

**Emergence of the definite article and integration into a paradigm:
 a comparison between Late Latin and Modern French**

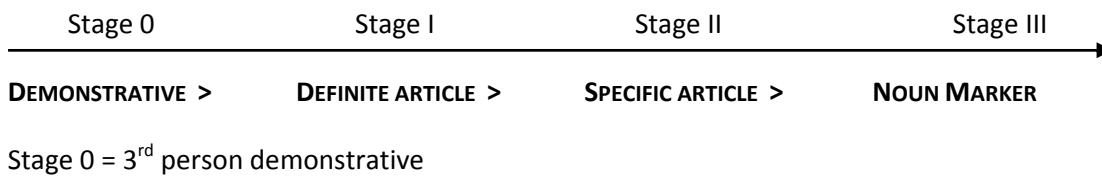
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1. Introduction

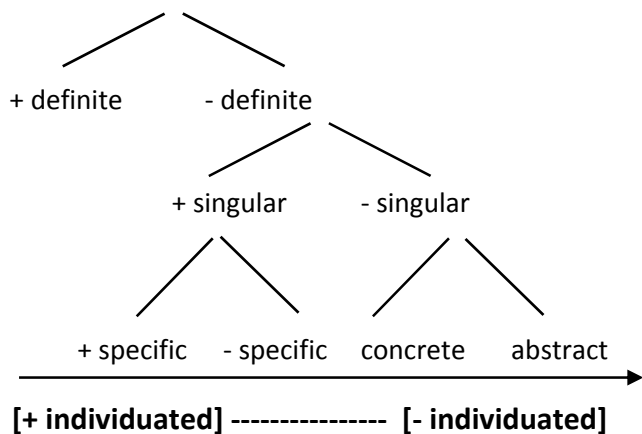
1.1. Two models for the development of the articles

1.1.1. The cycle of the definite article (Greenberg 1978)



1.1.2. The scale of individuation

FIGURE 1 (Carlier 2006, De Mulder & Carlier 2012)



1.1.3. Research questions

Stage 0 > Stage I

- How to account for the shift from demonstrative to definite article ?
- Why is the remote demonstrative is the most common source for the definite article?

Stage II, Stage III and beyond

- Does the existence of other articles slow down or even stop the grammaticalization process?
- What happens beyond Stage III? Does the cycle of the definite article start again?

1.1.4. Empirical data

- A more or less uninterrupted documentation of more than 2000 years, allows real-time observations of the step-wise emergence of the definite article in a long-term diachronic perspective (electronic corpora for each stage of the evolution).
- Two successive cycles of the definite article (Harris 1978; De Mulder & Carlier 2006)
Ille (Latin) > *li* (Old French)
Ecce ille / ecce iste (Late Latin) > *cist / cil* (Old French) > *ce* (Modern French)
Ce N-ci / Ce N-là
 - Similarities
 - Differences: impact of the paradigm

2. Demonstrative (Stage 0) > Definite article (Stage 1)

2.1. Hypotheses

- Semantic weakening or 'bleaching': loss of the deictic feature (Hawkins 1978; Harris 1975; Diessel 1990 ; Lyons 1999)
- Pragmatic strengthening
 - Version 1: subjectification (Epstein 1993)
 - Version 2: intersubjectification (Carlier & De Mulder 2007)

2.2. 1st hypothesis: Semantic weakening or 'bleaching'

HARRIS (1978) (CF. HAWKINS 2004)

Demonstrative	>Definite article
- specifies an item (as opposed to other alternatives)	- specifies an item
- locates the item (spatially, temporally, psychologically, ...)	- does not locate

DIESSEL (1999)

Dem. exophoric use > Dem. endophoric use (amongst which adnominal anaphoric use) > Definite article

LYONS (1999)

Demonstrative > Definite when the referent is immediately accessible

- in the situation (exophoric)
- in the context (endophoric)

