The rich, *the poor*, *the obvious*: Arguing for an ellipsis analysis of "adjectives used as nouns"∗

Christine Günther

Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf

Abstract

This paper deals with nominal constructions such as *the rich*, *the poor*, *the impossible*, i.e. noun phrases that have a rather fixed form and meaning ([+human] or [+abstract]). The focus is on the question of headedness and internal structure - the paper presents new data and ideas against the view that the adjective undergoes a conversion/nominalization process. Drawing on parallels with elliptical noun phrases, it is argued that the adjective in the noun phrases under consideration remains an adjective which modifies a silent noun. This receives further support from a contrastive perspective – a comparison with German demonstrates that restrictions on the form and function of the construction derive from the rather impoverished inflectional system in English, as argued by Olsen 1988. The analysis proposed here addresses hitherto unaccounted-for aspects such as the use of an overt head noun (lexical or *one*) and non-adjectival elements in pre-nominal position (quantifiers, determiners other than the definite article) in nounless noun phrases.

1 Introduction

Noun phrases generally contain a nominal element. However, this element need not necessarily have a phonological representation, as can be witnessed in elliptical noun phrases of the following kind:

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(1)   The fact remains, however, that the challenger whose record is 19 wins and nine defeats has lost four of his last six <u>fights</u> and six of <u>his last eight</u>. (BNC, HJ4)

In this example, the ellipted noun in *his last eight* ___ is interpreted via the antecedent *fights* provided in the first clause of the conjunct.

A different kind of noun phrase that lacks an overt noun can be seen in (2)-(3):

(2)   Just as <u>the innocent</u> should not be punished, so <u>the guilty</u> should be made to pay. (BNC, CEK 3818)

(3)   The glass and paint seemed to echo a sense of <u>the esoteric</u>. (BNC, G34 762)

These cases differ from the noun ellipsis in (1) in that no antecedent is available for the interpretation. Rather, the phrases get a default reading as referring to persons, as in (2), or to abstract concepts, as in (3), which is why they have been labeled "Human Construction" and "Abstract Construction" (Kester 1996), terms that will also be adopted in this paper.[1] The term "noun ellipsis" will be used as a descriptive label to refer to antecedent-based cases as in (1).

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[1] Another term for the Human Construction is Pullum's (1975) "people deletion". However, it will be argued in Section 4.1 that no deletion of lexical material is involved in this construction, hence this label might be misleading. The Abstract Construction is also referred to as "Abstract Concept Construction" in the literature (cf. Giannakidou & Stavrou 1999).

The Human and the Abstract Construction are not found exclusively in the English language. In German, for instance, the same types of "nounless" noun phrases are attested (for French, Hungarian and Polish, see Günther in preparation). Example (4) displays an instance of noun ellipsis, while the Human and the Abstract Construction are illustrated in (5) and (6) respectively.

(4) Das   überlasse ich den   <u>Gegnern</u>,   von denen ich vermutlich
    that leave to I the   opponents of which I   presumably

    aber nicht <u>sehr</u> <u>viele</u> habe.
    but not   very   many   have

    'I leave this to my opponents, of which, however, I do not think I
    have very many.'
    (BRZ06/AUG.10153)

(5)   Hamburg, ein Paradies für <u>die Reichen</u>.
      'Hamburg, a paradise for the rich'
      (HMP08/MAI.02277)

(6)   Sie fordert eindeutige Beweise für <u>das Unfassbare</u>.
      'She demands clear proofs of the intangible.'
      (A09/AUG.03960)

This paper aims to analyze structural aspects of the Human and the Abstract Construction. To determine to what extent these noun phrases differ from ordinary ones, a contrastive analysis seems promising since it can shed light on the phrases' properties in relation to language-specific NP-structure.

German is particularly suitable as a contrastive language because, even though it is closely related to English, it differs in that the noun phrases under consideration have a wider range of possible forms and functions. The same applies to other nounless noun phrases: German generally allows for noun ellipsis with adjectives, while English here usually requires the overt anaphoric noun *one* as in (7) – a strategy that is not available in German.

(7)   Turn the corner and it's certainly a different <u>world</u>, if not <u>a new</u>
        <u>one</u>. (BNC, ECH)

The German noun phrase displays further differences that will prove important for the structural analysis of the Human and the Abstract Construction. First, number and gender are inflectionally marked; second, adjectival modifiers are always in pre-nominal position, i.e. even complex adjective phrases precede the noun they modify.

The discussion of how the two languages differ will provide deeper insights into the phenomenon in general and the role of number, inflection and *one* in the English noun phrase in particular.

The paper especially aims to answer the question whether these "special" constructions seen in (2), (3), (5), and (6) are all instances of elliptical noun phrases or whether they represent independent phenomena. Although a number of authors have presented arguments for the first possibility (cf. e.g. Vater 1987, Olsen 1988, Kester 1996; Payne & Huddleston 2002 subsume them under the label "fused-head"), an analysis along the lines of ellipsis is not widely accepted. Especially more traditional

accounts of German grammar are somewhat reluctant to acknowledge the parallels between (4), (5) and (6) (cf. e.g. Zifonun et al. 1997, Eisenberg 2000, Günther in preparation). The tendency to keep the two apart is even mirrored in German orthography: the initial letter signals the element's perceived nominal status in the Human Construction (8a) and its supposed adjectival nature in ellipsis cases like (8b).

(8) a. Die Reichen werden noch reicher

         'the rich are getting even richer'

         (BRZ09/AUG.01093)

     b. Die   ärmeren Staaten   können das nur,   wenn die reichen

         the   poorer   states   can   that only if   the rich

         ihnen   helfen.

         them   help

         'The poorer states can only do so, if the rich ones support

         them.'

         (RHZ09/DEZ.05740)

Several scholars agree that nounless noun phrases with human and abstract readings might involve A-to-N conversion, a nominalization or

"substantivization" process, as e.g. Giannakidou & Stavrou 1999 argue, which, however, is doubtful for reasons to be outlined in Sections 2 and 3.[2]

The aim of this paper is two-fold: first and foremost, it attempts to put forth arguments against the prevailing traditional view that the adjectives are nominalized (following e.g. Olsen 1988), showing that apparent counterexamples to an empty noun approach can be readily integrated into an account of noun ellipsis based on nominal inflection, as sketched in Günther 2013. Second, it provides a detailed (descriptive) picture of the phenomenon based on corpus data to lay the foundation for further, theoretical analyses. [3] While Günther (2013: 76-78) only briefly touches upon the subject, observing that *one*-insertion can also yield a [+human] interpretation when used without antecedent, this article offers a much more extensive analysis of the construction's properties, both in English and German. By considering hitherto unaccounted-for aspects such as the range of adjectives permitted, the use of participles as well as non-adjectival

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[2] In Günther (in preparation) the adjectives in these constructions are analyzed as "adjectives used as nouns" ("substantivisch gebrauchte Adjektive"), cf. also Jespersen (1946), in order to account for their adjectival properties without resorting to empty categories.

[3] The data to be used are taken from the *British National Corpus* (henceforth "BNC"), the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* ("COCA") and the *Deutsche Referenzkorpus* ('German reference corpus'), a collection of written language corpora, which are listed in the appendix. Some examples that are not attested in the corpora were taken from the Internet.

elements, the range of the construction's meanings (singular reference in both languages, concrete readings in German), and apparent problems for an ellipsis analysis, the paper offers insights into the structure of these nominal constructions that can help decide the fundamental question whether they are headed by empty nouns or not.

The line of reasoning can be briefly summarized as follows. Following Günther 2013, it will be argued that all the constructions in (1)-(6) contain a silent empty noun, which can surface as *one* in English and as a suffix in a small number of cases in German. The crucial aspect for explaining the observable differences between the languages is the presence of inflection and the categories encoded thereby: German has a rich inflectional system, expressing case, number and gender on the noun and the elements that agree with it (determiners and adjectives) whereas in English only number is expressed, on the noun, on some determiners (e.g. demonstratives) and on a few quantifiers (the cardinals, *many*, *several* and the like). This determines the range of the forms that nounless noun phrases can have – in English, they are subject to stricter requirements because, in terms of a silent noun, a crucial property, number, is not overtly expressed. As number serves an individuation function (cf. Bouchard 2002), those noun phrases that do not overtly express it can only receive generic readings. Hence, the Human and the Abstract Construction cannot be used to refer to individuals, which results in a rather fixed form (definite article + adjective).

In German, on the other hand, noun phrases containing silent nouns can readily be used for reference to individuals due to the presence of

inflection. Since number and gender are marked on the adjective, these grammatical properties are available even when the noun remains silent; hence, a referent is identifiable more easily. As reference is not necessarily generic, the construction allows for a wider range of determiners (such as zero, the indefinite article, or demonstratives).

