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

Structure

1. Introduction
   1.1 The article split
   1.2 Theoretical background: The concept types
2. The additional factors
   2.1 Anaphoricity
   2.2 Weak definiteness
   2.3 Prenominal modifier
   2.4 'Favorite' modifier
3. Conclusions
   3.1 The factors and the resulting article forms
   3.2 Towards a ranking

1. Introduction
   1.1 The article split

- Rhenish dialects exhibit a grammatical asymmetry in definiteness marking:
  Article split (Ortmann (2014)): Two different forms of the definite article.
- Strong vs. weak form → the weak form is based on a vowel reduction.
- Dialects under investigation: ‘Kölsch’ and ‘Mönchengladbacher Platt’, spoken in Cologne and Mönchengladbach, respectively, located in North-Rhine-Westphalia near Düsseldorf.
- Examples: Own data
  • Samples of records of Mönchengladbacher Platt (MG Platt).
  • Two different sorts of data: Fairy tales, narrated by one speaker.
  • Spontaneous conversation between two speakers.
  • Transcribed on the basis of an own orthography.

(1) Paradigm of the articles (based on data of MG Platt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOM</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>fem</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>DAT</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>fem</th>
<th>neuter</th>
<th>PL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dà</td>
<td>dii</td>
<td>dat</td>
<td></td>
<td>däm</td>
<td>dä</td>
<td>däm</td>
<td></td>
<td>dii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[de]</td>
<td>[di]</td>
<td>[dat]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[dem]</td>
<td>[de]</td>
<td>[dem]</td>
<td>[di]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dr</td>
<td>dɔ</td>
<td>ɔt</td>
<td></td>
<td>dɔm</td>
<td>dr</td>
<td>dɔm</td>
<td></td>
<td>dɔ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[dr]</td>
<td>[dɔ]</td>
<td>[ɔt]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[dɔm]</td>
<td>[dr]</td>
<td>[dɔm]</td>
<td>[dɔ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Theoretical background: The concept types

- Theory of concept types and determination (CTD) (Löbner (2011)):

(2) **Table of the 4 types of nouns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>[-U] Inherently non-unique</th>
<th>[+U] Inherently unique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[-R]</td>
<td>Sortal nouns (SN)</td>
<td>Individual nouns (IN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stone, book</td>
<td>moon, weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+R]</td>
<td>Relational nouns (RN)</td>
<td>Functional nouns (FN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sister, leg</td>
<td>father, head</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(modified version of Löbner (2011))

- Each noun type exhibits a corresponding concept type: SNs, RNs, INs and FNs exhibit SCs, RCs, INs and FCs, respectively.
- Each concept type corresponds to a specific kind of determination: Definite determination corresponds to the inherently unique concept types.
- Two kinds of uniqueness: semantic and pragmatic uniqueness:
  - Inherently non-unique nouns undergo a type shift: [-U] → [+U]: pragmatic uniqueness.
  - Inherently unique nouns are already [+U], no shift is required: semantic uniqueness.

**Claim:** The selection of the article depends on the respective concept type of the CNP (common noun phrase):

→ The **strong article** is used with **non-unique** ([−U]) concepts, indicating pragmatic uniqueness.

The **weak article** is used with **unique** ([+U]) concepts, indicating semantic uniqueness.

(3) (a) […] *mid ona jildon Bal […]*, worp dāh *Bal huach* […]

[...] with INDEF golden ball threw DEF.M.SG.STRONG ball [SC] up

' [...] with a golden ball [...] threw the ball in the air [...]'

(Fairy tale: 'The Frog King')

(b) Un *dr Moond shin imr nəch.*

and DEF.M.SG.WEAK moon [IC] shone still

'And the moon still shone.'

(Fairy tale: 'Hansel & Gretel')
Claim: The article split is not only governed by the concept type but also by the factors anaphoricity, weak definiteness, prenominal modifier and (prenominal) ‘favorite’ modifier.