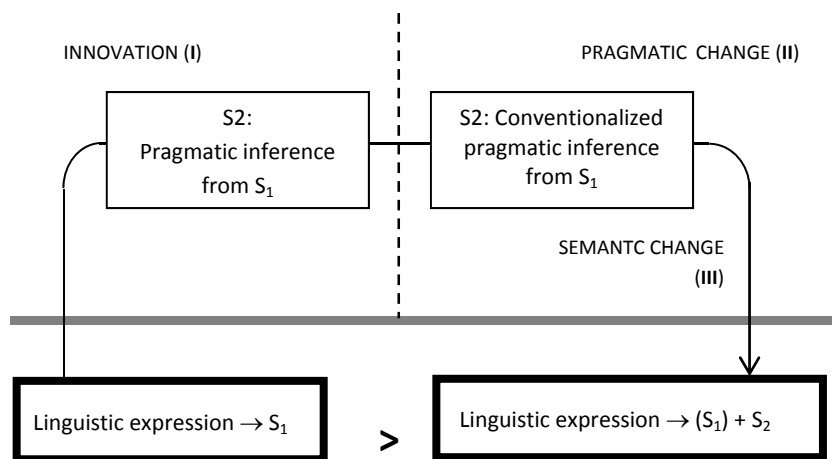
Location by means of deixis is redundant, deixis can undergo semantic erosion.

e.g. Pass me this/that/the bucket. (Hawkins 1978: 111)

Evaluation of the hypothesis of semantic weakening

- (i) Source expression ≠ demonstrative devoid of deictic meaning (e.g. *is* in Latin)
- (ii) Source expression = distal demonstrative
- (iii) *Associative anaphor* : the definite article retrieves the referent as unique by activating a frame of accessible language
versus
Direct anaphor: the demonstrative focusses the referent directly, without considering its structural links with an accessible frame
- (iv) Grammaticalization: Pragmatic change > Semantic change

FIGURE 2: A model of semantic change, based on Traugott & Dasher (2002:38)



- (1) *Aeraclius imperatur arma sumens, telam priliae et falange a suis postergum preparatam relinquens, singolare certamen, ut nouos Dauit procedit ad bellum. Emperator Persarum Cosdroes patricium quidam ex suis quem fortissemum in prelio cernere potuerat huius conuenenciae ad instar pro se contra Aeraglio ad priliandum direxit. Cumque uterque cum aequetis hy duo congressione priliae in inuicem propinquant, Aeraglius ait ad patricium, quem imperatore Persarum Cosdroae stemabat, dixit: "Sic conuenerat, ut singulare certamen priliandum debuissimus confligere: quare postergum tuom alii secuntur?" Patricius ille girans capud conspecere qui postergum eius uenerit, Aeraglius aecum calcaneum uehementer uргуens, extrahens uxum capud patriciae Persarum truncauit.* (Fredegarius, *Chronical of the Merovingian Times*, § 64)

The emperor Heraclius armed himself, left behind him his army drawn in fighting array, and advanced to the fray like a new David. But the Persian Emperor Chrosroes honored their pact by sending a certain patrician, whose great value he knew, to fight in his place against Heraclius. Advancing on horseback to each other, Heraclius said to the patrician, whom he took for the Emperor Chrosroes: "Since we have agreed to single combat, why are those other warriors following behind you?" **The patrician** turned his head to see who was following him, whereupon in a flash Heraclius spurred his horse forward, drew his short sword and cut off the patrician's head.

2.3. 2nd hypothesis: Pragmatic strengthening, version 1: subjectification

Definite article:

- Referential use: *hearer-oriented*, guides the hearer to the intended referent
- Expressive use: *speaker-oriented*, highlights the referent as discourse prominent

The demonstrative becomes a definite article when speakers use it for enhanced expressivity.

The expressive value of the definite article comes from its demonstrative origin.
 since, according to Epstein, the demonstrative is the linguistic equivalent of the act of pointing.