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, the formal and functional properties of the constructions in both languages are described. Section 3 presents arguments for subsuming the constructions under the category of elliptical noun phrases and discusses apparent counterexamples. In Section 4, the findings are integrated into an analysis of noun ellipsis as featuring empty nouns. Section 5 summarizes the paper.

2 Properties of the Human and the Abstract Construction – a contrastive perspective

As pointed out above, both English and German allow for reference to persons and to abstract concepts with non-anaphoric nounless noun phrases. Starting out with English, this section presents the main features of the Human and the Abstract construction as well as language-specific differences, having to do with grammatical properties (number, gender, the range of determiners allowed in the constructions, the exclusion of predicative-only adjectives) and their semantic effects (genericity vs. reference to individuals). Finally, the status of the elements under consideration will be discussed. It will be demonstrated that they retain their

adjectival   properties,   providing   arguments   against   a

nominalization/conversion approach.

2.1 The constructions in English

In English, the Human Construction has plural reference even though number

is not overtly marked. This is evident in verb agreement, as in (9), and the use

of co-referential pronouns, as in (10).

(9)   Suicide was the biggest cause of death, but the homeless are also

        150 times more likely to be killed in an assault. (BNC, CBF 9358)

(10)   The rich make the laws for themselves (COCA, 2000 NEWS)

        These   examples   also   show   that   these   noun   phrases   are

"characteristically   used   generically"   (Payne   &   Huddleston   2002:   417).

However, reference to subgroups of the denoted classes is possible as well.

In the following example, *the sick* refers to a contextually-defined group of

sick people rather than to the entire class.

(11)   … the pallets on which the sick lay were furnished with coarse but

        spotlessly clean linen. (BNC, EVC)

        Usually, this construction takes the definite article as in the above

cases but the use of demonstratives, as in (12), and possessive determiners, as

in (13), is attested as well (cf. Olsen 1988, Quirk et al. 1985: 423). However,

in these cases too, the NPs refer to subgroups and not to the entire class of

dead people.

(12)   'Bury <u>your dead</u> in the best grave we have,' is their first response. (BNC, ACG 439)

(13)   '<u>These dead</u> are my responsibility,' replied the policeman. (BNC, H84 2287)

In contrast to the Human Construction, the Abstract Construction denotes non-countable substances. It is a singular noun phrase, as the verb agreement in (14) shows, and it always takes the definite article.

(14)   May we learn to cherish <u>the good that lies within us</u>. (BNC, ALH 2797)

A further aspect that needs mentioning is the range of adjectives permitted in the two constructions. Interestingly, we only find adjectives that can occur pre-nominally – predicative-only adjectives are not allowed. So, instead of predicative-only elements such as e.g. *in vain* and *alone*, their attributive equivalents *useless* (15) and *lonely* (16) are used.[4]

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[4] Some instances of the Human Construction with *alone* are attested in the corpora.

(i) Books are written by <u>the alone</u> for <u>the alone</u>. (COCA 2002, NEWS)

However, even though it is classified as "never-attributive adjective" by Pullum and Huddleston (2002: 559), this adjective can be found in pre-nominal position.

(ii) I'm representing the single people and the otherwise <u>alone people</u>. (COCA, 2008 SPOK)

(15) … as science becomes a repository for the absurd and <u>the useless</u>.

(COCA, 2001 ACAD)

(16) They are members of a most valuable organisation which has two

main tasks -- to care for the poor and visit <u>the lonely</u>. (BNC, HU9)

The use of past participles is also attested, as the following examples

show.

(17) The task may be daunting — <u>the weary-minded</u> would say

impossible. (BNC, ABG 183)

(18) Encourage all those who act as advocates for <u>the oppressed</u> within

our society… (BNC, GX0 297)

(19) One does get so sick of the normal and <u>the expected</u>. (BNC, H8Y

1083)

Interestingly, the use of the present participle seems more restricted:

when it is used in the Human Construction, it denotes a more permanent or

defining property.

(20) Around him the volunteer nurses and doctors were tending the sick

and <u>the dying</u>. (BNC, HTY 2560)

(21) Has it ever occurred to you how much <u>the living</u> are outnumbered

by the dead? (COCA, 1998 FIC)

Hence, examples such as (i) cannot be considered evidence against the claim that predicative-only adjectives are disallowed in the Human and the Abstract Construction. The question of why only attributive adjectives are allowed will be addressed in Section 2.3.

(22) It might be argued that <u>only the more outgoing in the community</u>,

      "the joiners," would be recruited by such methods.

      (http://www.jstor.org/pss/3349909)

(23) Perhaps <u>the praying among us</u> can help define the difference

      between a "prayer", a "wish" and a "hope".

      (http://newsday.co.tt/commentary/print,0,102517.html)

In (23), for example, the phrase does not refer to people praying at the moment of speaking but rather to people who pray on a regular basis.

Elements that denote permanent, defining properties are positioned pre-nominally (cf. e.g. Bolinger 1967 on the semantic effects of modifier positions), which indicates that the present participle forms here are in pre-nominal position. To determine whether this is a structural constraint, i.e. whether there is a ban on post-nominal material in the Human and the Abstract Construction, a closer look at the German data will prove insightful, since, among other aspects, the German noun phrase differs from the English one in that other types of pre-modifiers are possible. The question of the modifier's position will be taken up in Section 4.

2.2 The constructions in German

As noted in Section 1, there are fewer restrictions on nounless noun phrases in German. Here, the Human Construction can be plural, as in (24), or singular, as in (25). In cases of singular reference, gender encodes a distinction between male individuals, as in (25a), and female individuals, as in (25b).

(24) Die Guten gegen die Bösen.

'the good against the bad'

(A00/APR.28419)

(25) a. Doch als der Schwindel aufzufliegen droht, bringt

but as the fraud uncover impends kill

sich **der** **Böse** um.

REFL the. MASC bad.MASC PREP

'But as the fraud is about to be uncovered, the bad (guy) kills

himself.' (B98/JAN.03973)

b. Die Stiefmutter ist **die** **Böse**, und jeder ist

the step-mother is the.FEM bad.FEM and everyone is

froh, wenn sie das Weite sucht.

glad when she the wide searches

'The step-mother is the evil (one), and everyone is glad as she

takes off.'

(M07/AUG.01335)

The noun phrases in question need not necessarily be definite. Plurals can take a weak quantifier as in (26a) or a zero determiner as in (26b) and singulars can occur with the indefinite article as in (27).

(26) a. Besonders einige Reiche bleiben gern unter sich.

especially some.PL rich.PL stay gladly among REFL

'Especially some of the rich like to keep to themselves.'

(HAZ09/OKT.04563)

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b. Ex-Eisläuferin   Katarina Witt (42) will   für den

ex- figure skater Katarina Witt (42) wants for the

Privatsender   ProSieben aus <u>Dicken</u> <u>Dünne</u>

commercial TV station ProSieben out fat.PL   thin.PL

machen.

make

'Ex-figure skater Katarina Witt (42) wants to turn fat

people into thin ones for the commercial television station

ProSieben.'

(RHZ09/JAN.04752)

(27) a. So <u>eine</u>   <u>Alte</u>   von gegenüber hat mich

so INDEF.SG.FEM old.SG.FEM of   opposite   has me

gesehen.

seen

'An old woman from across the street saw me.'

(HAZ08/JUN.04139)

b. 36 Jahre jung   und doch erfahren   wie <u>ein</u>

36 years   young and yet   experienced as   INDEF.SG.MASC

<u>Alter</u>!

old.SG.MASC

'Only 36 years of age but as experienced as an old man!'

(BRZ09/APR.08687)

The noun phrase with the abstract reading is neuter, as can be seen by the form of the definite article.[5]

(28) Erklärbar   ist nicht das Böse,   sondern das Gute

      explainable is not   the bad.SG.NEUT but   the good.SG.NEUT

      'Not the bad, but the good is explainable.'

      (BRZ07/JAN.07379)

With regard to the determiners in these constructions, German again turns out to be more flexible since determiners are not even required (29).

(29) Wir   bieten ausschließlich Schönes   an

      we   offer   exclusively   beautiful.SG.NEUT PREP

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[5] It is noteworthy that these noun phrases allow for concrete readings as well.

(i) Die Drittklässler des   Oberschulhauses verschenkten Gebackenes   sowie

    the third-graders the.GEN secondary school give away   baked.SG.NEUT and

    Gebasteltes.

    handicrafted.SG.NEUT

    'The secondary school's third-graders gave away pastries and handicraft items.'

    (A09/NOV.08228)

Based on this observation, the label "impersonal" is preferred over Abstract Construction in Günther (in preparation). However, for the current paper the term used in the English-speaking literature has been adopted.

'We only offer beautiful things.'

(BRZ06/DEZ.14056)

Nevertheless, even though the constructions are subject to stricter conditions in English, there are some constraints in German that have to be mentioned.

