically, a Thing has four categorizing components: countability, animacy, generality, and metaphoric propensity. Countability refers to mass nouns versus count nouns. Animacy differentiates conscious versus non-conscious Things, where the former takes the pronoun *he/she* and the latter *it.* Generality describes the taxonomic cline from general to specific in which the most general type are pronouns. Metaphoric propensity is "their potential for construing qualities and processes as things" (Halliday 2014: 386), in other words their ability to be used metaphorically.

The other elements, that is the Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, and Classifier, further describe the categorization of the class of Thing. The Deictic "indicates whether or not some specific subset of the Thing is intended" (Halliday 2014: 365). In other words, the Deictic serves the determining function. The second element, the Numerative, "indicates some numerical feature of the particular subset of the Thing" (Halliday 2014: 374). These include definite and indefinite as well as quantitative and ordinative items.

The final two, the Epithet and Classifier, are typically realized as adjectives. The Epithet "indicates some quality of the subset" (Halliday 2014: 376) while the Classifier serves to indicate "a particular subclass of the Thing in question" (Halliday 2014: 376-380).

Furthermore, two kinds of Epithets are recognized, namely the experiential and the attitudinal, which both express a quality of the subset. The line between the two is very fuzzy, yet the latter can be said to introduce an interpersonal semantic element. Halliday (2014: 376) provides the following examples:

(1) Experiential Epithet

a. Naval authorities believe the boat may have capsized because it was carrying a **heavy** load of construction materials in **choppy** waters [original emphasis].
b. Then he saw it – **a large red** feather barely sticking out of the straw mat [original emphasis].

(2) Attitudinal/interpersonal Epithet

a. Oh God Maitland was a **really cute little** town [original emphasis].
b. He lives in what Alec Guinness has called 'a stately pleasure dome', a 17th century 'pavilion' with **splendid** gardens in the depths of Buckinghamshire [original emphasis].

Functionally, the experiential Epithet is defining, at least in part. Consider, for instance, this example provided by Halliday (2014: 376): the adjective *long* in *the long train* is an experiential Epithet and indicates that one particular train possessing the quality of 'long-ness' in relation to some norm of length of trains can be identified whereas the adjective *mighty* in *the mighty train came thundering down the track* is an attitudinal Epithet and does not indicate one particular train by comparison to 'unmighty' trains. Furthermore, adjectives that are attitudinal Epithets can also fulfill the post-Deictic function. In this case, (Halliday 2014: 377) argues that the difference between the two is often unclear, as in *those lovely two evenings in Bali* compared to *those two lovely evenings in Bali*.

Often, the line between Epithet and Classifier is blurred and one word can serve either function but with differing meanings (Halliday 2014: 395-397). There are, however, important differences that separate the two:

> The line between Epithet and Classifier is not a very sharp one, but there are significant differences. Classifiers do not accept degrees of comparison or intensity – we cannot have *a more electric train* or *a very electric train*; and they tend to be organized in mutually exclusive and exhaustive sets – *a train* is *either electric, steam* or *diesel*. The range of semantic relations that may be embodied in a set of items functioning as

> Classifier is very broad; it includes material, scale and scope, purpose and function, status and rank, origin, mode of operation – more or less any feature that may serve to classify a set of things into a system of smaller sets (Halliday 2014: 377).

It is also the Classifier that often causes confusion about whether the construction is a compound noun or a Classifier + Thing. This shows how closely linked a Classifier and a Thing may be. To exemplify this difference, Halliday (2014: 377) considers *fast trains*. *Fast trains* can refer to "trains that go at high speeds" (Epithet) but also as "trains that are classified as express" (Classifier). Determining which function an adjective fills is thus not always easy and often requires (syntactic) context to some extent.

2.3.3.4 Fawcett's Quality Group

It has now been established that Halliday, along with others such as Muir (1972), Sinclair (1972), Berry (1975), Gregory (2009 [1969]), and Matthiessen (1995), do not distinguish an adjectival group of word class and instead consider adjectives to be within the nominal group as either modifiers or, in some cases, as Heads (Tucker 2017: 284). This leads adjectives to have the least clear status among the word classes, which is unsatisfactory and needs further development.

This is, of course, what makes Fawcett's counterargument attractive. The Cardiff Grammar significantly alters, and arguably simplifies, the classification of groups of word classes. Fawcett places value on the analysis of groups as well as clauses (unlike the Sydney Grammar, which focuses much more on the clause alone) and as such provides a more robust way to do so, writing that "our commitment to relating the elements of the syntactic units to their meaning potential in the system networks—and so the 'conceptual units' of logical form in the belief system" drives this approach (Fawcett 2000: 202).

There are four classes of group (or 'phrase', if one prefers the term) laid out in the Cardiff Grammar. In his original theory, Fawcett posits the nominal group, the adverbial group, the adjectival group, and the prepend group. He later revised this to combine the adverbial and adjectival groups into one 'quantity-quality group' arguing that the core element of the structure, the apex, will be filled with either an adverb or adjective, respectively (Fawcett 2000:

206-209), and now refers to the prepend group as prepositional group. There is indeed no verbal group as verbs are considered to be clausal elements[3].

Each group is made up of its own elements that are neatly outlined by Fawcett. The nominal group contains, maximally various determiners, selectors, modifiers, qualifiers, and a head. Note that 'head' here is not capitalized so as to differentiate it from the Hallidayan 'Head'. The prepositional group has, of course, a preposition and a mandatory completive. The quantity group includes the amount, adjuster, and quantity finisher. Finally, there is the quality group which includes both adjectives and adverbs. Unlike many other accounts, "the quality group (qlgp) is perhaps the most developed unit in the Cardiff Grammar […] and arguably more developed as a unit in the Cardiff Grammar than in any other account of its syntax" (Schulz & Fontaine 2019: 246).

This group has four elements: the apex (a), the temperer (t), the scope (s), and the limiter (l), with the apex being the core element (Tucker 2017: 287-288):

(3) Although large animals are generally *more* (t) *efficient* (a) *at walking* (s) *than small ones* (l).

The apex is an essential and obligatory element which, in this case, takes the form of an adjective. It serves to classify, identify or describe a quality of the Thing to be expressed. Pre-modifying elements of the apex are referred to as temperers. Tucker (1998: 67-68) suggests a further differentiation, namely that of degree temperer (t^d) and adjunctival temperer (t^a) to account for a) the co-occurrence of multiple pre-modifying elements and b) functional differences. One final subtype of temperer is what Tucker (1998: 69) calls the emphasizing temperer (t^e). This refers to additional elements preceding the temperer such as *so* in *so very quick at tennis.* As this feature is not of much importance in my study it is not necessary to expand on it further. Post-apex elements, that is, the scope (s) and the limiter (l), allow for further classification, identification, and/or description of a Thing (Tucker 1998: 72-89). However, they have little relevance to this paper as the construction it concerns generally does not occur with post-apex elements.

[3] For Fawcett's reasons for this see *A Theory of Syntax for Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2000a) and "In place of Halliday's 'verbal group'" (2000b) in which he argues against a verbal group at length.

2.3.3.5. Adjective versus noun

Reflecting on criteria for adjective status and the structure of the adjectival group (or rather, the quality group) is not yet sufficient for determining their structural and functional status in *the* + ADJ + Ø constructions. We must also consider what characterizes a noun or nominal group, how adjectives and the quality group differ from them, and in how far adjectives/the quality group can develop functions and behaviors similar to nouns/the nominal group. There are two aspects that must once again be considered, namely the morphosyntactic on one hand and the semantic on the other.

The general formal criteria for classifying a noun are more-or-less well-established in the linguistic community and are summarized by Pullum and Huddleston (2002: 536):

i. Phrases with a noun as non-fused head can occur as subject, object, or (predicative) complement in clause structure.
ii. Count nouns inflect for number.
iii. Nouns characteristically take adjectives as pre-head modifiers.
iv. Nouns take determiner dependents.

Further properties that some linguists (for example, Baker 2003) propose include the typical suffixes they may occur with (for example, *-ness*, or the plural *-s*) and that they most often occur after a determiner, numeral or adjective (Keizer 2020: 336).

Moreover, these formal guidelines do not include a classification taking semantics into account. Linguists in the functional (and cognitive) domain "tend to define nouns in discourse-pragmatic terms, that is, as the element that can be used to refer to a specific entity, or in cognitive-semantic terms, that is, as the element which designates or profiles a particular type of entity in some extra-linguistic domain" (Keizer 2020: 336). This description of a noun concurs with the functional and semantic approach of my study, as will be seen in Section 3. Nonetheless, as usual, not every noun has every one of these properties, formal or semantic, and drawing hard boundaries is virtually impossible.

Pullum and Huddleston (2002: 537-538), for instance, indicate that conflicting results from these criteria can occur in, for example, cases of homonymy, and give the slightly questionable

example *It was a very professional performance* where *professional* is an adjective and *She did better than all the professionals* where *professionals* is a noun.[4] They also mention two further exceptions where the line between nouns and adjectives becomes blurred: first, nouns as attributive modifiers, as in (4a), and second, adjectives as what they call fused-head modifiers in NP phrases as in (4b). It is, of course, the latter of these that concern the *the* + adjective + Ø construction, but whether Pullum and Huddleston's fused-head argument is tenable is questionable.

(4) a. government *inquiry* [noun as attributive modifier]

b. They claim the changes will only benefit *the very poor* [fused-head modifier in NP]

The element *government* in (4a) is often described as "a noun used as an adjective" in school grammars; as linguists, however, this tells us very little and is better explained as a noun filling a modifier function. This is also exemplified by the lack of the ability to be graded or modified by adverbs as adjectives are. Furthermore, modifiers such as these cannot be used in predicative function. A great deal can be, and has been, written about this phenomenon, but a discussion of these constructions is beyond the scope of this paper.

The second type mentioned in example (4b) is what Pullum & Huddleston (2002: 417-418) refer to as the 'fused-head modifier' in noun phrases. To them, it is only one instance of an internal modifier fusing with the head and they refer to it as "fused-head constructions with special interpretations" (Pullum and Huddleston 2002: 417-418). Examples of these, taken from Pullum and Huddleston (2017: 417), are provided in example (5).

(5) a. *The French* do these differently from *the Dutch.*

b. *The rich* cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven.

c. How will the new system affect *the very poor.*

d. We are going to attempt *the utterly impossible*.

e. This is verging on *the immoral.*

f. They like to swim in *the nude.*

[4] Pullum and Huddleston (2002) provide this example as evidence for homonymy of adjectives and verbs without going into detail about why they reach this conclusion; many others would argue that this instance of *professional* is simply a case of polysemy occurring because of conversion.

Although this account may appear to be superficially plausible, it is not really satisfactory. The shortcomings of Pullum & Huddleston's position are discussed in Section 2.4.

In summary, the differences between nouns/the nominal group and adjectives/the quality group are semantic as well as syntactic in numerous ways. Semantically, a noun is a unit that is construing, or specifying, a type of Thing, whereas an adjective functions descriptively to further limit the type of Thing expressed by the noun (Keizer 2020: 342). It is crucial, however, to acknowledge that, according to Cardiff Grammar, a modifier in a nominal group (e.g., an attributive adjective) describes the real-world referent (not the noun expressing it) and that the head (noun) is a cultural classification defining the real-world referent. That is, both are related to the referent but the relationship between modifier and head in reference to the referent is indirect (Fawcett 2000: 216).

(Morpho)syntactically, nouns and adjectives have very different properties:

i. Nouns inflect for number and possession; adjectives do not.
ii. Nouns have determiner dependents; adjectives do not.
iii. Nouns are modified by adjectives; adjectives are modified by adverbs (or, in some cases, other adjectives).
iv. Adjectives can be graded and/or intensified; nouns cannot.
v. Adjectives often have a negative case (e.g., *believable – unbelievable, happy – unhappy*); in nouns this is less common.
vi. Nouns can occur as subject, object, and complement; adjectives can occur in attributive, predicative, and postpositive positions.