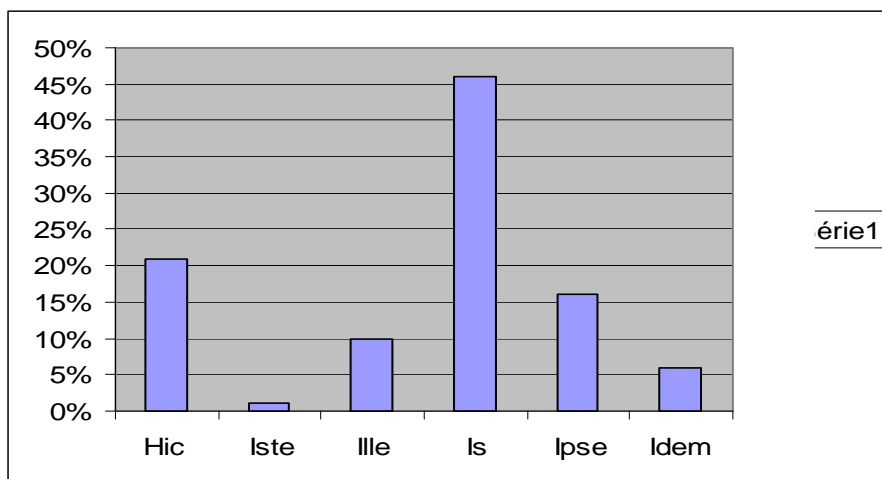
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2.4. 2nd hypothesis: Pragmatic strengthening, version 2: intersubjectification

2.4.1. The empirical facts

FIGURE 3: Relative frequency of the demonstratives & identity markers in a Late Latin corpus
 Fredagar, *Chronicle and Continuations* (7th – 8th C.)



Hic / Is > ∅

Ille : pronoun / demonstrative determiner (*ille / iste*) / definite article

Ipse > ∅

(2) *Superscriptus Remistianus contra praedicto rege et Francos seu custodias quas ipse rex in ipsas ciuitates dimiserat, nimium infestus accessit, et Bitoriuo seu et Limoticino quod ipse rex adquisierat, praedando nimium uastauit* (Fredagar, *Continuations* § 50)

The aforementioned Remistianus attacked **the aforementioned King** and the Franks and the garrisons which **this same king** had left in the cities, and he destroyed the districts of Berry and also the Limousin, that **this same king** had conquered .

2.4.2. Competition between *ipse* / *ille*

Ipse = marker of identification

It reinforces the continuity of the referential chain

- (3) *Inde egressus Crisceco uilla ueniens in Pontio, Leudesio sub dolo fidem promitti se simulans fefellit, facto placito ut coniuratione facta cum pacae discederint. Sed Ebroinus fallaciter agens ut solebat, compatri suo insidias praeparans ipsum Leudesium interficit; [...]* (Fredegarius, *Continuationes*, § 2)

Then Ebroin left Baizieux and reached the domain of Crécy in Ponthieu. He there deceived Leudesius by making a false promise that they should arrange a meeting and, after having exchanged loyalty oaths to each other, should part friends. But, as usual, Ebroin acted treacherously. He laid an ambush for his godfather and slew **this same Leudesius**.

Ille = deictic expression

It conveys the instruction to identify the referent by means of indications present in the context of its occurrence (situation or textual context).

Anaphoric use: it induces a new identification of an afore-mentioned referent

- (4) *Quando Deo conplacuit, Aubedo ligatarius directus a Chlodoueo regi causam legationes usque ad Chrotharium regem Langobardorum, Pavia coinomento Ticino ciuitatem Aetaliae peruenisset, cernens regina, quam sepius in legationem ueniens uiderat et ab ipsa benigne semper susceptus fuerat fuisse retrusam, quasi iniunctum habens exinde inter cetera Chrothario regi suggessit quod illam parentem Francorum quam reginam habuerat, per quem etiam regnum adsumserat, non dibuisset umiliare; [...]* (Fredegarius § 71)

In God's good time, Aubedo, sent by King Clovis on an embassy to the Lombard King Rothari, reached the Italian city of Pavia, or Ticinum. Realizing that the Queen, whom he had often seen during his missions and who had always received him well, was incarcerated, he put it in the course of the conversation to King Rothari, as if on instructions, that it would have been better not to humiliate **that relative of the Franks** who had been given to him as Queen and who had been instrumental in obtaining the throne for him.