The first constraint has to do with inflection and agreement. Generally, German adjectives and determiners agree with the head noun in case, number and gender. But there are some rare cases of non-inflecting adjectives, such as the English borrowing *sexy*. Interestingly, this adjective is not licit in nounless constructions (for a list of non-inflecting adjectives, see Duden 2006: 349-351).

(30)   *die sexy, *ein sexy, *eine sexy

Another borrowed item is *trendy*, which can occur attributively either without inflection, as in (31a), or as its inflecting German counterpart *trendig*, as in (31b). Crucially, in the German Human and Abstract Constructions, the inflected version must be used, as shown in (32).

(31)   a.   Welchen <u>trendy</u> Pullover kaufe ich?

'Which trendy pullover do I buy?'

(BRZ06/DEZ.01035)

b.   Er   kann mit   <u>trendiger</u>   Musik   überhaupt

he   can   with trendy.DAT.SG.FEM   music   absolutely

nichts   anfangen.

nothing begin

'Trendy music is absolutely not his cup of tea.'

(M01/FEB.10749)

(32) a. „die Trendigen" haben die Coolen   in Sachen

the trendy.NOM.PL have   the cool.ACC.PL with respect to

Dummheit sogar noch   übertroffen.

stupidity   even   excelled

'The trendy were even more foolish than the cool.'

(http://www.stardustproductions.de.tl/Geschichten-von-

Ausw.ae.rts.htm)

b.   Kunst als „Sinnsuche,   die das Oberflächliche, das

art as   search for meaning REL the superficial   the

Trendige   meidet und   dem Betrachter etwas

trendy.ACC.SG.NEUT avoids   and   the   beholder   something

zu   sagen   hat."

to   say   has

'art as a search for meaning that avoids the superficial and the

trendy and that has something to say to the beholder'

(RHZ00/SEP.18044)

The second constraint to be addressed concerns the range of adjectives
permitted in these constructions. In German, we find the same ban on
predicative-only adjectives that was illustrated for English in the previous
section. Adjectives that cannot be used attributively such as as *umsonst* 'in

vain' and *allein* 'alone' are not allowed in the noun phrases under consideration (**das Umsonste*, **die Alleinen*). Here, again, the attributive equivalents *sinnlos*, as in (33), and *einsam,* as in (34), have to be used. Hence, we can say that this is not related to the meaning of these modifiers but to a structural property of the constructions.

(33)   Objekte, deren Sinn das Sinnlose ist

  'objects whose point is the pointless'

  (BRZ06/MAR.01611)

(34)   Eine offene Tür für die Einsamen

  'an open door for the lonely'

  (RHZ06/DEZ.25917)

German also allows for participles, as the example in (35) shows. What is striking is the use of rather complex phrases including prepositional complements, which would not be possible in English (**the pushed to the edge*).

(35)   Ihm hat es das Verborgene, das vielleicht

  him has it the hidden.SG.NEUT the probably

  gar Vergessene oder an den Rand Gedrängte

  even forgotten.SG.NEUT or to the edge pushed.SG.NEUT

  angetan,

   taken

  'He is taken with the hidden, the potentially forgotten and the

  marginalized.'

(A98/FEB.11820)

A further contrast becomes evident in the use of present participles in German: unlike in English, the participles in the Human Construction can denote temporary properties, as shown in (36).

(36) Tatsächlich fanden Polizisten   <u>den</u>   <u>im</u>   <u>Auto</u>

indeed   found police officers the.ACC.SG.MASC in the   car

<u>Wartenden</u>.

waiting.ACC.SG.MASC

'Indeed, police officers found the man who was waiting in the car.'

(A07/OKT.05035)

This will receive further discussion in Section 4.3.

2.3 Adjectives or nouns?

The above description of the properties of the nominal constructions in English and German gives rise to the question of whether the elements under consideration retain their adjectival status or whether they have been reanalyzed as nouns. The (apparent) lack of a nominal head suggests that another element must take over this function, especially since the absence of an antecedent speaks against a simple ellipsis analysis (and thus against an empty nominal position). As shown in Section 1, this has led scholars to argue for a nominalization approach. However, as will become clear in what follows, there are good reasons to assume that the adjectives used in the

Human and Abstract Constructions retain their adjectival status and do not undergo a shift from A to N.

First of all, as Olsen (1988) points out, the elements under consideration display adjectival and not nominal morpho-syntactic properties. In English, the Human Construction is plural (cf. (9-10)). If the adjective were a noun, it should be able to carry plural marking, but this is not the case. Similarly, in German, the adjectives exhibit adjectival morphology (ibid: 343). Furthermore, the elements can be graded, i.e. occur in the comparative and superlative form, as in (37) and (38), and – contrary to what Giannakidou & Stavrou 1999 claim – they can take adverbial modifiers, as in (39).

(37) a.   … the wealthier have an obligation to help the weaker and

             the poorer. (BNC, ANA 1257)

      b.   Die Reichen werden immer reicher, die Ärmeren immer

             ärmer.

             'The rich are constantly getting richer, the poorer are

             constantly getting poorer.' (NUZ06/APR.01324)

(38) a.   New aid to the poorest is given as grants, not loans. (BNC,

             AM8 180)

      b.   das Unglaublichste zu denken und das Unmöglichste für

             möglich zu halten

             'to think of the most unbelievable and to consider the most

             impossible to be possible' (WPD/EEE.03418)

(39) a. … quantum theory, whose characteristic it is to replace the

continuous by the discrete, <u>the smoothly varying</u> by the

fitful. (BNC, EW6 101)

b. André Haschker machte <u>das fast Unmögliche</u> möglich.

'André Haschker made the almost impossible possible'.

(A08/NOV.07504)

What is more, as illustrated in example (36), in German the relevant element can be preceded by a PP-dependent. Since nominal heads can only be followed by prepositional phrases, this provides further evidence against a nominalization approach to the facts.

The morpho-syntactic properties thus make a reanalysis as nouns rather implausible. Yet, as one anonymous reviewer points out, the items could be stored as "nounish elements" including their adjectival morphology. Appealing as this may appear, there are some serious issues with this idea. First, the fact that predicative-only adjectives are not allowed would be left unaccounted for. Second, in both languages lexical nouns can be inserted into the construction and in English, pronominal *one* can also be used (cf. Section 3), which shows that there must be nominal position available in the structure. Third, the parallels to elliptical noun phrases to be discussed in the following section cannot be accommodated in a nominalization analysis.

It should be emphasized that this is not meant to say that lexicalization processes are ruled out – of course, the constructions can be lexicalized and acquire a 'fixed' meaning, as pointed out in Günther (in preparation) (cf. also

Allerton 1995). But this lexicalization is accompanied by the acquisition of nominal properties: for example, items such as *royal*, *catholic* or *intellectual* carry a plural suffix in the plural Human Construction. Furthermore, when nominalized, the relevant items can occur as indefinite singulars and do not allow for modification by adverbs. In other words, a categorical shift is possible, but it affects the morpho-syntactic level as well – thus it has to be kept apart from the cases discussed in this paper.

3 Parallels to noun ellipsis

As has been mentioned in the previous sections, the Human and Abstract Constructions display considerable overlap with elliptical noun phrases. The main parallels will be presented in what follows.

3.1 Overlap in form and function

In elliptical noun phrases, the remnant adjective also retains its adjectival properties (agreement with the missing noun in German, comparison, adverbial rather than adjectival modifiers). This is evident in the following example from German.

(40) Das alte <u>Aquarium</u> hat ausgedient, jetzt kommt

the old aquarium.NOM.NEUT.SG has served-out now comes

<u>ein</u> <u>viel</u> <u>größeres</u> <u>und</u> <u>schöneres</u>

a much bigger. NOM.NEUT.SG and more beautiful.NOM.NEUT.SG

auf die Anrichte.

on the sideboard

'The old aquarium is discarded and a much bigger and more beautiful (one) is placed on the sideboard.' (BRZ07/JUN.01084)

Furthermore, the inflection requirement in the German Human and Abstract Constructions discussed above also obtains in elliptical noun phrases. A non-inflecting adjective such as *lila* 'purple' has to be replaced either by its inflecting non-standard counterpart *lilan* (41) (cf. Sleeman 1996) or by the inflecting compound *lilafarben* 'purple-colored' (42) in elliptical contexts.

(41) An einem besonderen Tag wie an Weihnachten oder
on a special day like on Christmas or
Ostern trägt man als Pfarrer ein weißes
Easter wears one as priest a white
Messgewand, an normalen Tagen ein
liturgical garment.ACC.NEUT.SG on ordinary days a
grünes, in der Fastenzeit ein lilanes,
green.ACC.NEUT.SG in the lent a purple.ACC.NEUT.SG
am Karfreitag ein rotes.
on the Good Friday a red.ACC.NEUT.SG
'On a special day such as Christmas or Easter priests wear a white liturgical garment, on ordinary days a green one, during lent a purple one and on Good Friday a red one.'

