

The Various Factors of the Article Split in the Dialects of the Rhine Area

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The talk is about the strategy of marking definiteness in the Rhenish dialect 'Mönchengladbacher Platt' (MG Platt). The chosen examples (2) to (6) are samples from own transcripts of records of MG Platt. This German variety exhibits a grammatical asymmetry in definiteness marking, also referred to as article split (Ortmann 2014) which is characterized by the use of two different definite articles, a so called strong and a weak form. With regard to the distribution of these forms, Löbner (2011) makes the following assumption, which I summarize in (1):

- (1) The selection of the article depends on the respective concept type of the head noun, such that the weak article is used with inherently unique nouns ([+U]), that is individual (INs) and functional nouns (FNs), indicating semantic uniqueness and the strong article with inherently non-unique nouns ([-U]), that is sortal (SNs) and relational nouns (RNs), indicating pragmatic uniqueness.

Since the common function of both articles is to indicate that the definite NP is a unique concept, relational and sortal nouns undergo a type shift from a non-unique to a unique concept type ([-U] → [+U]).

This is achieved by enriching the original concept with information from the context, as for example in anaphoric uses. Hence, the term 'pragmatic uniqueness'. Due to the inherent uniqueness of individual and functional nouns, no shift is required, hence the term 'semantic uniqueness'.

(2) demonstrates the distribution of the article form as predicted in (1) with the respective inherent concept type indicated in the bold printed square brackets:

- (2) (a) [...] *mid ənə jɔldənə Bal* [...], *worp dā* *Bal*
 [...] with a golden ball threw DEF.MASC.SG.**STRONG** ball [SN]
 ' [...] with a golden ball [...], threw the ball [...]'

- (b) *Un dr* *Moond* *shin* *imr nɔch.*
 and DEF.MASC.SG.**WEAK** moon [IN] shone still
 'And the moon still shone.'

The uniqueness of *Bal* in (2a) is not inherently given, it has to be established via context, which is in this case enabled by anaphoricity. Since this is a case of pragmatic uniqueness, the strong article *dā* is used.

(2b) contains the inherently unique noun *Moond*, an instance of semantic uniqueness, indicated by the weak article *dr*.

The examples in (2) include clear cases with the inherent concept type being the only present factor responsible for the selection of the article form. I put forward the following claim:

Claim: Besides the inherent concept type of the head noun, there are at least three other crucial factors which govern the distribution of the article.

Contributing factors are 1. modifiers like adjectives or prepositional phrases (cf. to Ortmann (2014) for the influence of adjectives in Scandinavian), 2. anaphoricity, and 3. the kind of underlying relationship between the referent of definite associative anaphors (DAAs) and the referent of their possessor argument.

I will show that definite NPs containing adjectives are preferably used with the strong article due to their syntactic complexity and their restrictive character, as illustrated in (3):

(3) (a) [...] *als **dii** glooreischə Zeit von Adolḡ Hitlr*
 as DEF.FEM.SG.**STRONG** glorious time of Adolf Hitler

jəleebt wuut [...]
 lived was

‘[...] as the glorious time of Adolf Hitler was undergone [...]
 (‘glorious’ is meant ironically)’

(b) [...] *ᶓp **dää** School*
 on DEF.MASC.SG.**STRONG** chair

neavə dä Prinzässin, [...]
 next to DEF.FEM.DAT.SG.**STRONG** princess

‘[...] onto the chair next to [the chair of] the princess [...]

The combination of the adjective and the PP in (3a) as well as the PP in (3b) (underlined) modifies the respective nouns *Zeit* and *School* such that their referent can be determined uniquely in contrast to other objects with inherently identical sortal descriptions. They behave parallel to what Cabredo Hofherr (2014) calls ‘contrastive restrictive relative clauses’ (as in (3a)) which also trigger the strong article and ‘functional restrictive relative clauses’ (3b) for which both article forms occur (see Cabredo-Hofherr (2014) for a classification of restrictive relative clauses and the respective distribution of the two article forms in West Germanic dialects).

Regarding anaphoricity, I will focus on anaphorically used FNs, using this factor as an explanation for the observed variation, demonstrated in (4):

(4) (a) [...] *kləptə dan an də Düür*
 knocked then at DEF.FEM.SG.**WEAK** door

*ən **dii** Düür jing ᶓp* [...]
 and DEF.FEM.SG.**STRONG** door went open

‘[...] then knocked at the door, and the door opened [...]

- (b) [...] *klɔptən* *ət an də* *Düür* [...]

knocked it at DEF.FEM.SG.WEAK front door
- mäk də* *Düür* *ɔp* [...]

made DEF.ART.FEM.WEAK front door open

‘[...] it knocked at the door [...] opened the door [...]’

This shows that the FN *düür* can occur with both, the strong (4a) and the weak article (4b) when used anaphorically. I assume that this is due to the two competing factors involved here: the inherent uniqueness of the head noun, which would trigger the weak article versus anaphoricity, which would trigger the strong article (see (2)) and that in instances like (4a), anaphoricity is explicitly indicated.

Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the kind of underlying relationship in DAAs is a crucial factor by discussing the variation found in those cases. I refer to Schwarz (2009), who claims that the article choice in the context of contraction between prepositions and the definite article in Standard German depends in cases of DAAs (cases of bridging in the sense of Schwarz) on the kind of underlying relationship. He contrasts part-whole to other kinds of relationships. I will take up his suggestion to explain the contrast depicted in (5):

- (5) (a) [...] *dat wɔr də* *Schtivmɔtr*

that was DEF.FEM.SG.WEAK stepmother
- won dii* *Kingr*

of DEF.ART.FEM.SG.STRONG children

‘[...] that was the stepmother of the children [...]’
- (b) [...] *dat wɔɔ dää* *Diinr*

This was DEF.MASC.SG.STRONG servant
- wɔn dääm* *Köning* [...]

of DEF.MASC.DAT.SG.STRONG king

‘[...] this was the servant of the king [...]’

In contrast to (5b), the relation in (5a) between the respective referents of *Schtivmɔtr* and *Kingr* is a kinship relation plus truly functional, that is a one-to-one relation. Those kinds of relationship trigger the weak article, whereas the underlying relation in (4b) exhibits a different kind of affiliation, which is not inherently given but established between two individuals. Those kinds of relationships are marked by the strong article.

Finally I will discuss multifactorial cases where it is unclear which factor does have the most influence in the respective combinations, as illustrated in (6):

- (6) *Də* *Prinzässin* [...]
 DEF.FEM.SG.WEAK princess
- dii* *nöüə* *Königin* [...]
 DEF.FEM.SG.STRONG new queen
 ‘The princess [...] the new queen [...]’

This example exhibits two factors which could govern the strong article: the adjective and anaphoricity. It is not clear which claim it supports: that adjectives trigger the strong article or that anaphoricity governs the strong form.

Thus, the aim of my talk is to suggest an elaboration of Löbner's account by taking into consideration those three factors in addition to the inherent concept type of the head noun to explain the distribution in the presented data, to discuss their interplay and to comment on how they are weighted.

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