

# Introduction

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The papers collected in this volume explore the factors determining the referential interpretation of noun phrases across a wide array of typologically unrelated languages. The languages discussed include Armenian, Brazilian Portuguese, Catalan, Danish, French Sign Language (LSF), several West-Germanic languages, Modern Greek, Japanese, Karitiana, Martinique creole (Martinikè), Modern Hebrew, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Tatar and Turkish. The individual papers approach this question from complementary angles, covering morphology, syntax, semantics, information structure and acquisition.

The research reported here was inspired by the project *Languages With and Without Articles: calculating nominal reference*. By comparing languages with and without articles, the aim of this project was to place definite and indefinite articles in the wider context of grammatical devices constraining the construal of nominal reference. In what follows we use the abbreviation NP for *Noun Phrase*, taking this term as neutral with respect to the precise syntactic analysis of the constituent (e.g. NP, NumP, DP ...) which may be proposed in the aftermath of Abney (1987).

As is well known, the referential properties of nominal expressions are constrained by a number of grammatical factors, both external and internal to the noun phrase (cf. Kramsky 1972, Lyons 1999). External factors include, e.g., information structure, word order, case, verbal aspect, while internal factors include determiners, number, quantity and quantifiers, classifiers, noun type (e.g. count, mass, collective). The definition of *definiteness* is complicated by the fact that it is variably viewed as a syntactic property or feature arising from a structural position: D, or as a semantic property involving the way the reference of a noun phrase is construed in its sentence and discourse (cf. section 1.1. below).

## 1 Issues in the Analysis of Definiteness

Determiners and definiteness have been extensively studied in formal linguistics, and this introduction does not attempt to provide an exhaustive survey of the vast relevant bibliography. In what follows we single out a few key issues addressed in current research on definiteness and (in)definite articles, in order to place the contributions gathered in this volume in a wider theoretical perspective:

- (i) To what extent are (in)definite determiners necessary for argumenthood?
- (ii) What are the semantic features expressed by (in)definite determiners and how are these semantic categories expressed in languages without articles?
- (iii) What is the relationship between marking by a “definite determiner” and semantic “definiteness”?

### 1.1 *Nominal Reference and Definiteness*

Many studies regard the occurrence of definite determiners as licensed by two semantic properties: Uniqueness (or Maximality), and Familiarity.

The property of Uniqueness is illustrated by examples such as (1a) below, where the singular definite noun phrase *the pear* identifies the unique pear referent provided by the discourse context, or (1b), where the definite noun phrase *the moon* identifies an entity a priori thought of as unique in our human world (cf., e.g., Löbner 1985, Corblin 1987). In a context such as (1c), where a singular referent fails to be presupposed as unique, the definite article is banned. Since the term *uniqueness* is not quite appropriate to account for the definite article in plural NPs such as *the pears* in (1d) (Hawkins 1978:158), the term *maximality* has been proposed to capture the semantic effect of definite determiners regardless of number. Under this view, a definite determiner signals that its NP identifies the maximal set which, in the discourse context, satisfies the descriptive content of the head noun (see e.g. Link 1983). For a set reduced to a single member, this boils down to uniqueness.

- |     |    |  |   |
|-----|----|--|---|
| (1) | a. | There was a pear on the table.                     | John took <b>the pear</b> .<br>(unique referent/maximal set of ‘pear’)                        |
|     | b. | <b>The moon</b> stood still,<br>on Blueberry Hill. | (unique referent/maximal set of ‘moon’)   |
|     | c. | There were a few pears on the table.               | John took a/ <del>#the</del> <b>pear</b> .<br>(non unique referent/non maximal set of ‘pear’) |
|     | d. | There were a few pears on the table.               | John took <b>the pears</b> .<br>(maximal set of ‘pear’)                                       |

*Familiarity* has been modelled as the contrast between newly introduced discourse referents and previously introduced referents (Kamp 1981, Heim 1982). In (2), for example, the indefinite noun phrases *a man*, *a woman*, *a hat* introduce new discourse referents, while the definite noun phrase *the man* refers

back to a *familiar* individual—familiar to the speaker and hearer, since previously introduced by the indefinite NP *a man*:

- (2) **A man and a woman** came in. **The man** was wearing a **funny hat**.