(M07/APR.02637, taken from Günther 2013: 16)

(42) Der rote Umschlag   muss in   den

The red envelope.NOM.MASC.SG must in   the

lilafarbenen   gesteckt   werden.

purple-colored.ACC.MASC.SG   put   be.

'The red envelope has to be put into the purple one.'

(Z07/FEB.00438, taken from Günther 2013: 16)

Numerals and quantifiers also indicate that the two types of nounless noun phrase are actually very similar. This is because these items can be used in elliptical noun phrases, i.e. in phrases where the noun's content is recoverable via an antecedent.

(43) a. In retrospect, among the many outcomes under discussion at the time, **only two** were really possible. (COCA, 2000 ACAD)

   b. Die Kugel rollt auf   die Pins zu, doch nur zwei
       The ball   rolls towards the pins to but   only two
       kommen zu Fall.
       come   to   fall
       'The ball is rolling towards the pins, but only two fall.'
       (NUZ08/MAI.02891)

(44) a. But here's one more reason to can the cans: Many have lots of added sugar. (COCA, 2010 MAG)

   b. Die Hotels, davon gibt es   viele, stehen leer.
       The hotels, thereof exist EXPL many, stand   empty

'The hotels, there are many of them, are vacant.'

(BRZ09/DEZ.09721)

However, the same noun phrases can be used without antecedent, which results in a [+human] interpretation.[6]

(45) a. Eventually the tornado went away. Amazingly, <u>only</u> <u>two</u> died. (COCA, 1991 SPOK)

    b. Weil   es   nichts Schöneres   gibt, als wenn

    Because EXPL nothing more beautiful   exists than when

    Sich <u>zwei</u> das   Jawort   geben.

    REFL two the   wedding vow give

    'Because there is nothing more beautiful than two (people) tying the knot.'

    (BRZ07/JUN.17563)

(46) a. Does evolution by natural selection rob life of purpose, as <u>so</u> <u>many</u> have feared? (COCA, 2009 ACAD)

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[6] Note that Payne and Huddleston (2002: 411) categorize this use along the lines of the Human Construction (a "special fused-head" in their terminology). Again, in German grammars these elements are regarded as pronouns and not as determiners in elliptical noun phrases (cf. also the classification as "non-selbstständig" ('non-independent') in Zifonun 2005, a group which comprises elements that can be used both as pronouns and pre-nominally).

b. Überall   TV-Schüsseln, <u>viele</u> haben ein Handy,

everywhere satellite dishes many have a   cell phone

Strom   ist da.

electricity is   there

'Satellite dishes everywhere, many (people) have a cell phone,

electricity is available.'

(BRZ09/JAN.03044)

This parallels nounless phrases containing adjectives, which receive a [+human] reading if no suitable antecedent is contained in the context. This was evident in example (8), repeated here for convenience, where the non-anaphoric phrase *die Reichen* 'the rich' refers to rich people, and the anaphoric one to rich states.

(47) a. <u>Die</u> <u>Reichen</u> werden noch reicher   (=8)

'the rich are getting even richer'

(BRZ09/AUG.01093)

b. Die ärmeren <u>Staaten</u> können das nur, wenn <u>die</u>

the poorer states   can   that only if   the

<u>reichen</u> ihnen helfen.

Rich   them   help

'The poorer states can only do so, if the rich ones support

them.'

(RHZ09/DEZ.05740)

In English, this analogy is less obvious, since in elliptical noun phrases with adjectival modifiers (usually)[7] *one*-insertion applies (cf. example (7)). Interestingly, noun phrases containing *one* do not require an antecedent, as pointed out in Günther (2013: 24; 77). In these cases, the non-antecedent-based use results in [+human] reference again. Examples can be seen in (48)-(52), where I provide more context than in other cases in order to show that no element qualifying as antecedent is available.[8]

> (48) They'd like to know that over in Dayclear," he said finally.
>
> "They're really upset. They're sure they're going to lose their homes. It's all they talk about, <u>the old ones</u>. There's not anywhere else for most of them to go. (COCA, 1998 FIC)

---

[7] Cf. Günther (2011) on the use of adjectival modifiers without *one* in elliptical noun phrases; cf. also Section 4.1, especially fn. 12.

[8] Again, this is contrary to Giannakidou and Stavrou (1999), who claim that *one*-insertion in the Human Construction "yields ungrammaticality" (1999: 299). They present the following two examples to support their claim (an instance of the Human and the Abstract Construction respectively):

(i)   *The blind ones need our help.

(ii)   *Many people are attracted by the unknown one.

The ungrammaticality marking of example (i) is untenable in light of the data presented here. The ungrammaticality of (ii) arises because *one* is a count noun (cf. Section 4 for further discussion) and the Abstract Construction has a mass interpretation.

(49) Now and again, between changes-of action, between the parting, the searching, the dipping of the finger, the massaging, the kid returns to watch her grandmother and then to fly away again and to feel Granny slowly shuffling off, patting her back and taking her to her cot. <u>Some old ones</u> never learn. (COCA, 1994 FIC)

(50) Another patrol came and they put Reggie on a stretcher. I said, Is he going to be all right? This dude said, I've never seen anybody shot be so quiet, well except <u>the dead ones</u>. (COCA, 2006 FIC)

(51) Some people swore that the house was haunted. Almost every day for three weeks, we'd find <u>a dead one</u> inside of it. (COCA, 2010 SPOK)

(52) My biggest fears would be, perhaps, he couldn't get the work done that he wants to do. That politics as usual would stay in place. That he would attempt to work across the aisle and they would refuse. He's <u>a tough one to turn down</u>, though. (COCA, 2008 MAG)

The data show that the use of *one* relaxes the rather strict requirement of the definite article and plurality, since it allows for singular, (51)-(52), as well as indefinite noun phrases, (49), (51)-(52). This also affects the semantics of these constructions – their reference is no longer generic. The plural definite noun phrases *the old ones* in (48) and *the dead ones* in (50), for instance, do not refer to the entire group of old or dead people; they refer to a group of old people or dead people in a particular context (the old people

living in Dayclear in (48) and the dead people a particular person has seen in (50)).

It is worth pointing out that *one* cannot easily be inserted into the Abstract Construction since it is a count noun (cf. Stirling & Huddleston 2002) and hence incompatible with the mass reading of this construction (cf. fn. 8). However, in some cases, including examples like (53)-(54), non-anaphoric *one* gives rise to abstract readings.

(53)   She didn't want it to -- she would never have wanted the animal to be destroyed. So I don't know. That's <u>a hard one</u>, isn't it? (COCA, 2010 SPOK)

(54)   "Stay out of the house," Samuel said. "This is going to be <u>a difficult one</u>." (COCA, 1999 FIC)

In these examples, the noun phrases containing the anaphoric form denote individual states of affairs or events.

To sum up: the Human and Abstract Constructions and noun ellipsis share morpho-syntactic as well as semantic properties. For this reason, they can be considered instances of the same underlying phenomenon – the presence of an empty noun. However, before the argumentation for this is given in detail, some (apparent) arguments against an ellipsis analysis have to be addressed. They comprise differences between the two noun phrases (Human/Abstract and elliptical) with regard to the range of adjectives permitted, the use of complements and the possible insertion of a lexical noun into the nominal position.

3.2 Apparent counterexamples

The first problem concerns non-descriptive, "intensional adjectives" such as, e.g., *apparent*, *fake* or *alleged*. This type of adjective occurs in the Abstract Construction, as shown in (55), but the corpora do not contain examples of human reference.

(55)   "But sometimes the real and the apparent are not the same thing,

   Odessa." (COCA, 2007 FIC)

   On the other hand, we find these adjectives with the anaphoric noun *one*, as illustrated by example (56).

(56)   … a real boss as well as an alleged one. (COCA, 1991

   ACAD; taken from Günther 2013: 36)

   The same holds for German: the adjective *vermeintlich* 'alleged' occurs in elliptical noun phrases as in (57) and in the Abstract Construction as in (58), but is not licit in nounless noun phrases with human reference. If the three types of noun phrase (elliptical, human, abstract) had the same structure, one would not expect different restrictions on the modifiers.

(57) Fast   scheint es,   dies sei die Farbe des   Wahnsinns,

   almost appears EXPL this   is   the color the.GEN madness

   des   vermeintlichen   und des   tatsächlichen,

   the.GEN alleged.GEN.SG.NEUT and the.GEN   actual.GEN.SG.NEUT

entpuppt sich doch die Ärztin am Schluss als die

emerges REFL MP the doctor at the end as the

einzig wahre Verrückte.

only true crazy

'This almost seems to be the color of madness, the alleged and the

real, since in the end the doctor turns out to be the only true

madwoman.'