However, in practice the boundary between noun and adjective is much fuzzier than these classification criteria suggest. Although the classical (Aristotelian) perspective ascribes clear boundaries that imply all-or-nothing categoryship, (many) more modern approaches account for the fuzziness that exists. Membership can be said to be graded where some items are 'more adjectival' than others. For instance, *fun* has properties of a noun and an adjective: it can be preceded by a quantifier or be intensified, may be possessed (*[have] fun)*, has no plural form, may be modified by adjectives and adverbs, and can follow a prepositional phrase (Keizer 2021 lecture; Denison 2013). Logically, it cannot be ascribed one group over the other based only

on formal criteria. This can occur not only on the 'cline' between adjective and noun but between any two word classes. The boundary between adjective and preposition can be fuzzy, too. *Near*, for example, can occur in attributive position, be followed by *one*, be preceded by *very*, has a superlative form, and has the morphological derivative *-ly*. These characteristics all point toward membership of the adjective category; yet, *near* is typically classified as a preposition. These are only two examples of the general issue that categoryship, like so much else in linguistics, is contingent on the criteria and approach used.

2.4 Human and Abstract Constructions

Theories about the phenomenon of the Human Construction and the Abstract Construction can be roughly split into three categories: 1) those that claim nominalization of the adjective, 2) those that suggest a deleted element, and 3) those who propose that the adjective has special qualities that allows it to occur in such a construction. None of these propositions is without faults and some are more difficult to argue for than others.

First, arguments for full adjective-to-noun conversion are largely rejected for the obvious reason that they often retain the majority of the characteristics of adjectives. However, proposals of partial conversion such as those of Strang (1969) and Grygiel (2003) are more convincing. Strang cleverly notes that "[l]ike all the others, this class is isolated on formal grounds; we might say that the forms look as if they have *moved half-way along the road from being adjectives to being nouns* and strayed a bit as well as not going all the way" [my emphasis] (1968: 113). In other words, this construction is unique in functional and semantic terms, and it follows that they must also be unique in formal terms. Similarly, Aarts (2007: 135) remarks that not all words have moved the same distance on the cline from adjective to noun. Langacker's Cognitive Grammar also supports the idea of partial conversion, calling it 'category extension' (Grygiel 2003: 34). Grygiel (2003: 34) writes that for "ADJECTIVES, defined as linguistic units which profile atemporal relations […] [i]t is possible […] to become a thing by a projection of the thing schema on to non-spatial domains" [original emphasis].

In contrast, Aarts (2007: 134) argues against a de-adjectival nominalization, explaining that it is a violation of "a generally accepted principle of grammar, endocentricity, which stipulates that all phrases must be properly headed" and it is unclear whether a partially converted

adjective can be considered to be a proper head for a NP. Kester (1995: 60) adds "that there is a sharp difference between true nominalizations and the cases under consideration here" and notes that "[n]ouns can be used in the singular, […] they have plural morphology, […] and do not necessarily have a generic interpretation".

Pullum and Huddleston (2002: 417-418; 2005: 115) endeavor to provide a solution with their "fused modifier-head with special interpretation", which was already mentioned in section 2.3.3.4. As briefly mentioned in that section, the HC and AC are said to be a kind of fused-head construction akin to those that are antecedent-based. In this way, they make a grave mistake that is present in other explanations as well: they lump together the HC and AC (Pullum & Huddleston do not use this terminology) and noun-less constructions that are antecedent-based. In doing so, they fail to identify a range of unique structural and semantic qualities as well as the productive nature of the constructions. Aarts (2007), too, finds this explanation unconvincing. One example he provides is *the pure in heart* which, in the fused-head analysis, would be made up of both a pre-head and a post-head modifier with the abstract head in between them (in the example this would look like *pure* + abstract head + *at heart*). All of this results in "amorphous lumps" (Aarts 2007: 135). In addition, this example shows a problem semantically: what abstract head could be inserted here? Neither **the pure ones at heart* nor **the pure people at heart* are possible.[5] The only possible insertion of a noun is by restructuring the entire phrase as *the ones [who are] pure at heart* or *the people [who are] pure at heart.*

Pullum and Huddleston also write that "in a special fused modifier-head […] the only determiner permitted is the definite article" (2021: section 6.1.2 no page number), and claim that "we couldn't even substitute a demonstrative" (2002: 417). This is far from the case, as others such as Günther (2018) found by looking at corpus data. Not only a demonstrative determiner is possible, but a possessive determiner is as well (for instance, "*these* dead are my responsibility, bury *your* dead"). Furthermore, Pullum & Huddleston (2002: 417-418) argue that these can be rephrased by using a demonstrative (*those* for the HC and *that* for the AC) plus a relative clause as in "those who are rich/very poor" and "that which is utterly impossible" without providing much evidence for this argument.

[5] This is also accounted for in corpora; while *[the] pure at heart* occurs in both the COCA and the Google Books Corpus, **the pure ones at heart* nor **the pure people at heart* occur in either corpus.)

A promising approach to further analyze the *the* + ADJ ∅ construction is to examine corpus data. Günther (2018) uses corpus data in a comparative study of the Human and Abstract Constructions in English versus in German. Although her conclusion that both are elliptical noun phrases and that both the HC and the AC are based on antecedent syntactic information, rendering them an instance of anaphora like other types of noun ellipsis, and implying that a boundary between them is unnecessary, is problematic, there are some useful elements of the Human and Abstract Constructions that Günther observes.

First, Günther (2018: 81-82) finds in the corpus data that the HC and the AC express a generic meaning in German as well as in English. Second, she concludes from the data that an interpretation as a nominalized adjective is unlikely, arguing that the possibility for *one(s)* insertion requires a potential noun slot. However, this statement is problematic as the suggestion of possible *one*-insertion presupposes that 1) there is an empty noun slot and that 2) an insertion of any kind is semantically equivalent to the HC and AC, neither of which is proven in her analysis. In fact, insertion of any other item, whether *one(s)* or a lexical noun, significantly changes the meaning. For instance, the generic lexical nouns that Günther mentions as possible insertions (in English) are *people* in the HC and *stuff* in the AC but it is uncertain whether this produces semantically equivalent constructions (for example, can *the rich* and *the rich people* be considered as semantically equivalent? In this thesis it will be argued that it cannot for reasons explored in the study in section 3). Furthermore, the AC does not allow *one(s)* insertion as this would indicate countability which is not possible in the AC. For example, *the scientific as well as the religious is important* is syntactically and semantically acceptable whereas **the scientific one(s) as well as the religious one(s) are important* is not, unless there is an overt antecedent present.

Interestingly, Günther (2018: 109) claims to "[have gotten] around the artificial boundaries that have been posited for these inter-connected phenomena" by "analysing *one* and the silent noun as one and the same element". There is not only a clear lack of consideration for semantic factors, but the paper also lacks sufficient evidence supporting her claims. In any case, this conclusion is unsatisfactory in explaining the semantic and functional motivation(s) of the HC/AC.

A promising alternative which remedies some of the issues is Panagiotidis's (2003: 382-432) so-called "null noun", which is similar to other arguments of a zero-noun but considers them a natural class of their own and offers a more encompassing explanation. His null noun refers to a syntactic noun that is phonologically and descriptively void of all semantic meaning (and therefore cannot be replaced by *one(s)* or any generic noun). This combines the concepts of the phonologically empty noun that he denotes with 'eN' and the descriptively empty noun. Although he does not use a particular notation for the null noun, I will use 'nN' in this thesis for convenience and clarity as it is not to be confused with the denotation *ø* which indicates the general idea of an empty noun in this thesis.

Disagreeing with the *pro*-form argument (cf. Kester 1996), Panagiotidis (2003: 428) posits that these nouns form their own category completely separate from lexical and *pro*-form nouns, and are "defined by their lack of descriptive features". His paper "Empty Nouns" (2003) does not only discuss the HC/AC (which he refers to as "human noun ellipsis") but puts great focus on other types of "missing" nouns, for instance those of anaphoric reference. In the case of the HC/AC, he writes that "in some sense, everyone understands that the presence of the adjective is crucial; in *what* sense the presence of the adjective is crucial is a matter of debate" [my emphasis] (Panagiotidis 2003: 394). He recognizes that the interpretation of these constructions is up to contextual and pragmatic factors, not anaphoric ones. Thus, they are quite complex, as "the learner has to retrieve their feature makeup once by agreeing functional heads inside (or also, perhaps, outside) the DP" (Panagiotidis 2003: 428). Although this account of the HC/AC is plausible, it disappointingly once again prioritizes other noun-less adjective constructions over those that are examined in this thesis.

It is because of all these problematic, unsatisfactory theories that a functional stance which heavily bases analyses on the meaning-level of language is taken in this thesis. However, before continuing with my own corpus-based study, an important topic must be addressed, namely the rather significant differences between the HC and the AC (Wu 2020: 144-150).

2.4.1. Differences between the HC and the AC

Wu Zhen (2020: 146-199) points out that despite the attention that the Human Construction has received, the Abstract Construction has received even less, typically having been conflated with the Human Construction. The fact that the AC denotes something abstract rather than

human is not the only difference, and arguably not even the most significant. The first important difference between the HC and the AC is that, as Wu (2020: 147) observes, "on many occasions we are not quite sure what this abstract thing is, i.e. we are unable to specify its reference". Compare the two sentences in example (6) paying attention to the implied referents of the constructions.

(6) a. *The poor* lose health insurance and then get sick and cannot afford treatment.
b. It's a rare gift to be able to make *the inevitable* feel mysterious […]

The poor in (6a) is undeniably a HC with the expected qualities of being generic and plural, and the possibility to infer *people* as Thing. In (6b), *the inevitable* cannot be said to have an easily identifiable noun that could be inserted at all. A second significant difference is that ACs have, almost exclusively, singular verb concord and therefore a singular reading, setting it apart from the general rule of a plural reading of the HC.

Wu (2020: 149) goes on to explain that the ACs (he refers to them as GACs) have three further distinctions: they cannot 1) appear with possessive pronouns, 2) appear with genitive nouns and 3) be contained in an *of*-construction. While these features do encapsulate most ACs, there are plenty of exceptions for all of these, which limit Wu's position:

(7) a. That code was buried in *his unconscious*.
b. Many younger people are looking for a *sense of the sacred.*

Nonetheless, based on Panagiotidis (2003: 423) and his proposal of the semantically void nN, Wu (2020: 173) makes a convincing argument for an empty noun analysis, stating that it "offers a good balance between simplicity and effectiveness". This is also found in the study of this thesis.

3. The study

3.1. Methodology

This study is corpus-based and derives its data primarily from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies 2008). The COCA was selected in order to be able to

examine a wide array of representative data from various genres while still restricting the amount of data to an amount appropriate for a study of this size. For supplemental data when the frequency of an item was extremely low in the COCA, the iWeb was occasionally referred to on account of its sheer size of 14 billion words.

Unfortunately, due to the restricted capabilities of the corpora as well as the complexity of the construction in question, several issues arose in gathering the data. First, a general search for "*the* followed by any adjective that is not followed by a noun (but can be followed by any other part of speech or punctuation)" in the form *the* ADJ -N and in the form *the* ADJ VERB|ADV|. was not possible. Individual searches of *the* ADJ VERB and *the* ADJ ADV yielded frequent false positives (especially when a verb has an identical noun form). The query *the* ADJ . and variations of this proved to yield fairly reliable results.

Based on the data gathered from the general searches, individual adjectives were selected for further investigation. The search queries for each of these was, X being the adjective, *the* X VERB, *the* X ADV, and *the* X and later *the* X VERB (where the VERB was known) and *the* X. In subsequent examinations further forms were included, such as *the* ADV X VERB and *the* ADJ X. The results for each of these was then randomized using the corpus's integrated functions. All of the data was imported to Microsoft Excel for further analysis.

After I conducted the initial quantitative overview, I used the categorization criteria for adjectives that were discussed in Section 2.3.3.2 to identify the category membership, or, in other words, the prototypicality, and the 'type' (Dixon 2006: 16) of a set of randomized items. Furthermore, I identified the syntactic positions of a selection of items in randomized sentences provided by the corpus, also paying attention to the verbs with which they occur.