This dichotomy between previously introduced discourse referents for definites, and newly introduced discourse referents for indefinites is, however, underdetermined (cf. Kaneko, this volume, for a discussion of the link between Uniqueness and Familiarity). In particular, various approaches rely on a range of definitions of “given” and “new” information making use of such notions as *specificity*, *topicality*, *salience*, or *accessibility* (cf. Gundel & Fretheim 2005; for a discussion of definiteness in French Sign Language in these terms see Garcia & Sallandre this vol.).

*Specificity* has been linked to an existence presupposition: while the specific indefinite in (3a) presupposes the existence of an individual being looked for, the non-specific indefinite in (3b) does not carry such a presupposition (Fodor and Sag 1982, Enç 1991):

- (3) a. He is looking for a (certain) secretary.  
       (specific: there exists a (certain) secretary such that he is looking for her)  
       b. He is looking for a secretary.  
       (nonspecific: anybody qualified as ‘secretary’ can apply).

*Topicality* has been linked to the “definiteness” issue since Kuroda’s (1965, 1979, a.o.) and Kuno’s (1973, a.o.) work on topic markers in Japanese. As they point out, the phrase marked by the Topic marker *wa* in Japanese (or *(n)eun* in Korean) necessarily has a “definite” interpretation. This constraint is illustrated below by the Korean examples in (4), where the argument marked as subject by the particle *ga* in (4a) may be construed as preidentified (definite) or not (indefinite), while the phrase marked as topic by the particle *neun* in (4b) necessarily points to a uniquely identified referent pre-activated by the immediate discourse context:

- (4) a. Beoseu -ga o-goiss -da.<sup>1</sup> (Korean)  
 bus -SUBJ come-PROG-DEC  
 (i) 'There's {a/the} bus coming.'  
 (ii) 'It's {a/the} bus that's coming.'
- b. Beoseu -neun o -goiss-da.  
 bus -TOP come -PROG-DEC  
 (i) (What about the bus? >) 'The bus is coming.' [simple topic]  
 (ii) (What about the bus and the taxi? >) 'The BUS is coming (not the TAXI).' [contrastive topic]

This link between topicality and some definition of familiarity is widely assumed in works on Topicality—cf. Gundel's (1988) TOPIC FAMILIARITY CONDITION and Lambrecht's (1994) PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION OF REFERENCE AND ROLE.

- (5) a. **Topic-familiarity condition** (Gundel 1988)  
 An entity, E, can successfully serve as a topic, T,  
 iff both speaker and addressee have previous knowledge of or  
 familiarity with E.
- b. **Principle of Separation of Reference and Role** (Lambrecht 1994:185):  
 "Do not introduce a referent and talk about it in the same clause".

Similar views are formalised by Erteshik-Shir (1997) in her own model of Information Structure, which leads her to assume that every utterance must contain a Topic—covert if not overt—instantiating a presupposed or "old" discourse referent.

- (6) Utterances are conceived of as a set of instructions by a speaker to a hearer to update and organize a file so that the file will contain all the information the speaker intends to convey. The file consists of indexed cards which represent existing discourse referents. Information is entered on these cards according to well-defined principles. Each card has an indexed 'heading' and information pertaining to this heading can be

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1 Abbreviations used in the Korean glosses: DEC = declarative sentence; PROG = progressive aspect; SUBJ = subject marker; TOP = topic marker.

entered on the card. Common ground information is thus ordered according to the ‘topics’ defined by each discourse referent.

ERTESCHIK-SHIR 1997:17

Conversely, existential constructions are generally associated with new discourse referents, i.e. indefinite NPs, an effect known as the *definiteness effect* (Milsark 1979 and Keenan 2003 for *there*-constructions in English, Leonetti 2008 for Romance).

- (7) a. There was a **child** in the garden.  
       There were {**children** / **some children** / **few children**} in the garden.  
 b. \*There was **the child** in the garden.  
       \*There were {**the children** / **most children** / **all the children**} in the garden.
- (8) a. Hay {algunos / dos / muchos / pocos /  $\emptyset$ } perros.           (Spanish)  
       have some / two / many / few /  $\emptyset$  dogs  
       ‘There exist some / two / many / few dogs.’  
 b. \*Hay {él / el perro / ese perro / Fido}.  
       have 3MSG / DEF dog / DEM dog / Fido  
       Lit. ‘There exists {it / the dog / that dog / Fido}.’ (adapted from Leonetti 2008)

As Erteschik-Shir (this volume) shows, apparent counterexamples to the correlation between topicality and definiteness, on the one hand, and existential constructions and indefiniteness, on the other, can be explained in a theory that allows subordinate information structures.