(SOZ08/JAN.03101)

(58)   … eine facettenreichen Welt schafft, die jeden Augenblick

a diverse world creates REL every moment

droht im Nichts, im Sog des

threatens in the nothing in the undertow the.GEN

Vermeintlichen unterzugehen.

alleged.GEN.SG.NEUT to sink

'...creates a diverse world, which is on the verge of drowning in the

undertow of the alleged any minute'

(Z08/SEP.00069)

However, since intensional adjectives can be used in the Abstract but not in the Human Construction, this restriction is not a structural constraint but a semantic one: a [+human] interpretation is incompatible with these modifiers, since human beings constitute a category that is defined on the basis of biological criteria. It is hard to imagine a non-fictional context in which a human's membership of this category is only apparent. It is

conceivable, though, in fictional contexts where human-like beings (such as androids) exist.[9]

The second issue relates to restrictions on complements in German. Haider (1988: 46) observes that, in the Human Construction, an element such as *verwandt* 'related' cannot co-occur with a post-nominal complement if an additional constituent marks the former as an adjective. In example (59), the prepositional phrase *mit ihr* 'with/to her' functions as complement to *verwandt*. Due to the fact that complements to nouns cannot be realized in pre-nominal position (cf. Section 4.3), the presence of *mit ihr* suggests that *verwandt* has adjectival status.

(59)   die   mit   ihr   Verwandten   *(des Verstorbenen)

         the   with   her   related.PL   the.GEN   deceased

The following (admittedly complex) made-up example suggests that adjectival and post-nominal complements can co-occur in elliptical noun phrases.

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[9] It should be pointed out here that the same constraints apply to other types of adjectives in the Human Construction: only those adjectives are used that denote a defining property of a class of human beings (cf. Section 4.4, examples 93-98). What those properties are, however, is highly-context dependent. Crucially, this is a pragmatic constraint and not a structural one. Of course, some adjectives might be used in this construction more frequently than others, or to put it differently, the construction might be favored in certain contexts with certain topics. See Allerton (1995) on the use of the Human and the Abstract Construction.

(60) Auf der Beerdigung zerstritt Frau Müller sich sowohl mit

at the funeral fell out Mrs Müller REFL CONJ with

den mit ihr verwandten Arbeitskollegen der Überlebenden

the with her related colleagues the.GEN survivors

als auch mit <u>den mit ihr verwandten [e] der</u>

as well as with the with her related [e] the.GEN

<u>Verstorbenen</u>.

deceased

'At the funeral, Mrs Müller fell out not only with the colleagues of
the survivors related to her but also with those of the deceased
related to her.'

This structural difference between the two types of noun phrase,
however, is only an apparent one. The restriction displayed in (59) is
semantically/pragmatically conditioned: the [+human] interpretation is
incompatible with a post-nominal genitive. As (59') and (59'') show, the
insertion of a lexical noun such as *Arbeitskollegen* 'colleagues' is perfectly
acceptable in this context, whereas the insertion of *Menschen* 'people' results
in an infelicitous interpretation.

(59') #die mit ihr verwandten Menschen des Verstorbenen

the with her related people the.GEN deceased

'the people of the deceased who are related to her'

(59'')die mit ihr verwandten Arbeitskollegen des Verstorbenen

the with her related colleagues the.GEN deceased

'the colleagues of the deceased who are related to her'

This is due to the different types of noun-genitive-interaction: a relational noun is compatible with the genitive here, since a social relation between referents is encoded by the genitive. A genitive NP following a noun such as *people*, however, denotes a possessive relation. This will strike the hearer as odd, since people usually do not own people. As this is a semantic (or pragmatic effect), the same contrast can be observed in English.

(61) a. the very rich friends of Dick Cheney and George Bush

(http://www.baystatebanner.com/natl21-2010-10-28)

b. #the very rich people of Dick Cheney and George Bush

The phrases in (61) are odd since they are in conflict with socio-cultural world knowledge. Note that a genitive that encodes origin can be used in this context, as shown in (62), which once again underlines that the restriction is not a structural one.

(62) a. the very rich of the world (COCA, 1991 SPOK)

b. die ganz Reichen dieser Welt (BRZ09/SEP.11876)

The third argument that might be put forward against an ellipsis analysis of the Human and Abstract Constructions pertains to restrictions on the insertion of lexical material into the structure. In elliptical noun phrases, the gap can be filled by a copy of the antecedent noun, as can be illustrated with the ellipsis example given in (1), repeated here as (63).

(63)   The fact remains, however, that the challenger whose record is 19

        wins and nine defeats has lost four of his last six <u>fights</u> and six of

        <u>his last eight [fights]</u>. (=1)

The underlying idea is that, if the Human and Abstract Constructions were elliptical, overt lexical material should be freely insertable without having any crucial effect. As we will see, this is not always the case, and thus poses a problem for the suggestions made here.

With respect to the Human Construction, this problem is actually somewhat less obvious since the use of *people* in English, or *Menschen/Leute* in German, is possible, as the corpus data in (64) show:

(64)   a.   "Already", complained The Seaman after six months of

              fighting, "<u>the poor people of this country</u> are beginning to feel

              the effects of the greedy shipowners' demands. (BNC, FES

              1311)

        b.   „Die einzige Art, wie Bush Gandhi ehren   kann, ist

              the   only   way howBush Gandhi honor   can   is

              nicht durch   eine Kranzniederlegung an   seinem

              not   through a   wreath ceremony   on   his

              Grabmal, sondern indem er   mehr Mitgefühl   für

              tomb   but   by   he   more compassion   for

              <u>die   armen Menschen dieser   Erde</u> zeigt", erklärte   er.

              the   poor   people   this.GEN earth shows explains   he

'"The only way for Bush to pay tribute to Gandhi is not through a wreath ceremony at his grave, but through showing more compassion for the poor people of this world," he explains.'
(T06/MAR.00258)

However, as Gisela Zifonun (p.c.) points out, the insertion of *Frau* 'woman' or *Mann* 'man' into the head position of the singular Human Construction is more difficult. This is best illustrated with an example: an adjective such as e.g. *angestellt* 'employed' can be found in pre-nominal position (65a), as well as in singular nounless noun phrases referring to female (65b) and male (65c) individuals.

(65) a. <u>Die</u> <u>angestellten</u> <u>Lehrer</u> haben seit 2003 keinen
   the employed teachers have since 2003 no
   Tarifvertrag.
   collective agreement
   'Employed teachers have not had a collective agreement since 2003.'
   (B07/JUN.40723)

   b. Er bedrohte <u>die</u> <u>28-jährige</u> <u>Angestellte</u> mit
   he threatened the 28-year-old employed.ACC.SG.FEM with
   einer Pistole und forderte Geld und Zigaretten.
   a gun and demanded money and cigarettes
   'He threatened the 28-year-old employee with a gun and demanded money and cigarettes.'

(B06/JAN.02431)

c. Doch <u>sein</u> <u>früherer</u> <u>Angestellter</u> hatte den

but his former employed.NOM.SG.MASC had the

Mordauftrag nur zum Schein angenommen und

murder contract only to the pretense accepted and

sich längst der Polizei offenbart.

REFL long the police showed

'But his former employee had only pretended to have accepted

the murder contract and had long since reported to the police.'

(B06/JAN.02959)

The use without a lexical noun is certainly the preferred option. Yet, there are examples where the nominal position is filled by a lexical noun expressing gender, as (66) demonstrates.

(66) <u>Nur</u> <u>jede</u> <u>zehnte</u> <u>angestellte</u> <u>Frau</u>, aber jeder fünfte <u>Mann</u>

only every tenth employed woman but every fifth man

arbeitet in einer Unternehmensleitung, und nur 12 Prozent

works in a company management and only 12 percent

der Frauen gegenüber 18 Prozent der Männer haben

the.GEN women opposite 18 percent the.GEN men have

eine Vorgesetztenfunktion.

a supervising function

'Only every tenth female employee but every fifth male works in management, and only 12 percent of females, as against 18 percent of males, have a supervising function.'

(A00/MAR.17651)

Interestingly, in this example, *Frau* is used contrastively, which highlights the sex of the referent (*Frau* 'woman' is contrasted with the contextually given alternative *Mann* 'man'). Thus, the use of a seemingly redundant noun (for which grammar already conveys the relevant information of [number, gender]) serves a particular pragmatic function. It is probably due to pragmatic aspects like these that the use of *Mann* or *Frau* is dispreferred in other contexts. The conditions under which lexical nouns are used in the Human Construction certainly need further investigation, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. What can be concluded from the above example is that lexical nouns can be used in the Human Construction in particular contexts. Hence, the perceived constraint is not a structural condition but a pragmatic preference.

Looking at the Abstract Construction, the question whether lexical material can be inserted is more difficult to answer, due to the lack of appropriate nouns that denote masses. Notably, an English mass noun that is (more or less) devoid of lexical meaning, *stuff*, is attested in noun phrases with abstract readings:

(67)   …put religion first, and the social stuff second. (COCA, 1990
         MAG)

(68)   …both artists plant their feet firmly in <u>the ordinary stuff of</u>

       <u>everyday life</u>. (COCA, 2004 MAG)

The following examples illustrate that there are parallel instances of the Abstract Construction.