On the basis of this general overview and the patterns that emerged, a selection of representative clauses was chosen and analyzed according to the framework put forth by the Cardiff Grammar. This includes the creation of syntax trees based on the concepts of exponence, componence, and filling, as well as semantic analyses which focus on the TRANSIVITY and MOOD strands of meaning.

In the selection and analyses of constructions, several 'types' were excluded, namely those referring to nationalities (for example, *the British*) and those describing colors. The former was

excluded because these have become lexicalized nouns and the latter because there simply were no occurrences in the sample from the corpus. Additionally, occurrences in titles *(*for example, *Dawn of the Dead*) or names of bands, institutions, etcetera (for example, *Guide Dogs for the Blind*) were omitted since titles such as these often follow different rules and are not representative of regular use.

3.2 Quantitative Data

In the COCA, the first general search query *the* ADJ VERB yielded a total of 6,214 tokens representing 219 unique types. This gives us normalized frequencies to one million of 6.204 and 0.219, respectively. After categorizing the first 100 hits, I determined that 27 were not a noun-less nominal group and three were excluded on account of referring to a nationality (for example, *the British came*). By subtracting these tokens from the first 100 hits, a total of 4,349.79 tokens or 43.428 per million and 183.959 types or 0.1533 per million remained.

The second query *the ADJ* . yielded a total of 134,066 tokens (133.850 per million) and 684 types (0.683 per million). Again, after sorting out false positives (20) and nationalities (6), 99,208.8 tokens (115.11 per million) and 506.159 types (0.505 per million) remained.

Because the queries the ADV ADJ VERB and the ADJ ADJ VERB yielded no positive results, there is nothing to report. However, the query *the* ADV ADJ . had 4127 tokens (4.120 per million) of which 130 were unique types (0.13 per million). After examination there were 3549.22 tokens (35.432 per million) and 111.8 types (0.112 per million) left. For *the ADJ ADJ* . there were 5625 tokens (5.616 per million) of which 2475 tokens (26.395 per million) remained after classification. Of the 109 types (0.109 per million), 51.23 (0.051 per million) remained. Table 2 provides a summary of the types and frequencies of COCA search queries.

Table 2 Type and token frequencies of COCA search queries

	the ADJ VERB	**the ADJ .**	**the ADV ADJ .**	**the ADJ ADJ .**
Total tokens	6,214	134,066	4,127	5,625
Total types	219	684	130	109
Tokens/MIL	6.204	133.850	4.120	5.616
Types/MIL	0.219	0.683	0.13	0.109
Tokens after categorization	4,349.79	99,208.8	3549.22	2475
Per MIL after categorization	43.428	115.11	35.432	26.395
Types after categorization	183.959	506.159	111.8	51.33
Per MIL after categorization	0.1533	0.505	0.112	0.051

This data should be considered with caution as it cannot reliably be assumed that every one of these instances really is a Human or Abstract Construction. Even a cursory look through the uses in context reveals that in many cases anaphora or cataphora is present, such as in the example *50 million people, with some 675,000 Americans amongst* <u>*the dead*</u> (COCA). Many other occurrences included mistagged nouns, namely those that have the same form as the verb (for example, *the operating costs*).

To exclude such instances, it was necessary to examine samples of individual constructions further. For example, in a sample of 100 instances of *the worst VERB*, 57 were found to be either anaphoric or followed by a noun homonymous or polysemous to a verb (for example, *the worst lie, the worst call* (COCA)). Other examples included *the blind*, where 42 instances were false hits (often it is the noun referring to the window appliance), and *the dead*, where 30 were false hits. Yet, in other cases, such as with *the unthinkable*, every instance in the sample can be said to be an AC.

Furthermore, a sample of 105 instances in context made up of the words (*the*) *good, bad, rich, poor, elderly, young, strong, unthinkable, holy, divine, dead, inevitable, tough, blind, Left, unimaginable, unexpected, impossible, unknown, obvious, ordinary, extreme*, and *faithful* was examined in terms of which syntactic functions they performed in the clause. This gave me the following data: 24.8 percent or 0.023 per million occurred as Subjects, 34.3 percent or 0.036 per million as Complements, 37.1 percent or 0.039 per million as Adjuncts, and 3.8 percent or 0.004 per million were unclear (they occurred in incomplete clauses without a verb). Although this does not reveal any significant insights, it does show that the HC/AC occurs in every

element of the clause. This also shows that, in my more detailed analyses, instances of the HC/AC in all positions must be considered.

Additionally, I looked at which typological category a sample of 79 adjectives fall into (a number of the original 100 samples are false positives). From the seven categories proposed by Dixon and Aikhenvald (2006: 16) (human propensity, physical property, value, dimension, color, age, and speed), six occurred in the sample (color did not occur). Just as with the occurrence in clause elements, this information indicates that instances from each category are relevant.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine a representative set of data as there is such a wide range which can be seen in the numbers above. Nonetheless, for the intents and purposes of this thesis it can be tentatively assumed that overall its occurrence in the COCA is quite limited (considering the COCA is made up of 1,001,610,938 words, of which 65,752,402 are adjectives, as of October 2023).

3.3 Preliminary Observations

During the preliminary stages of my examination of the construction, numerous patterns emerged. These are described in this section before we move on to the primary analyses following Cardiff Grammar guidelines in section 3.4 These preliminary observations include the overall pattern to flout expectations, patterns of determiners, the availability of possession, the tendency to occur in (semi)fixed phrases or closely collocated pairs, the peculiarities of the AC in comparison to the HC, and a word on linguistic tests.

3.3.1 Flouted expectations

Perhaps quite obviously, the construction flouts the syntactic expectation that an item of the quality group, that is, an adjective, is followed by a noun or that an elided or covert noun is based on antecedent semantic and/or syntactic information. In other words, it is surprising to find a construction that defies this expected principle while it remains grammatical and meaningful. It follows that the HC and AC are marked choices indicating 'something' that differs from the normal unmarked choice but, as Panagiotidis writes, "in *what* sense the presence of the adjective is crucial is a matter of debate" [my emphasis] (2003: 48). Or, vice versa, the question is: in what sense is the absence of the noun crucial?

This thesis so far has already indicated that the absence of the noun is indeed as crucial as the presence of the adjective. It may seem that this goes without saying, but it must be highlighted that the grammatical-syntactic markedness of the HC and AC signifies a significant semantic choice. The extended syntactic and semantic analyses in section 3.4 show the relevance and importance of this proposition.

3.3.2. Determiners

Naturally, HCs and ACs occur predominantly with the article *the*, but in contrast to claims that this is the only possible (and obligatory) determiner in the HC (for example, Borer and Roy 2010; Pullum and Huddleston 2021), there is ample evidence that demonstrative and possessive determiners are also available in the HC (for example, Quirk et al. 1985; Arnold and Spencer 2015; Günther 2018). The corpus data in my study supports this latter stance, as exemplified in example (8). Additionally, some, like Quirk et al. (1985: 423), have noted further marginal cases including numeral determiners as in *2 dead, 1 injured* (from Wu 2020: 102) and conjoined adjectives lacking a determiner as in *they came from young and old* (from Wu 2020: 102). It should be noted that these last two uses are rare and are not possible with every adjective.

(8) a. *Your dead* cease to love you… [possessive]

b. She acted as a sort of guardian, though *these dead* seemed quite capable of maintaining themselves. [demonstrative]

Nevertheless, the preferred use of *the* in the HC and the AC[6] must be communicatively and semantically motivated in some way. First, the need to retain a determiner at all needs to be considered. I propose that this is connected to the expectation of the Main Verb. For instance, in the clause *The elderly die* the infinitive verb *to die* expects to have one participant (someone/something that is "doing" the dying) whose role should be filled by a (typically alive) entity which is most likely realized as a noun/nominal group. The quality group cannot answer the hypothetical question *Who is (doing the) dying?* and thus requires a grammatical signal that can qualify it as an answer, as a total lack of a determiner would mean a complete loss of the

[6] Possessive determiners are possible in ACs, but are quite restricted. For example, compare your best and his unconscious to **your beautiful* and **your unknown*.

understanding that it is a complete nominal group regardless of the lack of an overt (lexical) noun.

Although *the* is largely used as article determining a specific noun, it may also be used in generic references in both the singular and plural and as definite and indefinite which is shown in example (9) (Radden 2007: 106-110).

(9) a. *A tiger* hunts by night. [generic indefinite singular]
b. *Tigers* hunt by night. [generic indefinite plural]
c. *The tiger* hunts by night. [generic definite singular]
d. *The Italians* are fond of pasta. [generic definite plural]

The first of these, the generic indefinite singular, represents an entire class by singling out one instance. The second, the generic indefinite plural, "generalises over a large segment over a class, but not all its elements" which tend to be "based on vague, impressionistic judgements and allows for exceptions" (Radden 2007: 109). The third, the generic definite singular, expresses the "class as such" by referring to an individual. Finally, in the fourth generic reference "the definite plural generalizes over a class by referring to many of its elements, but not necessarily all its elements" (Radden 2007: 110).

According to Radden (2007: 110), the HC falls under the generic definite plural reference. Despite describing these as nominalized adjectives, which is contradictory to the argument of this thesis, he rightly writes that "these always refer to a class, never to a single entity [and that they] describe a property that defines a class" (Radden 2007: 110). Furthermore, he remarks that in this type of generic reference plural verb agreement is always used. This last point indicates that the AC uses a generic definite singular reference rather than a plural one. This means that the AC triggers a prototypical instance which is mapped onto the entire class, completely disregarding any exceptions as they are not important. In reference to (9c), Radden (2007: 109) writes that "the class is a species [tiger], which is implicitly contrasted to other species within the animal kingdom".

While this may seem like an insignificant difference, the fact that the two constructions express different kinds of generic references indicates a structural difference which may have deeper

implications than much of past research suggests. In light of Radden's arguments, examples (10) and (11) demonstrate this difference.

(10) They let *the sick* die through our horrific healthcare system. (COCA)
(11) Further, *the unconscious* speaks to us in ways that go beyond words… (COCA)

The sick in example (10) is thus a reference to the entire class possessing the property *sick* without singling out any individuals. Furthermore, because of this generalization, exceptions to the expressed state of things, that is, the sick dying through the horrific healthcare system, are permissible. In other words, it is understood that, with this type of generic reference, not every member of *the sick* is undergoing the stated Process. In example (11), a singled-out prototypical instance of *the unconscious* is representative of the class per se. Because of the abstruse nature of ACs, this example is not as straightforward as that which Radden (2007: 109) provides. Nevertheless, it seems to support the notion that, unlike the HC, the AC refers to some amorphous but homogenous entity defined by the property expressed by the adjective and thus any outliers that perform differently from the stated one are irrelevant. This, again, solidifies the status of the specific instance as the class as such.

Consequently, it can be seen that the role of *the* in the HC and AC is critical, not only in that it 'signals' a (complete) nominal group which appropriately fulfills the expectation of the Main Verb, but that it also contributes greatly to the understanding of the type of reference that is occurring.

3.3.3 Possession

Both genitive *'s* and *of*-constructions are available to show possession in the HC; in the AC, corpus data shows that both are possible as well but the *of*-construction seems to be preferred.

(12) a. I still remember the "inflation devalues *the poor's* savings!"
b. In the short term, that campaign raised awareness of the needs *of the poor*.
c. Tell her why gardening is important to you, how it feels like a touch *of the holy.*

This is not very surprising since the genitive *'s* is typically (but not exclusively) associated with animate referents and the *of*-construction is preferred for non-human/non-animate

entities (Cambridge Dictionary 2024). For example, *the color of the paint* versus *the paint's color* and *the woman's daughter* versus *the daughter of the woman*. Though both phrases are grammatically and syntactically acceptable, the prepositional phrase is more closely associated with the inanimate object *paint* while the *'s* is more closely associated with the animate *woman.* Fawcett (2000: 212) describes the use of *'s* genitive as the 'genitive cluster' (genclr) which consists of a possessor (po) element that is typically a nominal group and the genitive (g) element that is always filled by *'s*. Although seemingly 'small', it is only a single morpheme after all, the genitive element functions as a preposition. Fawcett gives the example of *the dog's back legs* versus *the back legs of the dog.* In the former, the genitive element is a 'relator' to the whole nominal group and expresses general possession including part-whole relationships and ownership. In accordance with the Cardiff Grammar, the *of*-construction is analyzed like any other nominal group with a selector (v) element.

