

# (Non-)Functional Concepts: Definite Articles in Bavarian

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  - 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
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# 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, . . .

What does it mean?

## Two Competing Stories

### Familiarity vs. Uniqueness (ignoring presupposed/asserted)

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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.

# Two Competing Stories

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- **uniqueness**: Russell, Frege, Strawson, Löbner, Kadmon, Hawkins,...
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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<sub>w</sub>* Maxi has a book bought. His mother has  
*des biachl* scho glesn.  
*the<sub>s</sub>* book already read

- deictic

- (12) Schau, *dea Hund* is liab.  
look, *the<sub>s</sub>* 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<sub>s</sub>* 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 & Hulseley 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. ≈  
 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<sub>s</sub>* 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<sub>s</sub>* 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?

$$(18) \quad \llbracket the_w \rrbracket = \lambda_w \lambda P. \iota x [P_w(x)]$$

- 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<sub>w</sub>*/*the<sub>s</sub>* child  
 abhoin!  
 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<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>w</sub>/the<sub>s</sub>* 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

$$(29) \quad \llbracket the_w \rrbracket = \lambda w \lambda P. \iota x [R(w) = x],$$

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.

- $P$  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

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- 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 (*the<sub>w</sub> missing marble*) and deictic cases (*the<sub>w</sub> 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<sub>s</sub>/the<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>w</sub>* Hans knows not, who *the<sub>s</sub>/the<sub>w</sub>* 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.

- a. Max is astonished that a drunken person could win the race. [opaque]
- b. 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<sub>w</sub>* Maxi believes firmly that today a ski-race was  
 und  
 and

a. dass *dea* Ma *dea* wos gwonnen hot betrunken  
 that *the<sub>s</sub>* man who won drunk was  
 woa.

b. dass *da* siega betrunken woa.  
 that *the<sub>w</sub>* winner drunk was

transparent:

- (36) D'Christl    hod net glaubt dass heit    a rennen woa  
*the<sub>w</sub>*-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<sub>s</sub>* man who        won        has drunk  
 woa.  
 was
- b. dass *da*    *Siega*    betrunken woa.  
 that *the<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>s</sub>* vs. *the<sub>w</sub>*!

# Summing up

- no unified treatment for the Bavarian definite determiners
- *the<sub>s</sub>* gets anchored to a discourse referent
- *the<sub>w</sub>* 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<sub>s</sub>* (excluded only: contextual, establishing relative clauses)
  - smaller for *the<sub>w</sub>* (only: proper names, superlatives, or inherent definites that have been mentioned before)

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