(69)   …or that religion may in fact be a necessary part of <u>the social</u>.

       (COCA, 1999 ACAD)

(70)   May you make meaning in <u>the ordinary of our extraordinary days</u>.

       (COCA, 2005 ACAD)

In German, the corresponding noun would be *Zeug*. It can be used in Abstract Constructions, as the following examples indicate.

(71)   Das übliche Zeug.

       'the usual stuff'

       (B07/DEZ.85557)

(72)   Bono, lass das politische Zeug da raus.

       'Bono, leave aside the political stuff!'

       (B03/JUN.41254)

The above examples make clear that there is no ban on lexical nouns in the Human and Abstract Constructions. Thus, in these noun phrases, a position for a head noun is available, just as it is in elliptical noun phrases. Explanations for the nominal slot usually remaining empty have to be sought outside the realm of syntax – the use of redundant linguistic material is certainly pragmatically determined (which by the way, also applies to

elliptical noun phrases)[10]. Therefore, this argument against an ellipsis analysis of the Human and Abstract Constructions has to be discarded, too.

In light of the above, it appears to be fully justified to analyze the Human and Abstract Constructions as nounless noun phrases, i.e. along the lines of noun ellipsis. The details of this analysis and its implications are presented in the next section.

4 Empty nouns and anaphora

As the previous sections have shown, it is reasonable to assume that the Human and Abstract Construction are not as special with regard to their structure as they might appear. Rather, we are dealing with "regular" noun phrases containing a pre-nominal adjective, the only distinctive characteristic being that, in most cases, the head position is not filled. The latter is a regular mechanism known from noun ellipsis and hence no peculiar phenomenon. What is special about these nounless noun phrases is that the interpretation as [+human] or [+abstract] is not tied to an antecedent, which has given rise to analyses keeping the different types of nounless phrases apart. The aim of this section is to demonstrate that parallels as well as differences between the anaphoric and the non-anaphoric instances can be accounted for in an empty

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[10] Günther (2013: 118-128), for instance, analyzes head noun realizations in anaphoric relations (lexical noun, *one*, zero), arguing that the choice of the noun is determined by the degree of accessibility of the antecedent, i.e. its discourse status.

noun approach, thereby also accommodating the differences between English and German.

4.1 Arguing for an empty noun analysis

There are three possible ways to analyze the empty position in nounless noun phrases.[11] To begin, one could assume that a lexical head noun contained in the structure is deleted (cf. e.g. Merchant 2001). This, however, is problematic for two reasons: first, as pointed out in Section 3, there is no appropriate lexical mass noun with an abstract interpretation; in other words, it is not clear what noun would be deleted in the Abstract Construction. The use of *one* poses the second problem: *one* also yields a [+human] interpretation when used without antecedent and since it is a nominal element in head position (cf. Schütze 2001, Panagiotidis 2003, Payne et al. 2013), this position is not available anymore to a lexical head noun such as *people*. Similar issues arise with a small *pro* analysis, where the head position is considered to be filled by an empty pronominal element, which is either anaphoric or endowed with inherent features, as proposed by Kester (1996) (cf. also Borer & Roy 2010). Crucially, *one* is assumed to be an element that is inserted whenever anaphoric small *pro* cannot be licensed – this ignores the parallels between anaphoric and non-anaphoric nounless noun phrases and cannot account for the use of *one* with human reference (for further arguments against small *pro* analyse,s see Panagiotidis 2003). Another way of dealing

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[11] See Günther 2013 for detailed discussion.

with nounless noun phrases is put forward by Olsen (1988), who proposes that both elliptical noun phrases and the Human and the Abstract Construction contain an empty noun in head position. Since this idea will be adopted in this paper, its main points will be summarized in what follows.

Comparing the Human and the Abstract Construction in English and German, Olsen suggests that there is an empty nominal head in both languages. The observed language-specific differences are the result of the richer inflectional system in German: German adjectives are morphologically marked for gender and number, hence, an overt noun is not required to express these grammatical properties. Due to the presence of gender information, the Human Construction in German can be used for reference to individuals, whereas in English, it can only refer generically. In the English noun phrase, countability is the crucial feature that needs to be expressed (cf. also Olsen 1987). *One*, being the overt counterpart of the empty noun, is used to express countability in elliptical noun phrases with adjectives, since the latter do not carry this feature. Importantly, elliptical noun phrases and the Human and the Abstract Construction are structurally identical. Yet, Olsen (1988) argues for two different empty nouns – one being anaphoric, the other being able to denote semantically primitive concepts on its own, i.e. without antecedent. Those concepts comprise individuals (with [+human] as the default reading) and something continuous, which receives an [+abstract] reading.

The main elements of Olsen's analysis are on the right track, I believe. However, drawing a dividing line between anaphoric and non-anaphoric empty nouns is somewhat problematic and in fact not necessary. First of all,

as has been illustrated in Section 2, *one* can also be used without antecedent, yielding a [+human] (and in some cases even [+abstract]) interpretation. Postulating the existence of two different empty nouns would require the same for *one*. This assumption is dubious to the extent that the potential for anaphoricity can be witnessed with lexical nouns, too. The example in (73), for instance, shows that a noun such as *stuff* can be used anaphorically:

(73)   … the right <u>food</u> can enhance performance and <u>the wrong stuff</u> can cripple mountaineers. (COCA, 1997 NEWS)

The noun phrase in bold print is certainly interpreted as "the wrong food". As pointed out in Section 3.2, this noun arguably can also be found in the Abstract Construction (cf. example (67-68)). Claiming that there are two different lexical nouns in anaphoric and non-anaphoric contexts seems rather far-fetched.

What is more, Olsen does not acknowledge that there is a non-anaphoric use of *one*. Instead, she claims that *one* as an overt marker of anaphoricity is required with adjectives in elliptical noun phrases to block a [+human] interpretation in examples such as the following:

(74)   But the new <u>jobs</u> aren't as easy or secure as <u>the old ones</u>. (COCA, 2002 SPOK)

However, as corpus data presented in Günther (2013) show, noun ellipsis with adjectives in English is possible, i.e. *one* is not required as an

overt anaphoric element.[12] What is more, Olsen's suggestion that the anaphoric empty noun has an overt counterpart, *one*, whereas the non-anaphoric one has not, again implies a distinction between anaphoric and non-anaphoric nounless noun phrases, which does not hold (and which Olsen also argues against). Furthermore, keeping apart anaphoric and non-anaphoric cases is problematic for examples such as the ones below, where the same quantifier is used both in an elliptical noun phrase, (75), and with [+human] reference, (76).

(75)   John likes dogs well enough to own *several e/many e*. (from Olsen 1988: 344)

(76)   Does evolution by natural selection rob life of purpose, as <u>so many</u> have feared? (COCA, 2009 ACAD) (=46a)

Considering *one* a necessarily anaphoric element ignores the parallels between (75) and (76): for (75) this would mean that *one* was not required (or

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[12] Günther (2013) conducted a search in the BNC for noun phrases in an anaphoric relation, in which one of the NPs contains the modifier *new* and the other the modifier *old*. Out of 1101 attestations, 263 (23.9%) phrases are elliptical, as illustrated in the example below.

(i)   The lower substage of barbarism is common and is marked by the discovery of pottery, but the middle substage is marked by agriculture and the domestication of plants in the new <u>world</u>, and by pastoralism and the domestication of animals in <u>the old</u>. (BNC, A6S, from Günther 2013: 121)

The large percentage of elliptical phrases suggests that noun ellipsis with adjectives in English is not as marginal as usually assumed.

potentially deleted) since countability is expressed on the quantifier, whereas in (76), countability would not play a role since *one* could not be inserted here in the first place. In such a view, one would have to assume either a different effect of countability on empty nouns in the two types of noun phrases, or one would have to say that there are two types of *many*: an anaphoric and a non-anaphoric one. Both options are undesirable for the reasons given above.

In order to account for the parallels between the Human and the Abstract Construction as well as the differences between English and German described above, it is crucial to take into account the nature and the function of *one* and its relation to the empty noun. These aspects will thus be addressed in the subsequent sections, starting out with a brief overview of Günther's (2013) analysis of noun ellipsis.

4.2 Silent and overt empty nouns in English

Günther (2013) accounts for noun ellipsis in English as follows: as in Olsen's approach, anaphoric *one* is considered the overt counterpart of a silent anaphoric noun (cf. also Panagiotidis 2003). A further assumption is that noun phrases denoting countable units differ structurally from those denoting masses, in that Number is available in the former but not in the latter (cf. Borer 2005, and de Belder 2011 for a structural view of the mass-count distinction). If an empty noun is used in a noun phrase with a count interpretation, it combines with number morphology and is spelled out as *one*. Now, as has been mentioned above, there are elliptical noun phrases with quantifiers that do not contain *one*, as illustrated below (cf. also (75)).