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the two constructions of possessives in the HC.

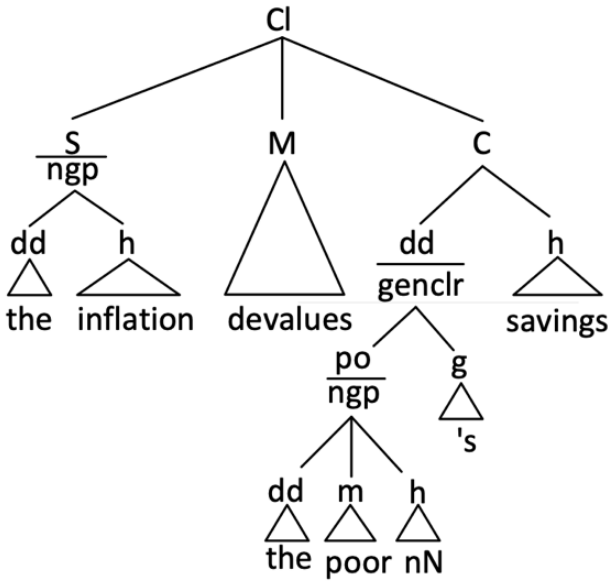

Fig. 8 *Syntax tree of the clause* The inflation devalues the poor nN's savings.

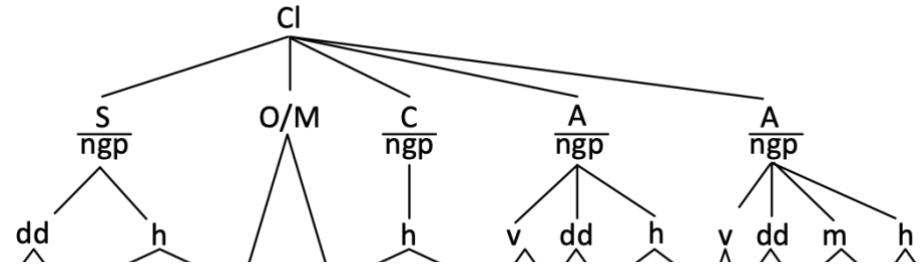

Fig. 9 *Syntax tree of the clause* That campaign raised awareness of the needs of the poor nN.

3.3.4. (Semi)fixed phrases and meanings

With many of the high-frequency items, *the* + ADJ + nN constructions are part of a more-or-less fixed expression. Such is the case with, for example, *the worst*, which is seen overwhelmingly in *if*- and *when*-clauses (in the iWeb, *should*-clauses are also frequent) such as in *What if the worst happens?* (COCA). Others are deeply seated in expressions, such as *the tough* in *when the going gets tough, the tough get going* which accounts for 33 of 65 instances in the COCA or *the toughest of the tough*, which has two HCs, which accounts for 70 percent of instances in the COCA.

Another form of fixedness is the occurrence with a certain verb. This is, for instance, seen with *the unthinkable* which is followed by *to happen* in 86 percent of a random sample of 100 AC instances. Similarly, *the worst* overwhelmingly occurs with *to happen* and *to come* (92.85 percent). Moreover, the close bond between an adjective and the verb that collocates with it can express a widely accepted concept. For example, *the strong* is followed by *to survive* in 30 percent of the COCA sample. From this, we can assume that some usages of the HC and the AC have become so fixed that their form and function has been solidified through very frequent use over time.

Curiously, some adjectives in the HC are not only closely linked with certain verbs, but also exhibit a preference in syntax. To definitively establish a pattern an extensive look at frequencies would be needed, yet briefly remarking on this observation indicates the possiblility. Consider *the blind* in example (13), where in each of the examples it is used as a complement in a *for*- or *of*- clause.

(13) a. Earlier this month, an advocate for *the blind* took to The LA Times to bemoan how Alec Baldwin was cast… (iWeb)
b. Service dogs for *the blind* tend to be labs. (iWeb)
c. Although less vocal about it than the Federation, the American Council of *the Blind* supported the emphasis on Braille literacy.

Another pattern is the tendency for HCs to occur in juxtaposition of opposites. The common phrase '*the rich* [get] *richer and the poor* [get] *poorer'* is an excellent example of this. Some variant of this occurs in 10 percent of the *the poor* sample and in 18 percent of the *the rich*

sample. This direct juxtaposition of antonyms, of which one is more positive than the other, highlights the disparity between the two. Likewise, *the strong* occurs frequently in comparison to *the weak*. Unsurprisingly, *the strong* always stands in a superior position both negatively as in (14a) and positively as in (14b).

(14) a. But the first truth is that *the strong* devour *the weak*, so let us feed upon people… (iWeb).
b. Was that *the strong* protecting *the weak*?

Furthermore, *the strong* frequently occurs (12 percent in the sample) with verbs associated with force and/or violence such as *crush, destroy, and tread* in the COCA.

Finally, the specific meanings of adjectives in HCs and ACs is also noteworthy and indicate a semantic use different from that of the adjective in attributive position of an overt noun (or anaphoric ellipsis). For instance, *the dead* is a fairly frequent HC in the COCA with a meaning distinctly different from anaphoric *the dead.* In anaphoric use, *the dead* refers to a sub-group of a specified group of people, for instance a group of people involved in a natural disaster. Example (11a) shows this use. In the HC it bears a different reading, namely that of referring to a reanimated corpse. Compare (15a) and (15b) below.

(15) a. *The dead* included two anchors for state-run radio Radio Mogadishu […].
b. *The dead* climbed up from the ground, shivering and shouting in their new skins.

The use in the HC like in (15b) also imbues a non-conscious participant with the ability to perform active processes like *climbed up*, *shivering,* and *shouting.* This example is also a clear demonstration as to why insertion of a lexical noun is very problematic: the typically suggested noun *people* is not viable here because *dead people* does not trigger the meaning 'reanimated corpse' but of 'deceased human' like the anaphoric use does. This notwithstanding, *the dead* in the HC can, at times, express the meaning of 'deceased people' (rather than 'reanimated corpse'), particularly when the Main Verb is acting upon them (however, this is not the only case in which the HC expresses this meaning). This is the case in (16) where both *the dead* and *the living* are HCs.

(16) Do not pity *the dead*, Harry. Pity *the living* […] (Rowling 2007: 590).

As a last remark on *the dead,* it is interesting that its opposite *un-* form *undead* is understood the same way as (11b). This alternative can also trigger the 'reanimated corpse' reading in cases where *the dead* is read anaphorically, like in (15a). In this example, *the undead included two anchors…* is, indeed, understood as 'reanimated corpse'; however, this remains an anaphoric reference.

3.3.5. Abstract Constructions

As briefly explained in section 2.4, the Abstract Construction is similar to the Human Construction in that they share many surface features. However, as summarized by Wu (2020: 144-150), there are some peculiarities that separate the AC from the HC. First, a possessive pronoun, which is possible in a limited capacity in the HC, is not possible at all in the AC. Second, the AC does not necessarily have a strictly plural reading; quite the opposite is true, the AC always signals a singular reading (as far as the data used in this thesis shows). And third, in the AC it is not always clear what noun could be inferred, that is, what could be a possible (real-world) referent; therefore, an argument for *one*-insertion, or similarly, inserting *thing* as the noun, is not sustainable (Wu 2020: 146-147).

I posit that the AC is frequently used at times when a concept as a whole is not recognizable and/or (at least cognitively) categorizable and thus inexpressible in an overt noun. This differs from concepts expressed by abstract nouns in that it lacks any imaginable referent; in other words, abstract concepts denoted by abstract nouns such as *confidence, democracy, opportunity, honor,* and *deceit* still communicate known concepts whereas the nN in an AC is the expression of no identifiable concept at all.

Consider examples (17a) and (17b).

(17) a. Indeed, for Freud, *the unconscious* itself totally lacks imagination… (example taken from Wu 2020: 146)

b. He went from *the extremely sublime* to *the extremely ridiculous* (Quirk et al. 1985: 424).

Can we readily insert a noun with confidence that it denoted the "correct" referent? In (17a), it is possible to perhaps infer pragmatically a noun akin to *mind* based on already-existing knowledge of Freud's theories. (17b) proves to be an even more intangible concept. Moreover, there is hardly a suitable noun which expresses the same concept that could be inserted. Meaning must, again, be based on pre-existing knowledge and pragmatic markers. What can be derived from syntactic information is that the two ideas, *the extremely sublime* and *the extremely ridiculous*, stand in opposition to one another as this is indicated by the metaphorical extension of *went* which suggests moving from one place to another.

Another example of this which I encountered is cases of adjectives expressing religion and/or spirituality. Particularly the adjective *divine* exemplifies this. Consider example (18):

(18) a. When it comes to the fearless life, *the divine* gives nothing freely... (iWeb)
b. […] so never will I reject that *the Divine* interacts with us. (iWeb)

Instances of *the divine* occur especially in the context of Christianity but are not restricted to it. In any case, it is understood to refer to an entity (a grammatical Thing and functional referent) imbued with the quality of divinity. The question '*the divine what*'? edges from the linguistic into the realm of the philosophical. This reiterates the assertion that the AC is often chosen to express concepts that are, in a way, 'un-nameable'. What can be said with certainty, however, is that a lexical noun insertion is not reliably possible; a pro-form can also not be considered appropriate on the grounds of its broader semantic implications.[7]

Last but not least, it seems that there are two types of abstract referent in the AC. Wu (2020: 151) points out that "the notion of 'abstractness' is not well defined" and posits that there is an "abstract non-human entity" and an "abstract concept" reading, which may intersect (at times, even with a human reading). He (2020: 152) provides the following corpus examples in which (19a) has an entity reading and (19b) has a concept reading. Interestingly, the chosen concept reading example includes a possessive determiner which should not be available for use in ACs. This indicates that there are restricted exceptions to this assertion and further analysis beyond the scope of this paper is needed to identify these.

[7] In some belief systems, there is the concept of the "Divine One". I do not take this instance into consideration as it functions like a name (hence, the capitals).

(19) a. I don't even dare to write what *the best* and the worst I can expect is.

b. She did *her best* to make me feel that when we were all together we made a genuine threesome, not a twosome plus a member of the awkward squad.

3.3.6. Linguistic tests

Several linguistic tests are useful to determine category membership as well as constituency of items and groups. Following Keizer's (2007: 21) word of caution regarding criteria and linguistic tests, I use a "cluster approach", selecting several tests that, used together, aid in identifying the prototypicality of items/constructions and in determining what parts of a clause 'go together'.

The first, a general category membership test, tests the "adjective-ness" and/or "noun-ness" of an adjective (in general and in use in a HC/AC). Particularly insightful is the gradeability and/or modification test, which provides valuable information about what class of group an item falls into. The second and third are substitution tests which also give some indication of 1) what (types of) items 'can go instead of' (category membership) and 2) which items must stick together (constituency).

In determining "adjective-ness", one test that is available is a gradeability and/or intensification test. If intensification is indeed possible, it indicates that the word cannot be a noun. Of course, such a test can only be done with adjectives that are inherently more-or-less gradable. In other words, an adjective such as *wooden* is not a good candidate for a gradeability test (although it can be intensified with an adverbial modifier; for example, *the completely wooden house*). However, there are some adjectives that, on a logical basis, should not be gradable but are commonly graded nonetheless, such as *the worst,* which already expresses the superlative and thus should not be able to be graded, but often is, such as in example (20), which is taken from the COCA.

