

(Non-)Functional Concepts: Definite Articles in Bavarian

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1 Definiteness

- Something gets marked
- What does it mean?
- Fine tuned taxonomy

2 Bavarian

3 The strong article

- Discourse referents for strong articles?
- Problem: Contextual usages

4 The weak article

- Semantic uniqueness?
- Problem: Conceptual usages of weak articles

5 Some further observations on weak/strong

6 Conclusion

Expressing “definiteness”

- e.g. articles
 - (1)
 - a. Hans-Christian took **the train**.
 - b. Hans-Christian took **a train**.
- some languages have more than one article marking definiteness (C. Lyons 1999), e.g. German dialects

Tasks

- What does the distinction mean/do?
- Does the general story allow for an explanation how German dialects (Bavarian) split up the cake?

What does it mean?

Two Competing Stories

Familiarity vs. Uniqueness (ignoring presupposed/asserted)

- **uniqueness**: Russell, Frege, Strawson, Löbner, Kadmon, Hawkins, . . .
- **familiarity** (or: identifiability): Christophersen, Heim, Chafe, . . .

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pro uniqueness:

- identifying definites (*the highest mountain in the world*)
- bridging

(2) I was at a wedding yesterday. **The bride** was quite ugly.

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pro familiarity:

- anaphoric NPs
 - (2) John bought a book. But **the book** did not appeal to Mary, who has a huge library.
- situative usages
 - (3) Open **the door**! (scenario: *three open, one closed*)

Two ways of being definite?

“no unification is possible” (cf. Lyons 1999, Poesio & Vieira 1997, etc.)

- 1 referring to an entity introduced into the discourse by use of an NP (DRT, Heim’s file cards)
- 2 “referring” to an entity which is known to be unique in the given context

recent unification:

C. Roberts (2003) weakens the notion of familiarity

C. Roberts (2003): weak familiarity

① strong familiarity (anaphoric)

(4) John bought a book. Mary didn't like **the book**.

② non-strong familiarity

- perceptually accessible (deictic)
- globally familiar, not mentioned in the discourse

(5) Did you know that **the former pope** had been here?

- contextual existence entailments

(6) Every motel room has a copy of the Bible in it. In this room, **the bible**/it was hidden under a pile of TV Guides.

(7) I lost 10 marbles, but I found only 9. **The missing marble**/#It is probably under the sofa.

C. Roberts (2003) weak familiarity (2)

- bridging

(8) John reviewed a book. He knew **the author**.

- establishing relative clauses

(9) What's wrong with Bill? Oh, **the woman he went out with last night** was nasty to him.

Two definite articles

- German dialects have a strong and a weak form of the definite article (Hartmann (1982) for Rhinelandian; compare Ebert (1971) for Fering, Wespel (2006) for Mauritian Creole)
- Bavarian: **strong** vs. **weak** definite article

(10) **des** biachl/'s biachl (*the book*), **dea** ma/**da** ma (*the man*),...

- strong article is also used as a demonstrative (stressed)
- related: preposition contraction in Standard German (Heim 1991)

Roberts (2003)'s subclasses \neq weak/strong article

- ① strong familiarity (... *a book* ... *the book*)
- ② non-strong familiarity
 - perceptually accessible (deictic)
 - globally familiar, not mentioned in the discourse
 - contextual existence entailments
 - bridging
 - establishing relative clauses

A first intuition on the German dialect split

- **strong article**: strong familiarity (reference to a discourse referent) (reconsider: deictic)
- **weak article**: semantic uniqueness

Usages of the strong article (obligatory) (1)

- anaphoric

- (11) Da Maxi hod a biachl kaft. Sei Mama hod
the_w Maxi has a book bought. His mother has
des biachl scho glesn.
the_s book already read

- deictic

- (12) Schau, *dea Hund* is liab.
 look, *the_s* dog is cute

Usages of the strong article (obligatory) (2)

- establishing relative clauses (vs. demonstratives, cf. Hawkins 1978)

A: What's the matter with Bill? - B:

(13) *Des Madel*, mit der a letzte nocht drahn
 the_s girl with whom he last night go-out
 gangen is, woa bes zu eam.
 gone is, was mean to him

Discourse referents for strong articles?

- anaphoric: indefinites introduce discourse referents, anaphoric NPs are interpreted with respect to that index (Heim 1982)/are resolved to that discourse referent (Kamp & Reyle 1993, van der Sandt 1992)
- deictic: objects perceptually salient in the situation are represented by discourse referents

Discourse referents for establishing relative clauses?