(77) We have two keys

    a.   but we need <u>three</u>.

    b.   *but we need <u>three ones</u>**.**

(from Stirling & Huddleston 2002: 1512)

This is because these quantifiers are specified for countability: if countability is expressed on an element immediately preceding the anaphoric form, *one* can be deleted, because it is devoid of lexical meaning and its features [+count] are a subset of the features expressed on the adjacent element (a "syntactic haplology" principle, cf. Barbiers 2005, Neeleman & van de Koot 2006). As soon as an adjective intervenes, *one* becomes "visible".

(78) Between the two forces lay one large lake and <u>three smaller ones</u>.

    (COCA, 2010 MAG)

On the basis of this, Günther concludes that *one* is always contained in elliptical count noun phrases. In those cases where countability is expressed on the preceding element, *one* is deleted, i.e. the structure of (77a) can be represented as follows.

(77a') *three* ~~ones~~

Crucially, the requirement of an overt noun *one* is not as strict as often assumed: being an overt realization of an otherwise silent form, *one* is not in complementary distribution with this silent form. First, as Günther (2013) shows, a silent form is licit even if the preceding element is an adjective and

hence does not carry a [count] feature. Second, we do find instances of *one* following those quantifiers, i.e. a [+count]-elements, that are claimed not to allow for this anaphoric form by e.g. Stirling and Huddleston (2002: 1512).[13]

(79) He was building one radio of <u>two ones</u>, so we also were able to listen long wave. (COCA, 2008 ACAD)

(80) Another incident out of <u>several ones</u> involved a deviant behaviour… (COCA, 1999 ACAD)

Hence, the presence (or absence) of *one* does not seem a strict structural requirement that always has drastic effects on grammaticality. Yet, there are semantic effects that can be witnessed. As pointed out in Section 2.1, the use of *one* in the Human Construction is attested in contexts where reference is not generic. What is more, quantifiers (such as e.g. *two* and *many*), expressing number and countability, can also be used to refer to subgroups and particular individuals. Similarly, Günther (2013) presents data suggesting a link between silent nouns and the range of reference: a silent noun frequently occurs in constructions where taxonomies are established and the anaphoric phrases denote sub-kinds (or sub-concepts, if the term "kind" is reserved for naturally-occurring kinds only, cf. Krifka 1995), rather than individuals, as examples (81)-(82) illustrate.

(81) These threatening contacts are of two kinds: <u>the difficult</u> and <u>the sympathetic</u>. (BNC, CKS 1066)

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[13] See also Payne et al. 2013 for similar observations and examples from British English.

(82) Various types of criminal — <u>the political, the habitual and the recidivist, the feeble-minded, the inebriate, the juvenile</u> — were all differentiated as separate specimens in the taxonomies of the new science of criminology. (BNC, AS6 602)

This suggests that the presence of more overt material and the resulting increase of information (countability and number, in the case of *one*) can be sufficient to narrow down the reference. This idea will be taken up in the discussion below of language-specific differences.

4.3 Language-specific differences

In the light of the above, it is evident that the differences seen between English and German nounless noun phrases relate to the languages' inflectional properties. This is particularly obvious from the inflection requirement that holds for modifiers in nounless noun phrases in German, as illustrated in 2.2. It is important to mention that this requirement only holds for the rightmost pre-nominal element – similarly to English where countability needs to be expressed on the element immediately preceding the silent noun. As illustrated by the following example, the crucial role of linear order for noun ellipsis can thus be noted in German as well.

(83) Neben den von Andreina Ertico in Wolfsburg   erstandenen

next   the by Anfreina Ertico in Wolfsburg   purchased

<u>Siegerschuhen</u> gefielen Linna Hensel ganz besonders auffallend

winning shoes   appeal   Linna Hensel very especially flashy

grün-farbene,   moderne schwarze und <u>sexy</u> <u>lila</u>   <u>glitzernde</u>.

green-colored modern   black   and sexy purple   glittering

'Apart from those winning shoes that Andreina Ertico bought in

Wolfsburg, Linna Hensel especially liked flashy green ones,

modern black ones, as well as sexy purple glittering ones.'

(BRZ08/MAI.16014)

As this example shows, the non-inflecting adjectives *lila* 'purple' and *sexy* 'sexy' are licit as modifiers of an empty noun, provided they are followed by an inflected item.

In German, the relevant property is gender rather than countability (cf. Olsen 1988). This becomes evident when we consider items such as the negative determiner *kein* 'no', the indefinite article *ein* and possessive determiners, which remain uninflected in the nominative masculine singular as well as the nominative and accusative neuter singular, but exhibit a gender-encoding suffix when they are used without a lexical noun. As illustrated below, *kein* has no suffix in attributive use with a neuter noun like *Bild* 'picture', but shows an -*es* ending in the elliptical noun phrase.[14]

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[14] Following a proposal by Corver and van Koppen (2011) in a micro-comparative analysis of Dutch, these suffixes are analyzed as bound pronouns in Günther (2013). This is because they are in complementary distribution to overt nouns and they only occur as the rightmost element in the pre-nominal string, i.e. in the position of a lexical head noun (or *one*).

(84) Aber in der Garderobe war <u>kein</u> <u>Bild</u>   von ihrem

but   in the checkroom was no   picture.NOM.NEUT.SG of   her

Mann   und auch <u>keines</u>   von dem Kind.

husband and also no.NOM.NEUT.SG of   the   child

'But in the checkroom there was no picture of her husband and

none of the child either.'

(HMP09/MAR.00847, from Günther 2013: 79)

Similarly, the use of a gender-encoding suffix on *kein* is attested with

human reference (85), where *-er* expresses generic masculinity.

(85) <u>Keiner</u>   in der Stadt überlebt das große Feuer.

no. NOM.MASC.SG in the city   survives the great   fire

'No one in the city survives the great fire.'

(WPD/GGG.07713)

Because gender unambiguously assigns nouns to classes, it may serve

as reference tracking device in anaphoric contexts (cf. e.g. Corbett 1991) and

it certainly also helps to identify new referents. This is why the Human

Construction is regularly employed for singular reference in German: in

addition to number, gender provides further information that helps narrow

down the reference.[15] The importance of gender is underlined by a cross-

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[15] It have the impression that singular reference with the Human Construction is way more

regular than the use of *one* to refer to individuals in non-anaphoric contexts in English. This,

of course, requires a quantitative analysis, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

linguistic perspective on the Human Construction: as Günther (in preparation) shows, French and Polish also allow for reference to individuals whereas Hungarian, a language without grammatical gender, does not. Due to this wider range of functions of the nounless constructions in German, there are fewer constraints on the use of determiners in quantifiers while in English, with its narrower referential options, only the definite article is permitted (with minor exceptions, cf. Section 2.1).

There is a further difference between the two languages, which is more difficult to account for: as has been demonstrated in Section 2.1, the present participle is only used in English when it denotes a more permanent, defining property. In German, this is not the case – here, participles can denote highly transient properties (cf. example (36), *der im Auto Wartende* 'the guy waiting in the car'). As this matter might have important implications for the present analysis, it needs closer scrutiny.

As is well-known from Bolinger's (1967) paper on adjectival modification, there are semantic differences that are tied to the modifier's position: pre-nominal ones tend to denote permanent properties, while post-nominal ones denote more transitory characteristics (cf. *the stars visible* and *the visible stars*). This suggests that the restrictions on the use of participles in the English Human Construction might be related to the modifier's position (cf. the effects in *the people working* and *the working people*). Crucially, English and German exhibit differences with respect to the position of adjectival modifiers: German allows for complex adjective phrases in pre-nominal position whereas English does not. Notably, in German, adjectives

in nounless noun phrases can take complements, as illustrated in (86), while the parallel structure in English is not permitted (*the interested in the life of the beaver).[16]

(86)   die   am   Leben der   Biber   Interessierten

       the.PL on the life   the.GEN beaver   interested.PL

       'those interested in the life of the beaver'

       (A09/OKT.09048)

The above restrictions could imply that English generally does not allow for post-modification of the empty noun, i.e. structures of the form "*the*

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[16] There are some exceptions as indicated in (ia and iia), but as Pullum and Huddleston (2002: 551) point out, the "ban on post-head dependents is not absolute". Indeed, the same complex adjective phrases also occur in pre-nominal position with overt nouns, as evident in (ib and iib, c), which suggests that the silent noun in the a-examples follows the adjective phrase.