(20) Still, say *the [very] worst* happens -- you buy a home and then immediately lose your job.

Many adjectives in the AC and HC can be readily intensified and/or modified. *Rich* is frequently intensified by a variety of (degree) modifiers including *very, ultra,* and *newly.* Other

synonyms for *very* are also grammatically and semantically possible: *awfully*, *exceedingly*, *excessively*, and *extraordinarily* are only a few examples. This type of modification is also possible with *poor*. Accounted for in the corpus are, amongst others, *very* and *extremely.*

Two substitution tests provide more insight into both membership and constituency. First, in (16a), there is the lexical substitution test in which a group, here a noun group, is substituted by an alternative. Second, there is the '*pro* test' in which a noun (group) is substituted by its correct pronoun. Both are seen in example (21).

(21) a. The beggars are starving – *The poor* are starving.
b. The poor are starving – *They* are starving.
c. Catholic churchgoers worship the trinity – *They* worship *the divine.*

Example (21a) shows that the noun group *The beggars* in the S can be substituted by the HC *the poor;* furthermore, (21b) shows that the HC *the poor* can be substituted with the pronoun *they*. (21c) shows a standard noun group (which is composed of the modifier *Catholic* and the head *churchgoers*) filling the S which substituted by its correct pronoun *They;* the HC *the divine* substitutes the standard noun group and composed of a deictic determiner *the* and the apex *divine*.

Applying these tests to the HC (*the* poor) and AC (*the divine*) reveals that HCs and ACs typically function like noun groups because they allow for substitution with either a pronoun or a different noun group. However, this does not imply that that the adjectives used in the HC and AC are inherently more noun-like.

The pronoun substitution test is also helpful in establishing constituency as the pronoun can only replace a full noun group (i.e., constituent). In (21c), *they* substitutes the constituent *Catholic churchgoers* which cannot be split up into **Catholic they.* Similarly, the determiner *the* cannot be separated from the head *trinity* as in **the it* and therefore builds one constituent. This may be a very simple example but can be useful in more complex constructions as well.

3.4. Syntactic and semantic analyses after Cardiff Grammar

The in-depth analyses of the HC and the AC in this chapter follow the guidelines set forth by the Cardiff Grammar (Fawcett 2000) and are based on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2. They are also informed by the preliminary findings outlined in section 3.3. Each HC or AC is first analyzed on the level of grammar and then on the level of meaning.

Seeing that language is all about meaning, the semantic analyses in this section are the most significant section of this paper. After establishing the necessary grammatical preconditions of each construction, the deeper meaning level that motivates these functional elements can finally be addressed.

It is never an easy task for a linguist to analyze language on the level of meaning without some degree of bias from their own subjective experiences and opinions; nevertheless, by adhering to the guidelines for semantic analysis set forth by the Cardiff Grammar it is possible to explore levels of meaning in a largely reliable way. In order to stay within the scope of this paper, the three most important strands of meaning, namely the experiential, interpersonal, and thematic, of a variety of clauses containing HCs and ACs are analyzed. This also makes it possible to pay attention to the details within these three crucial strands without foregoing the necessity to include more than one extended example.

3.4.1 The dead

To begin with, consider the simple sentence made of a singular clause *The dead came at me* (COCA) in which the elements of the clause are quite easily identified. When applying the MOOD test set forth by Fawcett (2008: 63-71; 133-135), which turns the clause into the POLARITY SEEKER *Do the dead come at me?,* the Subject is identifiable as *the dead* because it directly follows *Do* and precedes the process (which is the position the S occupies in the MOOD test). Furthermore, the necessity to use *do* in order to create the POLARITY SEEKER

indicates that the O and M are conflated. Knowing this we can identify *at me* as the C of the directional process.[8]

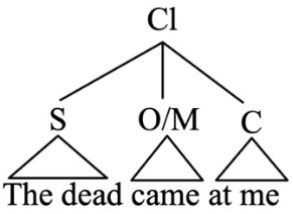

Fig. 9 *Basic syntax tree of* The dead came at me.

However, it quickly becomes apparent that there are complications in determining what unit fills the clause element S, and what group elements this unit is composed of. Should the S, *the dead*, be considered a singular nominal group made of only a d and m? This would imply that the pivotal element, the noun (said to function as Head in other theories) which expresses the cultural classification of the real-world referent per se, is missing, which is an unlikely if not impossible solution. On the other hand, could it be that the S in this clause consists of only the quality group *the dead* where *the* is a qld (quality group deictic) and *dead* the a (apex)? This is also very unlikely for the simple reason that the descriptor of the referent, *dead*, cannot perform the Process *came*. This is also reflected by the COCA in which all instances of the adjective *dead* followed by *came* and *come* are instances of either a HC or an anaphoric empty noun. Conversion of the adjective to a noun has already been ruled out for reasons reiterated throughout this thesis. For these reasons, it seems that the S *the dead* must be part of a nominal group wherein a non-expressed linguistic element categorizing a referent is present as 'invisible' head of the ngp while the (apex of the) modifier alone bears the full meaning of the group. Consequently, there is a dissonance between what is expected and what is syntactically expressed.

Based on the process expounding the O/M, *came*, it can be concluded that this clause needs two PRs because the verb *come* requires someone/something (PR_1) *coming to* someone/something/somewhere (PR_2). This C is expounded by the pronoun *(at) me* which has the PR of Affected (Af). Thus, the first PR, the Agent (Ag), must be *The dead*. This is simple to test using a pronoun substitution test: when replaced with *They*, it is inarguably functioning as the Ag. We must not forget, however, that 1) a substitution test does not produce a

[8] Other SFGs regard at me as Adjunct, but because the Cardiff Grammar views this to be predicted by the Process of coming, it is here treated as a Participant in the Process (Fawcett 2008: 142).

semantically equivalent expression and 2) that only because it can be substituted by a (pro)noun, the adjective does not magically transform into a noun.

An analysis of these structures as containing an empty noun, after Panagiotidis (2003: 381-432) who proposes a wholly non-semantic grammatical noun which "denote[s] no concept" (2003: 416), is attractive as an alternative to other theories such as the ones dismissed above. This can also be incorporated into the scheme of filling, exponence, and componence. In figure 11 below it is shown that the unit of **Clause** is **composed** of the **Elements** S, O, M, and C. The S and the C are, in turn, **filled** by the units **ngp** and **pgp**, respectively**.** The remaining Element O/M is directly **expounded** by the item ***came*.** The units ngp and pgp are **composed** of a **determiner**, **modifier**, and **head** and a **preposition** and its **completive**, respectively. The modifier in the ngp is **filled** by a **qlgp** which is **composed** of an **apex**. The **completive** of the prepositional group is **filled** by a **ngp composed** of a **head**. Finally, these elements are **expounded** by the items ***the dead nN*** *and* ***at me***.

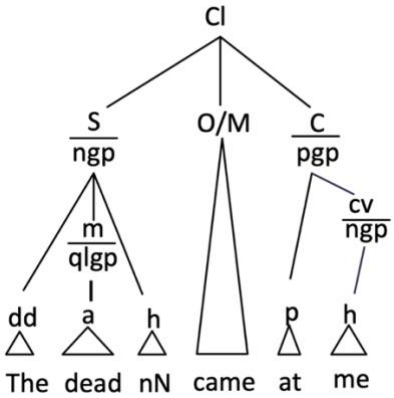

Fig. 10 *Syntax tree of the dead came at me showing further levels.*

This very simple example shows that working with the assumption of non-anaphoric empty noun can enable all functional and grammatical 'slots' to be appropriately filled by the units that are syntactically expected while keeping the unique meaning elicited by the HC intact (that is, one of generic and plural reference of which the adjective is the descriptor).

It also accounts for this type of nN differing from other postulations of 'empty nouns' (ø) in the wider sense: the nN here is part of a natural category of nouns which denote a 'meaningless' concept (Panagiotidis 2003: 48). That is not to say that there is no referent at all; simply, that the (real-world) referent per se is of less concern than its descriptor and because of this it does

not need a noun expressing it. This referent can be conceptualized as being a member (or members) of **the class of Thing considered (x)** where x is, of course, the adjective on the grammatical level and the descriptor (of the referent) on the functional level.

It is imperative to mention that the textual realization which is embodied by this system does not dictate its semantics. Quite the opposite is true: the meaning is always that which is critical, and lexicogrammar is in its service. It is because of this that 1) this postulation of a grammatical nN devoid of semantic meaning must be challenged and tested, and 2) that close attention must be paid to a wide variety of (possible) Human and Abstract Constructions in the hope of identifying the functional motivation of this meaning choice.

3.5.2 The elderly

In the sentence *That's where the elderly die most often* (COCA), the HC occurring in the independent clause *the elderly die most often* is similar to the previous example, with the exception that it contains an Adjunct instead of a Complement. The syntax tree below shows the basic elements of the clause. This can be verified by applying the MOOD test put forth by Fawcett (2008: 63-71; 133-135). In short, by changing the clause into a POLARITY SEEKER we can identify the Subject and the Operator with ease. The need to use *do* to change the clause into a POLARITY SEEKER indicates that the O and M are conflated in the original clause. Thus, the S O/M order which indicates an information giver of the original clause is shown and is visualized in figure 12.

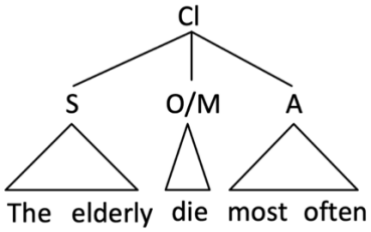

Fig. 11 *A simple syntax tree of* The elderly die most often.

We can ascertain that *the elderly* is a PR occurring as the Subject as the process *die* requires it. In other words, the process can be regarded as expecting that *someone/something dies* and thus has one required PR. As *most often* is an Adjunct it fills a Circumstantial Role.

If the referent that is attributed the quality of *elderliness* is not knowable, how is the fact that we can understand this noun group as (semantically) complete be reconciled? I propose that

substituting the 'definition' of what the quality group expresses about the referent, that is, being 'a member (or members) of **the class of Thing considered (x)'** can give us insight into a solution. In this example, this results in the clause *Members of the class of Thing considered elderly die most often.* Certainly, this is not a suitable substitution for actual language use, but it does hint at a possible way how we can intuitively understand an 'incomplete' nominal group. Furthermore, the presence of the determiner *the* should be taken into consideration and is therefore examined further in section 3.3.2.

Taking this understanding of the nominal group a step further, we can break down *Members of the class of Things considered elderly* into its own analysis in figure 13. The complex nominal group can be read as the element **Subject** is **filled** by a **nominal group** which is **composed** of a **head filled** by the item ***Members*** and several **qualifiers**, the first of which is filled by a **nominal group** composed of a **selector** expounded by the item ***of***, a **deictic determiner** expounded by ***the***, and a **head** expounded by ***class;*** the second qualifier is also filled by a nominal group composed of a **selector** expounded by ***of*** and a **head** expounded by ***Thing*** which has its own qualifier expounded by ***considered***; the final modifier is filled by a **quality group** with the apex expounded by ***elderly***.

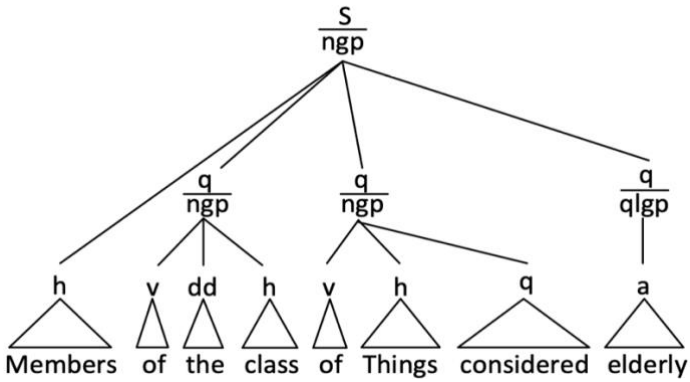

Fig. 12 *Syntax tree of the ngp* The members of the c ss of Things considered elderly

Disregarding Halliday's understanding of Head and instead accepting Fawcett's term 'pivotal element', it is clear that in a nominal group the 'main' noun is the pivotal element, and the remaining elements are secondary. In other words, *of the class of Thing considered elderly* are qualifying elements of *Members*; or, if considered functionally, *of the class of Thing considered elderly* express descriptors of the referent and *Members* expresses the cultural classification per se. As such, dropping the secondary items in the nominal group still produces the

grammatical sentence *Members die most often.* On the level of meaning (and information structure), this is problematic.