First mention use: *ille* N + relative clause

- (5) [...] **homines illos** quos Waiofarius ad defendendam ipsam ciuitatem dimiserat clementiam sue pietatis absoluit dimissisque reuersi sunt ad propria. (*Continuationes*, § 43)

Of his goodness he showed mercy to **the** (litt. **that**) **men** that Waiofar left there to defend the city, and dismissed them to go off home.

Competition: *ipse* > *ille*

Ipse resumes the referent identically, continuity of the referential chain

Selection: *ille* > *ipse*

Ille identifies the referent anew, allows discontinuity in the referential chain

Ille, 3rd person demonstrative

The demonstrative gives the instruction to identify the referent via elements of the context of its occurrence.

Cf. *This book* / *that book*:

- The proximal demonstrative denotes a referent that is wholly identified via elements in the context of its occurrence
- The distal demonstrative signals that the referent cannot be identified solely on the basis of the immediate context of utterance (Vuillaume 1980, Kleiber 1987).

→ **pragmatic inference**: invitation addressed to the hearer to mobilize previous knowledge in order to retrieve the referent.

This invitation is often made explicit in the so-called ‘recognitional’ use (Himmelman 1996): *you know / I talked you about her*.

(6) **Cette personne, tu sais, Mlle E... dont je t’ai parlé, avec qui je devais prendre le thé dans la quinzaine chez Mme Chesneau qui la connaît, eh bien, j’ai appris hier qu’elle a un amant, un grand banquier de Paris, qui ne veut pas l’épouser.** (Villiers de L’Isle-Adam, *Correspondance générale*)

That person, you know, Ms E... I talked you about her, with whom I had to have tea within two weeks in the house of Mrs Chesneau who knows her, well, I heard yesterday that she has a lover, an important banker of Paris, who doesn’t want to marry her.

3rd hypothesis: Pragmatic strengthening, version 2: intersubjectification

The incipient use of the demonstrative is a tool in the speaker-hearer interaction, it conveys an instruction that guides the hearer towards the intended referent.

The demonstrative becomes a definite article when this pragmatic inference becomes a full-fledged semantic feature.

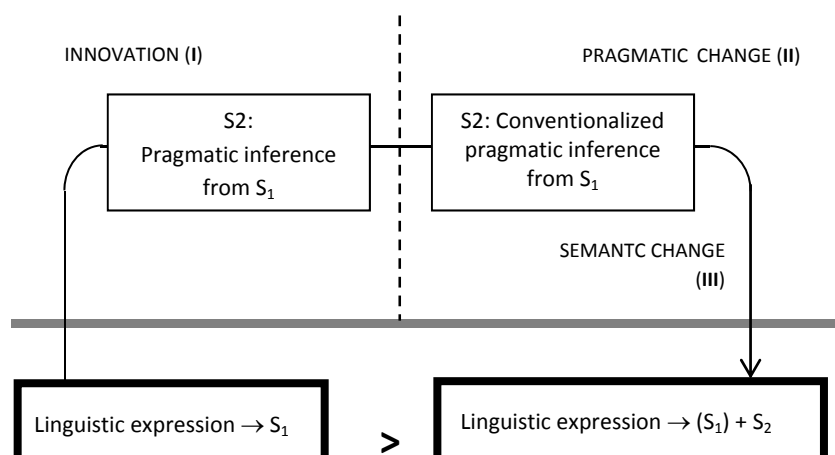
Evaluation of the hypothesis of pragmatic strengthening, version 2: intersubjectification

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2.5. The distinction between pragmatic definiteness and semantic definiteness (Löbner 1985) and the model of semantic change

Distinction between pragmatic and semantic definiteness (cf. strong definite article and weak definite article in Fering (Ebert 1971) and in several German dialects

FIGURE 2: A model of semantic change, based on Traugott & Dasher (2002:38)



Pragmatic definiteness:

The identification of the referent relies on the specific context of utterance

= Stage of pragmatic change (II)

S1: the referent is incompletely identified by elements of the context of its occurrence

(S2: invitation addressed to the hearer to mobilize previous knowledge in order to retrieve the referent)

- to refer to an entity perceivable in the immediate situation: *Stop **the noise!***
- to resume a referent previously mentioned, with the same denomination or by means of a different denomination, which can add new information: *Fred brought me some water, but **the water** was dirty.*
- to refer to a proposition (discourse deixis): *He told me that he had been very ill but I didn't believe **the story**.*
- in first mention, in combination with a relative clause: *What's wrong with Bill? **The woman he went out with last night** was nasty to him.*

Semantic definiteness:

The referent of the definite expression is identified independently of the specific context of utterance

= Stage of semantic change (III)

(S1: the referent is incompletely identified by elements of the context of its occurrence)

S2: invitation addressed to the hearer to mobilize a frame of accessible knowledge with respect to which the referent can be identified in a univocal way. This knowledge is no longer specific to speaker and hearer.

- to refer to a referent retrievable by its structural links with the immediate situation *e.g. the dog (= my dog);*
- for associative anaphor (*e.g. the house-the door*);
- to refer to unique entities within the discourse universe (*e.g. the sun*);
- for generic reference (*e.g. Les chats aiment le lait / ?The cats love the milk*).

Ille in Late Latin is a marker of pragmatic definiteness, but does not occur for the marking of semantic definiteness.

- Resumes a referent previously mentioned, with the same denomination (7) or by means of a different denomination, which can add new information.

(7) *Lucca castrum dirigunt, atque funditus subvertunt, custodes **illius castris** capiunt* (Continuations § 25)
They go to the fort of Loches, they raze it to the ground and take prisoner the guardians of **that fort**.

(4) *Quando Deo conplacuit, Aubedo ligatarius directus a Chlodoueo regi causam legationes usque ad Chrotharium regem Langobardorum, Pavia coinomento Ticino ciuitatem Aetaliae peruenisset, cernens regina, quam sepius in legationem ueniens uiderat et ab ipsa benigne semper susceptus fuerat fuisse retrusam, quasi iniunctum habens exinde inter cetera Chrothario regi suggessit quod **illam parentem Francorum** quam reginam habuerat, per quem etiam regnum adsumserat, non dibuisset umiliare; [...]* (Fredegarius, Chronical, § 71)

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- In first mention, in combination with a relative clause:

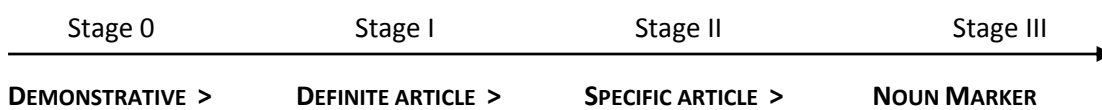
(5) [...] **homines illos** quos Waiofarius ad defendendam ipsam ciuitatem dimiserat clementiam sue pietatis absoluit dimissisque reuersi sunt ad propria. (Fredegarius, Continuationes, § 43)

Of his goodness he showed mercy to **the** (litt. **that**) **men** that Waiofar left there to defend the city, and dismissed them to go off home.

- For discourse deixis

- (6) *Martinus ideoque Lauduno Clauato ingressus infra muros ipsius urbes muniuit . Persecutusque eum Ebroinus ueniens Erchrego uilla , ad Laudunum Clauatum nuncios dirigit Aglibertum ac Reolum Remensis urbis episcopum , ut fide promissa in incertum super uacuas capsas sacramenta falsa dederunt . Qua **in re illae** credens eos , a Lauduno Clauato egressus cum sodalibus ac sociis ad Erchrego ueniens*
 Martin thereupon entered Laon, barricading himself within the city walls. But Ebroin was behind him, and when he reached the villa of Ecry, he sent Aglibert and the Bishop Reolus of Reims as his representatives to Laon, where they gave undertakings but wore falsely upon reliquaries that, unknown to him, were empty. Yet Martin trusted them over this and left Laon with his friends and supporters to go Ecry. And there, with all his companions they killed him. (Fredegar, *Continuationes* §3)

3. Stage II, Stage III and beyond



- Does the existence of other articles slow down the grammaticalization process? We could for instance assume that the existence of an indefinite article deriving from the unity numeral, marking specificity prevents the transition from the definite Stage I article to the specific Stage II article?
- What happens beyond stage III? Does the cycle start again?

