On the relation between Adjectives and Adverbs in Middle High German

Fabian Barteld  
(Bochum)

The morphological relation between adjectives and adverbs has seen a thorough change in the history of the German language (Paraschkewoff 1974): In Old High German there is a strict morphological distinction between an adjective and the corresponding adverb by the suffixation with -o. In modern German, there is no formal difference between the predicatively and the adverbial used forms, which is the reason for a debate about the lexical category of these words (Diepeveen/ Van de Velde 2010).

In contrast to the situations in Old High German and in modern German, in Middle High German there are different morphological relations between adjectives and adverbs (Pounder 2001, 304–305):

1. There are a few adjectives that have an umlaut, whereas the corresponding adverbial form does not show one (veste – vaste).
2. Many adverbial forms are marked by adding an -e, the weakened Old High German -o, to the adjective-stem (lanc – lange).
4. There are cases where the predicative form is the same as the adverbial form (kleine).

In the talk I will take a close look at these four cases and consider the synchronic relation between the two word-forms: are these cases different means to derive an adverb from an adjective, do they show properties of inflection (thereby marking the adverbial use of an adjective) or is it just the coexistence of two historically related words? By taking into account the different syntactic functions in which the word-forms are used, it is possible to gain a finer understanding of the functions of these morphological markers and of the relation between the parts-of-speech adjective and adverb and the corresponding syntactic functions.