Intuitively, one might argue that *elderly* is the most meaningful bit of information, without which there is little semantic content being communicated. One option is to shift the adjective to the front of the nominal group, making it a modifier rather than a qualifier, in order to bring it in closer relation to the head. However, *elderly members [of the class of Thing]* still has the head *members* as its pivotal element; in addition, it affects the generic reference in the clause *The elderly members [of the class of Thing] die most often.*

So, then, *elderly* must somehow be 'elevated' to the pivotal element of the group to reflect its communicative and semantic importance. Is it tenable to omit the syntactic expression of an expected pivotal element (here, the h in a ngp) for another to take on its semantic weight so that the intended meaning and emphasis comes to the forefront? Since *elderly* has not been converted to a noun and has no antecedent information which could lead to a typical empty noun, it can be argued that the nominal group with the modifier *elderly* stays intact with the only change being that the head element is expounded by a covert item expressing a referent lacking meaningful content, in other words, with the proposed nN. This leaves only the adjective to carry meaning, effectively making it the pivotal element. In addition, considering the adjective as pivotal element in this way reiterates the inability to insert a lexical noun since this would revert the adjective to a modifier again. In other words, a lexical noun such as *people* would then again become the pivotal element of the nominal group.

With the retention of an expected element of the ngp, the dd *the*, and the semantically-motivated 'elevation' of the adjective *elderly*, this HC can fill the function of S and simultaneously communicate meaning effectively and efficiently.

Figure 14 shows the syntax tree of the clause in accordance with the described criteria and explanation.

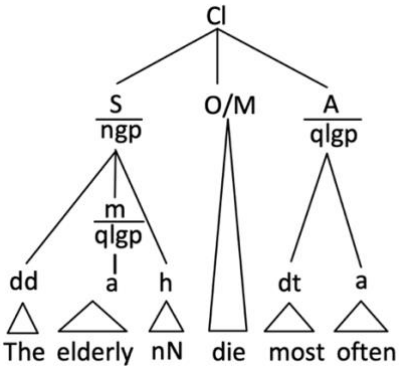

Fig. 13 *Syntax tree of* The elderly die most often

3.5.3 The hopeful and the hopefuls

As repeatedly asserted in this thesis, the use of adjectives in the HC and AC cannot be accounted for by the argument of noun conversion. However, there are cases in which conversion has indeed taken place. One such example is *hopeful.* The fact that it can appear in the plural already points to a difference to adjectives used in the HC and AC. In addition, *hopeful* as noun has its own dictionary entry (Merriam-Webster, Collins, and others).

At the same time, there is *the hopeful* which exists in parallel. Unlike the fully converted *hopefuls, hopeful* does not have its own dictionary entry as noun, but it does appear as a sub-definition of the adjective with the note that it appears in colloquial use (OED). Based on this, it can be inferred that the use of *hopeful* as in (22a) has not been (fully) converted like *hopefuls* in (22b). Since *hopefuls* is a noun, the second example is, of course, not a HC; whether the first example is a HC or a (partially) converted noun needs to be examined.

(22) a. The curious and the *hopeful* haunted the doorway of his studio.

b. They were social events where the members had a chance to get acquainted with the *hopefuls*.

There are several steps to take in order to establish whether (22a) is a true HC. First, the features of adjectives need to be considered: a superlative is possible (*the most hopeful*) as is an intensifier (*the very hopeful)* and modification by an adverb (*the foolishly hopeful*). This differs from *hopefuls* which does not have a comparative or superlative, cannot be intensified, and

cannot be modified by an adverb. Second, the juxtaposition of a second HC, *the curious*, suggests a generic and plural reading of *the hopeful* as the structure of the clause expresses a similarity of the two adjectives, namely the reading as HC. This is evidence that it is not the singular of the noun *hopefuls* but rather describes members of a class of Thing considered hopeful (that is, *hopeful* is descriptive of the real-world referent that expresses the cultural/social classification which is, in turn, expressed by a noun that is, in this case, not overt) which differs from the descriptive property of a noun that expresses the class of Thing per se (Fawcett 2000: 216). Linking the HC *the curious* and a singular nominalized adjective reading of *the hopeful* would create a construction that is discordant in meaning which is detrimental not only for communicative purposes but also probabilistically less likely (that is, the probability of traveling through system networks in such a way is low, although not impossible). To put it simply, it would be confusing to use two constructions that look identical, that, is they both appear to be HCs, but intend one to be read as a singular converted noun, particularly because this use has a distinct meaning from *hopeful* in a HC. By excluding the first HC *the curious,* a much vaguer reading of *the hopeful* would result and the probability of a reading as the singular of the noun *hopefuls* would become just as likely.

Yet, substitution of *hopeful* for *hopefuls* in (22b) reveals that *the hopeful* can indeed function like *hopefuls,* that is, as a (partly) converted noun, simply expressing its singular form while retaining a specific reading. In this use it refers to a specific, singular "aspirant" (Merriam-Webster: sense 2) rather than an undefined number of those who are "full of hope" (Merriam-Webster: sense 1.1) like in (22a). Thus, it can be argued that on the one hand *the hopeful* retains the features expected of the quality group (that is, adjectival features) and functions as a HC, but on the other hand it expresses the singular of the noun *hopefuls*.

Accordingly, *the hopeful* is analyzed like other HCs when expressing its functions as descriptor of a referent (that is, as adjective) and like a nominal group when expressing the singular of the specific plural noun *hopefuls.*

Because the denotational contribution of the head in the nominal group expressing the referent as such is unimportant in communicating the semantic meaning of the nominal group, the choice of the null noun underscores the significance of the quality *hopeful* over that of the empty concept ø. This is visualized in figure 15.

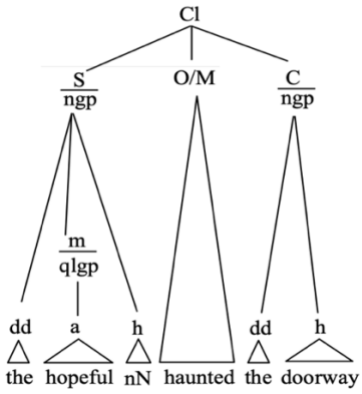

Fig. 14 *Syntax tree of* The hopeful nN haunted the doorway

3.5.4. Past participles

Past participles are an interesting case because there is an unmistakable gradation of those used in the HC and others that have been lexicalized as nouns. Consider the past participles used in example (23). *Accused* in (23a) and *deceased* in (23b) have been lexicalized as nouns, whereas *depressed* in (23c) and *disenfranchised* in (23d) are adjectives used in HCs. This difference can be seen in the fact that *accused* and *deceased* are not generic nor plural, that is, they refer to a specific individual (although they may be used for plural reference in which case a specific set is referred to). Furthermore, these have their own dictionary entries in, for example, the Oxford English Dictionary, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, and the Collins Dictionary. In contrast, *depressed* and *disenfranchised* have neither a dictionary entry as noun nor do they refer to a specific set, that is, both adjectives retain the generic and plural readings in the HC.

(23) a. Let the record show that *the accused* pleads not guilty.

b. Caleb must look at *the deceased*.

c. *The depressed* become overly biased to remember bad things.

d. The theme of helping *the disenfranchised* dominated the weekend gathering […]

The two different types of past participles can also be tested in how far adjectival features are present. A telling characteristic to test here is the ability to be graded/intensified and whether adverbs can be used to modify the adjective. Although both sets of past participles can take adverbs as modifiers—for example, *wrongly accused*, *recently deceased* and *clinically depressed*, *previously disenfranchised* (all examples from the COCA)—only those occurring

in the HC are able to be intensified/graded, such as in *most depressed* and *severely depressed.*[9] This ability of *the depressed* to be intensified in such a way sets it apart from the other past participles which could be argued to be modifiers of the base verb.

A syntactic tree analysis of the past participle used in a HC can be done in the same way as with any other adjective. Figures 16 and 18 show the syntactic analyses of *The depressed become overly biased to remember bad things* and *The theme of helping the disenfranchised dominated the weekend gathering*, and figures 17 and 19 show the semantic three-strand analyses.

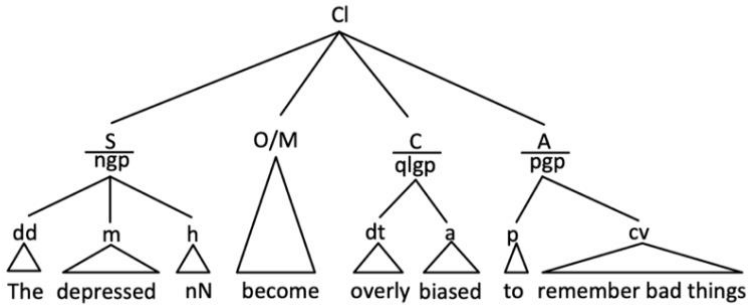

Fig. 15 *Syntax tree* of The depressed become overly biased to remember bad things

The depressed [nN] become overly biased to remember bad things.

Ex.	Agent	Process	Attribute	Circumstance
Int.	Subject	Main Verb and Operator	Complement	Adjunct
	Information giver			
Text	Subject Theme			

Fig. 16 *Three strand semantic analysis of The depressed become overly biased to remember bad things.*

[9] There is no corpus data showing *the disenfranchised* being intensified or graded; however, intensification or gradeability is tenable, for example, *the completely disenfranchised*.

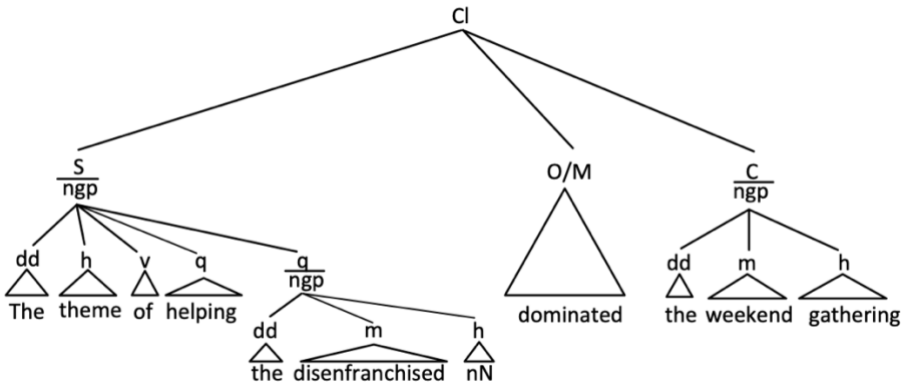

Fig. 17 *Syntax tree of* The theme of helping the disenfranchised nN dominated the weekend gathering

The theme of helping the disenfranchised nN dominated the weekend gathering

Ex.	Phenomenon	Process	Location
Int.	Subject	Main Verb and Operator	Complement
	Information giver		
Text	Subject Theme		

Fig. 18 *Three strand analysis of* The theme of helping the disenfranchised nN dominated the weekend gathering

An interesting contrasting example of *the depressed* is *That holds true for everyone but especially for the depressed.* This use differs from the previous example because it is an narrowing of a reference set *everyone* and is therefore a unique example of an HC. In other words, *the depressed* specifies a generic subgroup of the entity denoted by *everyone*; that is, it retains a generic reference to the entire category of *members of the class of Thing considered depressed.* When compared to the substitutions in example (24) which communicate reference to a specific subset, it can be seen that in the original clause *the depressed* has a lesser link to *everyone* and can therefore be read as more generic than its counterparts.