2. The additional factors
2.1 Anaphoricity

- Relevance as a factor: Anaphoricity leads to a shift in combination with SCs ([-U]), indicated by the strong article (see (4a)).
- Assumption: Anaphoricity in combination with FCs ([+U]) require the strong article.

(4)[...] klɔptɔ dan an dɔ Düür
knocked then at DEF.F.SG.WEAK front door

ɔn dii Düür jing ɔp
and DEF.F.SG.STRONG front door went open
‘[...] then knocked at the door, and the door opened […]’
(Fairy tale: ’Hansel & Gretel’)

(5) „[...] dii Schtaabbrandbombo, dii si-
DEF.F.SG.STRONG incendiary bomb REL REFL
ɔm Dachschtuul vasjsat hɔdɔ […]”
in_DEF.DAT.M.SG.WEAK roof truss got stuck had

“[...] dā Dachschtuul wɔr […]”
DEF.M.SG.STRONG roof truss was
‘[...] the incendiary bomb that got stuck in the roof truss […] the roof truss was […]’
(Spontaneous conversation)

(6) ɔt wɔr ens anɔ Köning [...] Dɔɔ sɔt dā Köning […]
it was once INDEF king there sat DEF.M.SG.STRONG king
‘Once upon a time there was a king […] There the king sat [with his family…]’
(Fairy tale: ’The Frog King’)


2.2 Weak definiteness

- Cf. de Swart (2012) for bare nominals in non-referential uses, called ‘weak definites’: The noun often occurs without an article (e.g. in Germanic languages: go to school, go to bed)
- Assumption: Weak definiteness is marked with the weak article.

(7) […] klōptən æt an ɗə Dǜür […] knocked it at DEF.F.SG.WEAK front door

māk ɗə Dǜür ɔp […]
made DEF.F.SG.WEAK door open
‘[…] it knocked at the front door […] opened the front door […]’

(Fairy tale: ‘The Frog King’)

(8) Un ɗə ding æt an ɗə Muur ɔ Schtrii̯kholz aanmaakə […] and there did it at DEF.F.SG.WEAK wall INDEF match light

[...] nɔɔr ɔ Schwäjålko noam, un dat an ɗə Wank aanmeek, another INDEF match took and this at DEF.F.SG.WEAK wall lit

[...] nɔɔr ɔ Schtrii̯kholz, meek dat an ɗə Wank aan […]
Another INDEF match made this at DEF.F.SG.WEAK wall on
‘And then it lit a match at the wall […] took another match and lit this at the wall […] another match, lit this at the wall […]’

(Fairy tale: ‘The Little Match Girl’)

2.3 Prenominal modifier

- Cf. Ortmann (2014) for the influence of adjectives in Scandinavian:
The suffixed article indicates uniqueness as such and the additional use of the free article is syntactically governed by adjectives.
- Assumption: Prenominal modifiers require the strong article.

(9) (a) mor-en til Peter
   mother-DEF of Peter
   ‘Peter’s mother’

(b) den syke mor-en til Peter
   DEF sick mother-DEF of Peter
   ‘Peter’s sick mother’

(Ortmann, 2014:305)
2.4 'Favorite' modifier

- ‘Favorite’ modifier (Partee et al. (2002)): superlatives as in the highest mountain, the tallest dog (also mentioned by Löbner (2011)).
  Descriptions containing a superlative refer uniquely: there is only one tallest dog, one highest mountain.
- ‘Favorite’ modifiers require the weak article.

3. Conclusions
3.1 The Factors and the resulting article forms

3.2 Towards a ranking

Ranking of the factors

Anaphoricity, 'favorite' modifier > prenominal modifier > weak definiteness > concept type
**Conclusion:** It has been shown that (i) the factors anaphoricity, weak definiteness, prenominal and 'favorite' modifier govern the article split besides the concept type and that (ii) these factors overrule the factor concept type.

References