*Accessibility* (cf. Ariel 1990) restricts the availability of discourse referents as antecedents for anaphoric expressions in the discourse. The conditions on accessibility have been variously discussed in terms of salience, discourse activation and givenness (cf. Lewis 1979, Gundel et al. 1993, Walker et al. 1998). The Givenness Hierarchy, for instance, links the referential status of NPs to their different available forms in a given language (Gundel et al. 1993):

- (9) **Givenness Hierarchy** (Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski. 1993 and references therein)
- in focus* > *activated* > *familiar* > *uniquely identifiable* > *type identifiable*
- it            this N            that N            the N                            a N

Needless to say, the terms *specificity*, *topicality* and *salience* are themselves given varying definitions across different studies (cf. v. Heusinger 2002 on specificity, Gundel and Fretheim 2005, Neeleman and Vermeulen 2012 on the definition of topic).

### 1.2 *(In)definite Articles and Argumenthood*

It has been proposed that determiners are required to turn a predicate into a referential argument (Higginbotham 1985). A syntactic phrasing of this hypothesis is proposed by Longobardi (1994, 2000) who assumes that argumental noun phrases are syntactically DPs (Determiner Phrases). This hypothesis has triggered extensive discussion, rephrasings and counter-proposals (cf. Chierchia 1998, Cheng and Sybesma 1999, Coene and D’Hulst eds, 2003, Dobrovie-Sorin and Laca 2003, Bošković 2008, a.o.). Chierchia (1998) proposes that lexical nouns are not predicative across languages but must be parameterized for every language as  $\pm$ argumental and  $\pm$ predicative, citing Mandarin Chinese as a language with inherently argumental/ kind-denoting nouns. Under this theory, determiners are viewed as spell-outs of the ‘Down’ operator which derives Kinds (arguments) from Properties (predicates), and are thus only necessary in languages whose nouns are lexically predicative (thus, in English but not in Chinese).

Bošković (2008, 2012) argues that argumental noun phrases are not universally DPs, proposes a list of systematic syntactic discrepancies between (determiner-less) NP-languages and DP-languages (cf. Bošković and Şener, this volume, for an analysis of Turkish along these lines). According to this theory, the structure of bare NPs in article-less languages is different from that of DPs in languages which have at least an overt definite article.

In the wake of Abney’s (1987) dissertation arguing for a syntactic parallel between noun phrases and clauses, a structure of NPs acknowledging various functional layers between the maximal phrase (DP) and its lexical component (NP) has been explored: Number (cf. Ritter 1991), Quantity and Classifier (cf. Doetjes 1997, Cheng and Sybesma 1999, Borer 2005), “Noun-hood” (cf. Kihm 2003). Under these assumptions, the hypothesis put forward by Higginbotham (1985) can be syntactically rephrased as follows: syntactic NPs are predicates, and in order to function as arguments they must be embedded under at least one functional projection (cf. Pereltsvaig 2007, 2013, this volume). It has been



Upper Sorbian; Zribi-Hertz and Jean-Louis, this volume on Martinikè). In some languages (e.g. French or English), pragmatic and semantic definiteness may be signalled by the same morphology (the “definite article”) and must therefore be told apart on syntactic and semantic grounds (cf. Aguilar and Zwarts 2010 on English; Corblin 2001, 2011 on French).

As argued by Löbner (1985, 2011) semantic and pragmatic definiteness may be regarded as the two end-points of the Definiteness Scale in (11):

- (11) Scale of uniqueness (Löbner 2011:320): pragmatic >> semantic definiteness<sup>2</sup>
- a. deictic with sortal common NPs (e.g. *this book*)
  - b. anaphoric with sortal common NPs (e.g. *a man came in ... the man*)
  - c. sortal common NPs with establishing RC (e.g. *the house that I live in*)
  - d. functional common NPs with explicit definite possessor (e.g. *his mother*)
  - e. definite associative anaphors (*a car—the motor*)
  - f. individual common NPs (e.g. *the sun, the king*)
  - g. proper names (e.g. *the Nile, the Alps*)

While languages with two articles are uniform with respect to article choice at the end-points of the scale (cf. (11a/b) above), article choice for the intermediate types is more variable (see (12), cf. Cabredo Hofherr this volume, Studler this volume and references therein).