(24) a. That holds true for everyone but especially for *the depressed*.
b. That holds true for *everyone* but especially for *the depressed ones*.
c. That holds true for *(all) people* but especially for *the depressed people*.

Important here is that (24b) and (24c) indicate a specific subset of the members of the Thing (in CG it can also be conceptualized as the real-world referent) denotated by *everyone* and (*all) people* whereas in (24a) the nN denotates the Thing (real-world referent) of which *the*

depressed are members. So, while *the depressed* in this clause has somewhat of an anaphoric reference, it also retains some features of the HC.

Furthermore, present participles, for example *the living* and *the dying*, also occur but seem to be much more infrequent (COCA). In the first one hundred hits for *the _v?g* in the COCA, the only present participle functioning as a HC is *the departing*, such as in example (25). Even within the instances of *the departing*, the majority are used as modifying element of an over noun in a nominal group.

(25) *The departing* and their loved ones had complete privacy from the man in his slightly shabby jumpsuit uniform.

For these reasons it is evident that both past and present participles may function as HCs. Nevertheless, great care must be taken when identifying these as many (for example, *the accused*) are indeed conversions with distinct dictionary definitions.

3.5.5 Abstract Constructions: the beautiful and the good

As previously discussed, the AC, though superficially equivalent to the HC on the syntactic level at first glance, exhibits several qualities distinct from its counterpart.

This is exemplified by *With the beautiful the good arrives* (COCA), shown in figure 20. This clause is especially notable because of its Marked PR Theme which differs from the other examples in this thesis and has a lower probability of occurring in general.

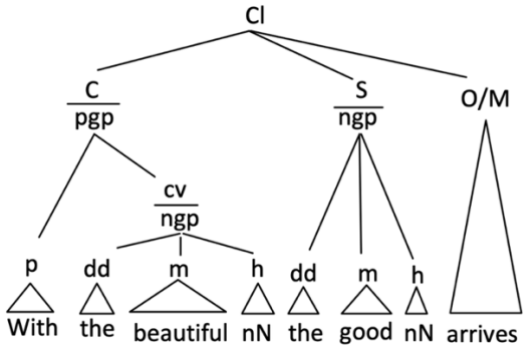

Fig. 20 *Syntax tree of* With the beautiful nN the good nN arrives

Furthermore, it contains a semantic and syntactic feature to which attention must be paid: both the S and C are in the form *the* ADJ Ø and both could function as a HC were it not for the verb indicating a singular S. In other words, the verb *arrives* indicates a singular reading of *the good* and thus, must be an AC. *The beautiful* could still have a plural reading; however, this, that is the presence of an AC directly following or preceding a HC, creates a semantic ambiguity not beneficial for effective communication. This issue will be expounded presently.

On the grammatical level, the definite determiner and need for a nominal group creates the expectation of a h filled by a noun following the adjectives *good* and *beautiful* which is, however, flouted once again (actually, twice). A simple pronoun substitution test, *It arrives with it*, shows this to be true. Furthermore, a lexical substitution test affirms the necessity of a singular noun to replace *the good* as example 26 shows. (26a) cannot occur as the verb does not agree with the noun/nominal group. In (26b), the verb agreement is correct but *the (good) person* is a singular and thus cannot take the place of a plural construction. Finally, for the purpose of this test, substituting ø in (26c) and (26d) with a singular abstract lexical noun is grammatically correct and retains the plural and generic reading (keeping in mind that, semantically, insertion of a lexical noun is not plausible in ACs as well as in HCs).

(26) a. *With the (beautiful) people the (good) people arrives.
b. With the beautiful people the good person arrives.
c. With the beautiful stuff/entity the good stuff/entity arrives.
d. With the things/entities the good stuff/entity arrives.

Though *the beautiful* and *the good* share the features discussed, there is a difference in which type of group of words they belong to, or, in other words, in the "noun-ness" and "adjective-ness" they have. In fact, *good* has been converted to an abstract noun which is seen when surveying the characteristics of nouns and the characteristics of adjectives. It has all the features of an adjective (Pullum & Huddleston 2002: 525-595) but also some of nouns; the abstract noun *good* can be used in the plural form *goods* (referring to commodities), cannot be modified by adverbs, and can only occur in nominal positions. Furthermore, a look at the dictionary (OED) reveals that the entry of *good* as a noun has a much wider range of application than *beautiful* as a noun, which is defined only as HC and AC. Lastly, the deletion test and movement tests in example (27) corroborate the finding that *good* has become a lexicalized

abstract noun and *beautiful* has not.[10] However, one sub-definition in the OED points out a "chiefly philosophical" meaning occurring in combination with *the* reading "in Platonic philosophy: *spec*. the abstract ideal of goodness, in which real things participate in being good, and which underlies knowledge and truth in the intelligible world" ("good", n., sense II.4.a.ii.). In this sense, *good* can be seen as equal to other ACs like *the beautiful,* indicating that it retains its function as adjective within the construction *the* + adjective + nN instead of taking on the role of a converted abstract noun. Without the determiner, *good* loses this quality of ACs (and does not fit the cited definition anymore).

(27) a. ?With beautiful, good arrives.
b. With the beautiful good arrives.
c. ?Good arrives with beautiful.
d. Good arrives with the beautiful.

This last test shows that *the good,* with a generic and plural abstract reference, may occur sans determiner syntactically whereas *beautiful* cannot. In other words, it can be said that *the + good + ø* (determiner + modifier + head) can lose the determiner, but thus becomes a typical nominal construction made up of only the head. Naturally, this means that there is a discrete semantic use of *the good* versus *good* (similar to *the hopeful* versus *the hopefuls).* At any rate, an entire paper could be dedicated to this issue alone and is far beyond the scope of this thesis. Key here is that the use of *good* in the clause *With the beautiful the good arrives* can be considered an AC despite its parallel existence as converted noun.

Semantically, this clause has several interesting features. Consider Figure 20 below:

	With the beautiful	the good	arrives.
Ex.	Affected	Agent	Process
Int.	Complement	Subject	Main Verb and Operator
	Information giver		
Text	Marked PR Theme		

Fig. 21 *A three strand semantic analysis of* With the beautiful the good arrives.

[10] The grammaticality judgements are based on the COCA in which *good* without a determiner nor noun occurred only as anaphora in the examined sample.

Immediately noticeable is the fronting of the prepositional group *With the beautiful* filling the Complement clause element. More specifically, this uses the Marked PR Theme (in contrast to other examples until now which have all had the Subject Theme) in the THEME system network. Despite a rather limited body of research on the Performer's intention, Fawcett (2007: no page number available) suggests "that, in many uses of this construction - including many that involve parallelism and contrast - the full explanation involves recognizing that some sort of **affective** response to the event by the Performer is involved - either overtly or covertly" [original emphasis] and that "what is often perceived as a disruption of the prescribed syntactic norms may perhaps be seen as a marker of the strength of the emotion that the Performer is experiencing." Although the Process *arrives* is not a 'desiderative' one, which is often associated with the Marked-PR Theme, it expresses a degree of emotionality that the Subject Theme would not express. Instead of marking a parallelism or contrast of (two) clauses, I propose that the C S M order in this example highlights the relation between *the beautiful* and *the good.* In other words, it marks the 'togetherness' of the two. This strengthens the implication that the location of *the good* is contingent on *the beautiful*, wherever that may be.

The process *to arrive* requires two PRs, one of which is often covert. The first PR is the something that is 'doing' the arriving (the Agent) and the second is where the arriving is happening (the Location). It is the latter of these that is frequently left unstated but is nonetheless there; whatever the clause, if there is no Location overtly expressed the question is 'where?'. Even in *With the beautiful the good arrives* there is a hidden 'where it arrives', probably assumed to be 'here', wherever and in whatever scope that may be.
The S and PR_1 t*he good* is the described but unstated referent which is performing the process *arrives* while PR_2 is the implied 'where' that the process necessitates. *With the beautiful* fulfills an additional PR expressing with whom PR_1 is arriving. What the referents of these two are is, as expected, elusive. That is to say, only the descriptors of the members of the class of Thing (that is, the referent) considered beautiful/good are of any importance in the relationship described by the process.

Attempting to construct the 'story' that the clause tells is somewhat more difficult than in HCs because the concepts *the good* and *the beautiful* are so removed from an imaginable referent. In fact, this clause exemplifies why propositions of substituting a noun like 'stuff' is impossible: *good stuff* and *beautiful stuff* impose much too much semantic information and the intended meaning is nearly completely lost. The clause is a statement of believed-to-be factual

information, namely that when something ungraspable with the inherent feature of being *beautiful* comes to whatever location is 'here', something ungraspable with the inherent feature of being *good* accompanies it. Even this attempted elucidation of meaning is grasping at straws in attempt to comprehend it. The expression of such is the function singularly of an AC.

3.5.6. The unknown

The two examples of *the unknown* in this section showcase further semantic features of the AC. First, consider the clause *[…,] as if I can touch the unknown* (COCA). Below is the syntax tree and corresponding three-strand semantic analysis.

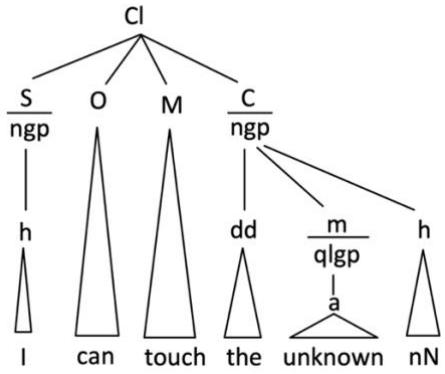

Fig. 22 *Syntax tree of* I can touch the unknown nN

	As if	I	can touch	the unknown nN
Ex.		Actor	Process	Affected
Int.	Adjunct	Subject	Main Verb	Complement
	Information giver			
Text		Subject theme		

Fig. 23 *Three strand analysis* of As if I can touch the unknown nN

Like other examples, *the unknown* plays a vital part in the system networks creating the meaning of this clause. First, the process *touch* requires two PRs which are typically filled by nouns expressing the referents doing and receiving *touch*. Because *touch* is a physical process and therefore indicates an expectation for two Things expressed by nouns, it is conspicuous that one of these, the second PR or 'Affected', is expounded by a nN. The relation *touch* between PR_1 *I* (Ag) and PR_2 nN (Af) is meaningless and thus communicatively flawed. It is

therefore necessary to rely on the adjective *unknown* to provide the necessary semantic material to appropriately fill PR_2 as *unknown nN* (Af). This also aids in establishing the TRANSIVITY system network of the clause. Since the Complement is a necessary component for identifying TRANSIVITY, having established that *unknown nN* is PR_2 indicates that *unknown* is also necessary to appropriately and meaningfully fill the Complement.

The experiential meaning is particularly interesting as the process (M) is, as already stated, one of physical nature and is expected to be incompatible with an abstract such as *unknown,* especially since it lacks any indication of a referent. In the clause, *As if* renders the ability *can touch the unknown* as a hypothetical, if not a literal, possibility. Comparing this to other common ACs in (28a) to (28c), it seems that there is a restriction of the process *(can) touch* to *the unknown.*

(28) a. As if I can touch *the inevitable.*
b. As if I can touch *the ordinary.*
c. As if I can touch *the unexpected.*

Despite all being grammatically correct, semantically (28a) to (28c) are questionable. Like *unknown,* they denote *members of a class of Thing considered inevitable/ordinary/ unexpected.* Yet, they are much more removed from being able to be physically interacted with through touch, even if only hypothetically or metaphorically. It could be suggested that *the unknown* is further down the cline toward noun than the other examples given. However, I reject any such proposition for the reasons discussed in Section 2.4 and Section 3.5.1.

The unique meaningfulness of this particular AC is also demonstrated in the clause [*Lise froze, caught between fear and indecision,] her fear of* <u>*the unknown*</u> *teaming up with the lesson she had learnt* (COCA). The sociocultural connotations of the adjective *unknown* already set a tone of unease, even fear, which stems from the assumed common human dislike of things that we do not know and/or cannot grasp. As such, it is fitting that a meaningless null (unknown) noun follows; it quite literally and visually represents an unknown referent.