3.1 The demonstrative in Modern French : a marker of pragmatic definiteness

Ce N (non-deictic demonstrative), *ce N-ci* (proximal dem.), *ce N-là* (distal dem.)

Jonasson (1998): In order to translate the French demonstrative determiner *ce* in Swedish, the definite article is as often used as the demonstrative determiner. This translation of the demonstrative determiner *ce* by a definite article in Swedish precisely occurs when there is pragmatic definiteness.

- to refer to an entity perceivable in the immediate situation:

(8) Stop **the** noise
*Arrêtez **ce** bruit*
- to resume a referent previously mentioned, with the same denomination or by means of a different denomination, which can add new information:

(9) Peter brought some water and **the** water was dirty.
*Pierre a apporté de l'eau et **cette** eau était sale.*
- to refer to a proposition (discourse deixis)
- in first mention, in combination with a relative clause

In Old French: *cist / cil* (proximal and distal demonstratives)

Cil as a “notoriety demonstrative” in Old French, with a generic meaning:

- (10) *Ce fu en mai el novel tens d'esté;
 Florissent bois et verdissent **cil** pré,
Ces douces eves retraient en canel,
Cil oisel chantent doucement et soëf (Prise d'Orange)*
 It was in May, in the new summer time;
 Woods flourish and (those) meadows turn green

(Those) sweet waters go back into their bed
(Those) birds sing sweetly and softly.

3.2 The definite article in Modern French: still a marker of definiteness?

The definite article is used :

- in generic use (also for count nouns in plural & mass nouns) (11)
- in type readings (places typically associated with an activity), in combination with the highly grammaticalized prepositions *à* and *de* (12)
- in idiomatic expressions (13)

(11) *Les baleines sont des mammifères.*

Whales are mammals.

(12) *Il est rentré à l'hôpital (for medical care) / Il est rentré dans l'hôpital. (in the building)*

il va à l'école, / He goes to school.

(13) *Avoir peur / avoir la trouille 'be scared'*

From Old French on, the definite article is already plainly a marker of semantic definiteness in occurs in the following types of use:

- to refer to a referent retrievable by its structural links with the immediate situation (14);
- for associative anaphor (15);
- to refer to unique entities within the discourse universe (16);
- for generic reference (although zero determination is more common) (17).

(14) *Des esperons puis brochet **le cheval** (Roland, 11th C.)*

with his spurs he pricks the horse (= his horse)

(15) *la forteresce - Atant en **la cort** en antrames, **Le pont** et **la porte** passames. (Yvain, 13th C.)*

the fortress – at that moment, we entered we entered the courtyard and we crossed the bridge and went through the gate.

(16) *Clere est la nuit e **la lune** luisant (Roland, 11th C.)*

the night is clear and the moon shining

(17) *Si cum **li cerfs** s'en vait devant **les chiens**, Devant Rollant si s'en fuient paiens. (Roland, 11th C.)*

In the same way as the deer runs away from the dogs, the pagans flee in front of Roland.

4. Conclusions

Stage 0 > Stage I

- Why is the remote demonstrative is the most common source for the definite article?
- How to account for the shift from demonstrative to definite article ?

Stage II, Stage III and beyond

- What happens beyond Stage III? Does the cycle of the definite article start again?
- Does the existence of other articles slow down or even stop the grammaticalization process?

Methodology

- Importance of real-time observations in order to reconstruct the different steps of grammaticalization path
- Importance of a precise analysis of the very initial stage of grammaticalization, when the impact of the primitive meaning is still strong and when the grammaticalizing form is still infrequent.

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