- idea: reduction to anaphoric case (alternatively: to contextual cases)
- Fox 2001, Sauerland & Hulsey 2006: “Trace Conversion”, relative clauses’ mismatches between surface structure and LF are outlandish but common
- behave like indefinites followed by an anaphoric definite (modulo: uniqueness as needed for accommodation!)

- (14) The woman Bill was out with yesterday was nasty to him. \approx
 Bill was out with a woman yesterday and she was nasty to him.

Contextual usages of strong articles (1)

- definite NPs (unique in the local context): ok,
pronouns: ???/*
- standard: unique w.r.t. common knowledge (CG), but no
discourse referent is introduced - accommodation
pronouns have not enough content for accommodation
- local (!) context guarantees uniqueness

- (15) a. I've lost 10 marbles, but I've found only 9. **The missing one** is probably under the sofa.
b. ... #The marble/#It is probably under the sofa.

- (16) Ich hab gestern 10 Biachln gsuacht, oba nua 9
I have yesterday 10 books looked-for, but only 9
gfundn. **Des fehlende biachl** muss untam sofa sei.
found. **the_s** missing book must under-the sofa be

Contextual usages of strong articles (2)

- (17) In jem hotoizimma gibt's a heftl üba d
 in every hotelroom there's a booklet about the
 wanderweg. In meim Zimma is **des heftl** am
 hiking-routes. in my room is **the_s** booklet on-the
 bett glegn.
 bed lain

- observation: introduced by the local discourse, but not as a salient referent
- idea (failure): weak article only if uniqueness needs reference to CG? - But: trivially unique definite NPs (e.g. superlatives) still come with the weak article!!!

Weak article - uniqueness? (1)

used where uniqueness w.r.t. common knowledge holds - maybe the weak article really expresses semantic uniqueness?

$$(18) \quad \llbracket \textit{the}_w \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda P. \iota x [P_w(x)]$$

- proper names
- superlatives
- functional concepts whose arguments have been satisfied

(19) the father of Mary, the author of the book, the distance between Frankfurt and Prague,...

- particular nouns + complement clauses

(20) the fact that Henk does not lose his way, the possibility that Hans-Christian will lose his way,...

Weak article - uniqueness? (2)

- bridging

(21) John bought a book. He likes the author (*of the book/of it*).

- BUT: conceptual usages...

Conceptual usages of weak articles

scenario: *A couple passes by the ski kindergarten where they spot a child crying violently; she utters:*

- (22) Ogott, mia ham vogessn, dass ma s'/des Kind
 oh-god we have forgotten that we *the_w*/*the_s* child
 abhoim!
 pick-up
 'Oh god, we've forgotten to pick up *the child*!'

- there's more than one child (no straightforward uniqueness!)
- strong article: the crying child, which is most salient in the situation
- weak article: often "their own child" - proper name?

Assimilate to proper names? (Henk Zeevat, p.c.)

- compare standard: no article needed with *mother*, *father*; rigid

- (23)
- Mother is always late! But all children like mother. (\neq their mother)
 - Mutter ist immer zu spät, aber alle Kinder lieben Mutter.

not possible: *child*, *son*, *daughter*,... /*Kind*, *Sohn*, *Tochter*,
dialect - more permissible?

- BUT: analysis in terms of proper names does not generalize to a long list of further possibilities for “*the_w* child”
- all possible interpretations involve some sort of enrichment...
 - can we pin down what are permissible enrichments and integrate that into the theory of weak/strong articles?

Pinning down the conceptual usages (1)

(24) We have forgotten to pick up *the_w* child!

- unique own child
- identification by presupposition
forget to pick up child x
presupposes: *child x is to be picked up*

(25) scenarios: *the (non-unique) own child that was to be picked-up; the neighbour's child they had promised to pick up, . . .*

note: the forgotten child is not the child crying in the situation

- identification by presupposition also works for the doors:

(26) Open *the door!* (scenario: *one closed, three open*)

Pinning down the conceptual usages (2)

- non-presuppositional common knowledge
scenario: *Magda is on her way to work as a babysitter, talking to her friend Cécile who knows that Magda is on her way to pick up the child Magda is supposed to look after:*

(27) I hoff I kumm no rechtzeitig, dass i s'kind
 I hope I come still in-time that I *the_w* child
 abhoi.
 pick-up

- remark: opaque/transparent doesn't matter (vs. Keenan & Ebert 1973 on Fering)

Not in terms of blocking

cases where both articles can be used to refer to the same entity, but there is “a difference in reading” (cf. Lyons 1999)

- (28) Da hod offenboa wea vogessn dass a
there has obviously someone forgotten that he
s’/des kind abhoid!
the_w/the_s child pick-up
‘Obviously, someone has forgotten to pick up this
child/the child he was supposed to pick up.’