  (i) a. …and suggest that benefits are split between the tangible and the difficult to
       define. (BNC, GUC 1144)

     b. the difficult to define concept that wine makers often use to describe a key
       component of their art (http://wikitravel.org/en/Wine_tourism)

  (ii) a. … with a mandate of reaching the hard to reach and the high at risk with
       regards to AIDS specifically and other health-related issues… (COCA, 1993
       SPOK)

     b. the elderly, the young and the high-at-risk people
       (http://scuttlebutt101.blogspot.com/)

     c. one of those weak at heart people (http://www.eons.com/groups/topic/593458-
       Something-to-think-about)

e_N AP". This can be well-accounted for in an ellipsis analysis, since the definite article does not license noun ellipsis in English (cf. Payne & Huddleston 2002, Günther 2013) and hence, the structure should not be licit with a special interpretation either. However, there is a less evident but serious issue: above, it was argued that the absence of *one* as number-hosting element merely has an effect on the NP's range of reference. This wrongly predicts that the absence of *one* in an example such as (87) should result a well-formed noun phrase with a generic reading, which it surely does not.

(87) This is because more than half of <u>the (*ones) responsible for putting the program into practice</u> do not know the program well yet. (COCA, 2010 ACAD)

This is clearly related to the properties of the definite article, because other determiners and quantifiers readily allow for a post-modified empty noun as the following examples demonstrate.

(88) <u>Those responsible for these brutal crimes</u> must be held to account. (COCA, 2012 SPOK)

(89) The inclusion of many different risk factors into one analysis is viewed by <u>many working in this domain</u> to be the next logical step in understanding depression etiology (COCA, 2006 ACAD)

(90) Despite the clear recollections of <u>several who say they were there</u>, it is puzzling that so many others who were regulars at the Wheaton center never heard of the show at the time. (COCA, 2009 NEWS)

At this point it needs to be mentioned that there are, of course, also semantico-pragmatic conditions on the use of anaphoric nouns. Eguren (2010) puts forth a "contrast condition" on noun ellipsis – an elliptical noun phrase must contain a determiner or modifier bearing contrastive focus. Since the definite article is not contrastive, it does not license ellipsis. Günther (2013) shows that the contrast condition also applies to the use of *one* (which naturally follows from *one* being the overt empty noun). This predicts that *one* cannot follow the definite article either. For apparent counterexamples as in (91), Günther argues that *one* differs from the element used with adjectives (e.g. *a green one*), in that it bears stress (cf. also Dahl 1985) and emphasizes singularity (anaphoric *one* is usually deaccented, cf. **a green ONE*).

(91)   If anyone can be said to deserve a holiday, she told herself firmly,

       then I am <u>the one</u>. (BNC, AD1, from Günther 2013: 64)

However, Günther does not account for instances of *one*-insertion such as in (87) – she merely claims that in these examples the contrasting information is expressed in the post-modifier (Günther 2013: 64), which makes the wrong predictions for silent nouns as pointed out above. I do not have a definite answer for this, but interestingly, a COCA analysis reveals that this use of the definite article with *ones* followed by a post-modifier (as in (87)) is highly infrequent in comparison with the competing plural demonstrative – an inherently contrastive element – with e_N and post-modifier (as in (88)). Table 1 displays the frequencies for *those* and *the ones* modified

by a PP, a relative clause (with an overt relativizer) or a complex AP (an adjective plus a PP).

	+ PP	+ rel. clause	+ complex AP
those e$_N$	48486 (96.4%)	68482 (91.4%)	3050 (98%)
the ones	1793 (3.6%)	7280 (9.6%)	62 (2%)

Table 1. *The ones* and *those* with post-modifiers in the Corpus of Contemporary American English

This suggest that maybe the question of why the definite article + silent noun does not occur with post-modifiers is not really the issue here and that the focus should rather be shifted towards the nature and the function of *one* in these contexts. I leave this open for future research.

4.4 Anaphora and antecedents

An aspect that has not been addressed yet is the recoverability of the silent noun's content. As a silent element cannot denote any concept, its denotation has to be provided elsewhere – however, there is no antecedent available for the silent noun in the Human and Abstract Constructions. However, this problem is more apparent than real: as is well-known, anaphoric elements do not require a linguistic antecedent. In (92), for instance, no noun that qualifies as antecedent is provided by the context, and still, the noun phrase is interpreted as referring to some kind of drink.

(92)   These guys did more tax cuts over this week. This is ridiculous. It's

like a drunk at the end of the bar, and regardless of the outcome,

just give me another one. (COCA, 2006 SPOK)

Hence, antecedents need not necessarily be present in the form of a lexical noun, provided the content of the empty form can be recovered from elsewhere. This also applies to elliptical noun phrases.[17] I assume that the content of the silent noun in the Human and the Abstract Construction can be retrieved in a similar way: even though there is no antecedent as such, grammatical and lexical information is available. This comprises countability (mass vs. count), number, gender (in German), as well as the lexical meaning of the adjective and other elements, such as the verbal predicate. In (93-95), for instance, the adjectives (and participles) denote human properties, whereas the adjectives in (96-98) are hardly applicable to human beings, which results in an abstract interpretation.

(93)   Steven, who is departing for the land of the married. (BNC, FSN

364)

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[17] Ellipsis is used when the referents are situationally accessible. In the example below, beads in different colors are drawn from a bag.

(i)   And the chance of getting either a red or a blue, If I say, Here you are, I'm gonna

you've got this bag and it's got three blue and one red in it. (BNC, FYA 1376, from

Günther 2013: 94)

(94) …special drinks of negligible calorie content for the weight-conscious. (BNC, C94 782)

(95) …especially commissioned to educate the illiterate about God (BNC, HPG 295)

(96) This sad, artificial division between the theoretical and the empirical is quite unnecessary (BNC, B25 111)

(97) Rule of Life No. 8: Never disregard the obvious. (BNC, HWL 68)

(98) she had no way of telling the possible from the absurd. (BNC, EFP 87)

If the following examples, disambiguation is brought about by the verb (99) and the predicate (100).

(99) When I was a newborn, the old discussed strange things. (COCA, 2000 FIC)

(100) The old are pessimists because they can not conjure up the energy for optimism. (COCA, 2011 ACAD)

What is more, the absence of lexical antecedents and the presence of grammatical information (number/countability, gender) results in default interpretations, as already argued by Olsen (1988). Even though the claim that the empty noun is able to denote concepts is inconsistent with its being devoid of lexical content, we can adopt Olsen's reasoning that there are prototypical nominal concepts. According to her, these comprise countable entities and non-countable, continuous masses. The prototype of the former is the class of human beings, the prototype of the latter is something impersonal and

abstract. If further information is added, the concepts are broken down into more distinct notions. So, there is no need to keep apart the two types of phrases on the grounds of their interpretation: both are anaphoric.

5 Summary and conclusion

This paper has analyzed, from a contrastive perspective, two (seemingly) different types noun phrases of the form "det + adjective": elliptical ones and those with a default interpretation as [+human] or [+abstract]. Based on corpus data, it was shown that the adjectives in the constructions with "special" interpretations retain their adjectival status as do the adjectives in elliptical noun phrases. On the basis of this and further parallels, an ellipsis analysis was proposed in which the head position is taken to be filled by a silent noun devoid of lexical meaning. The boundary between antecedent-based and non-antecedent-based empty nouns was argued not to exist: both phrase types are anaphoric. Language-specific differences were shown to result from general morpho-syntactic differences in the nominal domain. Complex adjective phrases, for instance, are regularly allowed in the special constructions in German, while this is marginal in English. This follows from the different position these modifiers have in the two languages: in English, they are usually confined to post-nominal position, while they occur pre-nominally in German. This difference also provides insight into more general properties of nounless noun phrases in that empty nouns seem to require pre-modifying adjective phrases rather than post-nominal ones. Further differences arise due to the inflectional inventory of the languages: German,

encoding number and gender on the adjective and the determiner, does not require an overt noun to host these grammatical features, i.e. the latter are expressed even if there is no noun and hence the constructions under consideration have a wider range of uses. English, on the other hand, requires a noun as host for number to allow for more specific reference – a function that can be assumed by *one* as overt empty noun.

In analyzing *one* and the silent noun as one and the same element, this approach thus also factors in the hitherto unaccounted for *one*-insertion in the Human Construction. By taking into account grammatical information (i.e. number) as a means to narrow down reference, the analysis furthermore captures the use of quantifiers with [+human] interpretations. Hence, the analysis proposed here has the advantage of a much broader scope and gets around the artificial boundaries that have been posited for these inter-connected phenomena.

Corpora

BNC *British National Corpus* (available at http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc)

COCA *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (available at

   http://corpus.byu.edu/coca)

Deutsches Referenzkorpus (available at https://cosmas2.ids-

mannheim.de/cosmas2-web/)

A *St. Galler Tagblatt*

B *Berliner Zeitung*

BRZ *Braunschweiger Zeitung*

DPA   *Deutsche Presse-Agentur*

HAZ   *Hannoversche Allgemeine*

HMP   *Hamburger Morgenpost*

M   *Mannheimer Morgen*

NON   *Niederösterreichische Nachrichten*

NUZ   *Nürnberger Zeitung*

RHZ   *Rhein-Zeitung*

SOZ   *Die Südostschweiz*

T   *die tageszeitung*

WPD   *Wikipedia*

Z   *Die Zeit*

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