Although the AC does not fill a mandatory function as it does in the previous example, it nonetheless carries significant semantic weight. Figure 23 shows a syntactic analysis of *Her fear of the unknown nN teaming up with the lessons I learnt.*

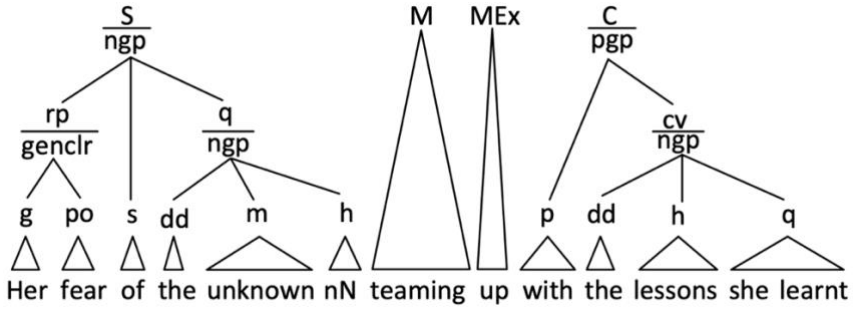

Fig. 24 *Syntax tree of* Her fear of the unknown nN teaming up with the lessons she learnt

The three-strand semantic analysis further dissects this clause.

	her fear of the unknown	teaming up	with the lesson she learnt.
Ex.	Agent	Process	Affected
Int.	Subject	Main Verb + Operator	Complement
	Information giver		
Text	Subject theme		

Fig. 25 *Three strand analysis of* Her fear of the unknown nN teaming up with the lessons she learnt.

First, the process *teaming up* requires two PRs filled here by *(her) fear* (Ag) and *lesson* (Af). This corresponds to the Subject and its mandatory Complement, respectively. It should be noted that only a prepositional group can follow the process of *teaming up* and so the prepositional group *with the lesson (she learnt)* is required. Furthermore, both of the items *fear* and *lesson* are non-conscious entities which have been ascribed a conscious process. The possessive pronoun *her* indicates that, in this case, *fear* is possessed by this individual (human) female as compared to the intent of the deictic determiner *the* which would indicate a more general *fear* applicable to a wider, more general class. Consequently, the referent described by *the unknown* is not only unnamed in general but is also more narrowly defined by what the subject (the possessor of the *fear*) experiences as (the) unknown and/or what is unknown to her.

This clause also exemplifies the inability to insert any noun beside the nN as well as the inability to substitute any other AC (or more generally, any other adjective). Looking at an extended understanding of the intended meaning of this clause shows the functional necessity of this particular AC in conveying its particular message. The clause *her fear of the unknown teaming up with the lesson she had learnt* expresses an ongoing experience of a female conscious entity (human) as an internal process of her distinct fear, which is based in a non-understanding of some entity or concept, being combined with some knowledge gained in a previous happening, very probably negative, and which is bringing about a certain reaction (freezing, as we infer from the preceding clause *Lise froze*). Altering any part of the clause will indeed change the meaning of this, however miniscule. Making a change such as altering the AC and/or inserting or substituting a noun would even cause a significant shift in meaning.

3.5.7. Exceptions: the extreme

Some HCs and ACs deviate from this overarching understanding of the phenomena. One such case is *the extreme.* This AC differs from other examples because it serves a different function, namely one of intensification. In simple terms, *the extreme* functions as an alternate of *extremely*, typically in the phrase *X in/to the extreme*. This becomes especially clear as *the extreme* collocates with a verb or adjective and, since it is introduced by *in* or *to* in the majority of cases, it is most often an Adjunct and thus acts as a Circumstantial Role.

To take that away from them is perilous to the extreme.

Ex.		Process	Affected	
Int.	Carrier	Main Verb + Operator	Attribute	Circumstantial role
	Information giver			
Theme	Subject theme			

Fig. 26 *Three strand analysis of* To take that away from them is perilous to the extreme.

Semantically, it can be said that (*to) the extreme* expresses 'to an incredible amount/degree of X' where X is the preceding adjective or verb. Consequently, it seems to modify an antecedent referent; however, this example shows that such an assumption is not without problems. Because the referent is the real-world counterpart of the "class of Thing" and is typically

expressed by a noun, having *to the extreme* as intensifier of an antecedent adjective is difficult to sustain. If the class of Thing (referent) is redundantly repeated as in an antecedent noun ellipsis it would read as **perilous to the extreme perilous*. This is not always the case, however. In the clause *Operational arrogance at the extreme* (COCA), it is tenable to treat *the extreme* as eliding the noun; *Operational arrogance at the extreme operational arrogance* is, albeit bizarre sounding, plausible. To also be considered is the conventionalization of [*preposition*] *the extreme* as a fixed phrase. These factors show that determining the line between a general noun ellipsis and the AC can be unclear and context-dependent, and that not every construction of the type *the* + ADJ + nN(?) is automatically a HC/AC.

3.5.8. Other MOODS: information seeker and polarity seeker

Until now, only examples in the information giver MOOD system have been addressed. This is largely due to practical restrictions of the COCA because no function to search for this very specific yet general query (*HC/AC present somewhere in the clause + question mark*) exists. Nonetheless, a few, specific searches confirm that the HC and AC do occur freely in other moods such as the information seeker and polarity seeker with much of the same function and effect as in the information giver mood.

(29) a. why else would he devote his life to serving *the rich*? [HC; information seeker]
b. Has not my soul grieved for *the poor*? [HC; polarity seeker]
c. What's more relevant than anxiety of *the unknown*? [AC; information seeker]
d. Had I done anything beyond delay *the inevitable*? [AC; polarity seeker]

In example (29a) through (29d), the HC and AC occur in simple 'seeking' networks. This topic alone could be explored at great length, but that is well outside the scope of this thesis.

4. Conclusion

As suspected, the Human and Abstract Constructions are far more intricate than past research has assumed. Particularly the Abstract Construction, which has received even less attention than the Human Construction, is shown to be a unique phenomenon that fills a very specific function and expresses unique semantic content.

On the formal levels of grammar and syntax, the AC and the HC resemble each other closely: a determiner is required, pluralization is not possible, they may fill the S, C, and A clause elements, they can occur in the genitive with both *-s* and in *of*-constructions, and they form a single constituent with their determiner and nN. Furthermore, both remain a full nominal group in which the quality group is highlighted by expressing a semantically empty referent with the nN. This serves as a viable inclusive and exhaustive explanation for both phenomena.

But on the level of meaning, the Human and the Abstract Constructions diverge significantly not only in the former having a plural reading and the latter a singular one, but also that the referent of an AC is in general far too vague and unknown to categorize, whereas in the HC it is clear that some sort of human sub-group is implied. The type of generic reference each expresses is also different because the definite plural generic reference of the HC requires plural verb agreement which the AC does not have, making it a definite singular generic reference which elicits a prototypical instance which is mapped onto the entire class rather than generalizing over a class like the definite plural generic reference.

Despite the differences in semantics, the HC and the AC are both able to fulfill the same functional roles, that is both constructions (can) fill Participant Roles that are dictated by the Main Verb much like overt nouns do. They are crucial in the TRANSIVITY network and, when filling the Subject element of a clause, the MOOD network. The way in which they relate to their referent, a descriptive relationship, is the same and they, of course, carry much of the semantic weight of their clause.

Most importantly, both the HC and the AC ultimately serve the same semantic and communicative function: they allow for the linguistic expression of a referent that is too vague or simply too unimportant and where the descriptive quality is more essential than the cultural classification, that is, the Thing, it describes. Furthermore, for language to be effective and efficient it strives to avoid redundancy, in this case the redundancy of stating an unnecessary unit that contributes no meaningful semantic information whatsoever.

This is also the reason why the proposal for a null noun is more sustainable than other arguments such as the fused-head (Pullum & Huddleston 2002) and partial conversion (for example, Strang 1969; Grygiel 2003) which fail to 1) account for various features and available uses of HCs and ACs and 2) satisfactorily address the semantic level. The null noun provides

a tenable solution to the question of how a non-antecedent based (seemingly) elided noun can be understood only on the basis of its modifier. The case of *the hopefuls* provides more evidence that 'conversion' is an impossible argument; indeed, I suggest that it actually points to a less 'fuzzy' state of the HC and AC as a whole because of how these differ from *the hopefuls*.

Regarded through this functional-semantic lens, the status of adjectives in the HC and AC is not very fuzzy at all. Accepting that there is a 'meaningless' and 'invisible' noun that fulfills all its nominal duties, the adjective expressing the referent's described quality remains a simple adjective fulfilling its adjectival duties of describing. It has also been shown that both constructions, the HC and the AC, are more productive than past research anticipated; if this was not the case, the corpus data would not be as diverse as it is. Nonetheless, there does seem to be a preference for adjectives describing value (*the poor, the best*) and physical propensity (*the dead, the sick*) in the HC. An in-depth study focusing on large amounts of data of this kind far beyond the scope of this paper is necessary for further investigation.

In addition to the linguistic analysis and evidence I have presented in this thesis, there are undoubtedly further pragmatic and sociocultural factors at play in assigning such rich meaning to the HC and AC. Future research in this respect would certainly add another layer of understanding and enrich the evidence supporting the conclusion that this phenomenon is not only worthy of study but also that a unique null noun denoting no concept satisfactorily accounts for functional and syntactic motivations.

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Appendix

A. Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomena referred to as the Human Construction and the Abstract Construction, a type of 'missing noun' in the form of *the* + ADJ + ø where ø represents 'not a noun' such as in *the rich and the poor.* Although there is some existing research on the topic, there are still many aspects to be explored, examined, and elucidated. With this in mind, corpus data from the Corpus of Contemporary American English was used to investigate the structural and semantic features of the constructions. Based on guidelines put forth by the Cardiff Grammar, a series of examples are used to show that a semantically null noun, that is, one that lacks any meaning content, is a viable structural option to account for the type of 'missing' noun in the Human and Abstract Constructions. Furthermore, perhaps more importantly, semantic analyses suggest that both structures contain unique meaning potential, expanding the communicative availability to express unknown and/or vague (real-world) referent. This conclusion is also in line with the general consensus that language aims to be both effective and efficient.

Key words: missing noun, adjectival construction, Human and Abstract Construction, Cardiff Grammar

B. Zusammenfassung

Diese wissenschaftliche Arbeit erforscht die Phänomene der Human Construction (‚menschliche Konstruktion') und der Abstract Construction (‚abstrakte Konstruktion'), eine Art "fehlendes Nomen" der Form *the* + ADJ + ø wobei ø ‚kein Nomen' darstellt, wie beispielsweise in *the rich* und *the poor*. Obwohl Forschungen zu diesem Thema existieren, gibt es einige Aspekte, die noch weiter erforscht, untersucht und erläutert werden müssen. Die strukturellen und semantischen Eigenschaften dieser beiden Konstruktionen wurden anhand von Daten des Corpus of Contemporary American English analysiert. Es werden einige Beispiel basierend auf den Richtlinien der Cardiff Grammar verwendet, um zu zeigen, dass ein Nomen ohne semantisch bedeutungsvollen Inhalt eine berechtigte strukturelle Möglichkeit darstellt, das „fehlende Nomen" in der Human Construction und der Abstract Construction zu erklären. Des Weiteren, möglicherweise sogar von größerer Bedeutung, deutet die semantische Untersuchung darauf hin, dass beide Strukturen einzigartige Bedeutungspotenziale enthalten, was die kommunikativen Möglichkeiten sich auf das Ungewisse und/oder das (reale) Vage zu beziehen, erweitert. Diese Schlussfolgerung geht auch mit der Übereinstimmung einher, dass Sprache darauf abzielt sowohl effektiv als auch als effizient zu sein.

Schlüsselwörter: fehlendes Nomen, adjektivische Konstruktion, Human and Abstract Construction, Cardiff Grammar