No blocking!

“use the weak article when the condition for reference by the strong article is not met” - does not give the right result

Strengthening to functional concepts

weak articles require functional concepts

- (29) $\llbracket the_w \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda P. \iota x [R(w) = x]$,
where R is a contextually salient individual concept such that
- for all w in CG: $R(w) \in P(w)$,
 - and R does not depend on the local conversation.

- P a proper name/superlative/...: R is encoded directly

$$(30) \quad R = \lambda w. \iota x [P(w)(x)]$$

- P is not a functional concept: R comes from presuppositions triggered by the sentence; common knowledge in general (appeal to consistency, relevance, ...-?)

Strengthening to functional concepts

weak articles require functional concepts

$$(29) \quad \llbracket \textit{the}_w \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda P. \iota x [R(w) = x],$$

where R is a contextually salient individual concept such that

- a. for all w in CG: $R(w) \in P(w)$,
 - b. and R does not depend on the local conversation.
- “does not depend on the local conversation”? - to exclude weak articles in contextual (*\textit{the}_w missing marble*) and deictic cases (*\textit{the}_w child crying right here*)

Referentiality (1)

strong: exclusively referential; weak: can be either

- (30) Wast du, wea *dea/da* Redna is?
 know you who *the_s/the_w* speaker is

strong: do you know who this speaker is (what's his
name/affiliation/...)

weak: do you know who is going to speak (e.g. on the next slot)?

- (31) Da Hans was ned, wea *dea/da* Redna is.
 the_w Hans knows not, who *the_s/the_w* speaker is

Referentiality (2)

Standard German: desambiguation by position:

- referential:

(32) Hans weiß nicht, wer **der Professor** wirklich ist.
Hans knows not, who the professor really is

- non-referential:

(33) Hans weiß nicht, wer wirklich **der Professor** ist.
Hans knows not, who really the professor is

Opaque/Transparent?

- the contrast:

(34) Max is astonished that **the man who won the race** was drunk.

- Max is astonished that a drunken person could win the race. [opaque]
- The winner of the race is such that Max was astonished that he was drunk. [transparent]

- Keenan & Ebert (1973) on Fering:
strong article: ambiguous
weak article: only opaque reading

Opaque/transparent in Bavarian

weak/strong: independent of transparency!

establishing RC - strong, bridging (functional concept) - weak

opaque:

(35) Da Maxi glaubt fest, dass heit a skirennen woa
the_w Maxi believes firmly that today a ski-race was
 und
 and

a. dass *dea* Ma dea was gwonnen hot betrunken
 that *the_s* man who won drunk was
 woa.

b. dass *da* siega betrunken woa.
 that *the_w* winner drunk was

transparent:

- (36) D'Christl hod net glaubt dass heit a rennen woa
 the_w-Christl has not known that today a race was
und hod si gwundat
and has herself wondered
- a. dass *dea* *Mo*, dea was gwonnen hod betrunken
 that *the_s* man who won has drunk
 woa.
 was
- b. dass *da* *Siega* betrunken woa.
 that *the_w* winner drunk was

Proposal (compare van Rooy 1997 for pronouns)

Definiteness

A definite **the N** presupposes that there is either

- a **discourse referent** (introduced by indefinite, by an entity perceptually salient in the utterance situation, or accommodated) which is **the maximally salient one that is presupposed to be N in all worlds of CG** (\subseteq Assignments \times Worlds)
[cf. von Stechow 2004 for necessity of salience]
- a **functional concept P** such that in all worlds w in CG:
 $P(w) \in N(w)$ und P does not depend locally on the current conversation.

Bavarian resolves the disjunction as *the_s* vs. *the_w*!

Summing up

- no unified treatment for the Bavarian definite determiners
- *the_s* gets anchored to a discourse referent
- *the_w* depends on an identifying property (if descriptive material fails, it may come from common knowledge, but not the local context)
- overlap with pronouns:
 - quite big for *the_s* (excluded only: contextual, establishing relative clauses)
 - smaller for *the_w* (only: proper names, superlatives, or inherent definites that have been mentioned before)

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