- (12) Det / At iast buk, wat hi skrewen hee, docht  
 DET<sub>FULL</sub> / DET<sub>RED</sub> first book REL he written has is-worth  
 niks. (Fehring Frisian)  
 nothing.  
 ‘The first book he wrote is no good.’ (Ebert 1970:169, ex 33’)

Differences in the distribution of definite determiners can also be observed between languages that only have one definite determiner. As is well known, plural generic NPs appear article-less in English but obligatorily with a definite article in Romance languages, illustrated here by French:

<sup>2</sup> SORTAL NOUNS are unary predicate terms, of type ⟨e,t⟩, such as *table, tree*. INDIVIDUAL

- (13) Les pandas sont végétariens. (French)  
 DEF pandas are vegetarians.

The plural definite determiners in English and French are therefore not equivalent (see Ionin et al., this volume, for a study of L2 acquisition of articles in Brazilian Portuguese, English and Spanish in the expression of genericity).

Part of the contrast in (13) could possibly be explained by different degrees of grammaticalisation of definite determiners in English and French. From a diachronic viewpoint, definite determiners indeed spread along the scale in (11) from deictic and anaphoric uses to semantically-unique uses like associative anaphora, individual nouns (*the sun*) and generic NPs (*the Panda*) (cf. De Mulder and Carlier 2010). Notice, however, that singular and plural definite determiners need not proceed along the same grammaticalisation path. In English, for instance, the singular definite determiner is possible in generic NPs (*the Panda*) while the plural definite determiner is not.

#### 1.4 *Definite Determiners and Definiteness*

The study of definiteness is further complicated by the fact that the distribution of (in)definite determiners is not limited to contexts where the expression of (in)definiteness is at stake. At least three problematic cases deserve to be mentioned: (i) the occurrence of definite determiners where no “uniqueness presupposition” seems present, (ii) the possible occurrence of multiple definite determiners in a single noun phrase, (iii) the absence of determiners with certain types of nouns which in other languages would call for a definite determiner.

Case (i) is illustrated by the so-called “weak definites” of, e.g. English (Poesio 1994, Carlson et al 2006, Klein and al. 2009, Aguilar and Zwarts 2010)—cf. ex. (13)—or French (Corblin 2001, 2011)—cf. ex. (14):

- (13) a. He took **the train** to come here, and so did Mary.  
 [true even if they took different trains]  
 b. He usually spends his summers at **the seaside**.  
 [true if he spends his summer vacation in a different place every year]

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NOUNS are individual terms, of type *e* such as *pope*, *US president*, *sun*. RELATIONAL NOUNS are binary predicate terms, of type  $\langle e, (e, t) \rangle$  such as *brother*, *sister*. FUNCTIONAL NOUNS are unary function terms, of type  $\langle e, e \rangle$  such as *mother*, *father*, *head*. For details see Löbner (2011, pp. 280–282).

- (14) Marie est à l'hôpital, et Jean aussi.  
 Mary be.PRS.3SG at DEF.SG hospital and John too  
 'Mary is in (the) hospital, and so is John.'  
 [true if they are in different hospitals]

For Malagasy, Paul (2009) argues that the semantic contribution of the determiner is limited to contexts that allow a choice between presence and absence of the determiner; in contexts where the determiner is either required or banned, the interpretation of DPs is underdetermined.

The second type of mismatch between definite articles and definiteness can be found in constructions containing multiple definite determiners. Multiple definite marking is found in such examples as (15a) (Modern Greek) and (15b') (Modern French):

- (15) a. *i asimēnia i pena* vs. a'. *i asimēnia pena* (Modern Greek)  
 DEF silver DEF pen DEF silver pen  
 'the silver pen' (adapted from ex 2 Lekakou and Szendrői this volume)
- b. *la niña más viva* vs. b'. *la fille la plus intelligente*  
 DEF girl more intelligent DEF girl DEF more intelligent  
 'the most intelligent girl' (Spanish) 'the most intelligent girl' (French)

Lekakou and Szendrői (this volume) argue that the distribution of the definite determiner in (15a/a') corresponds to a syntactic difference in Modern Greek. The contrast between Spanish and French in (15b/b') is as yet unexplained.

Well-known examples of "missing determiners" are provided by mass nouns in a language like English, which only requires overt determiners for singular count nouns in argument positions (16a/b). Mass nouns have been shown to pattern with plurals (Jespersen 1909, Carlson 1977):

- (16) a. He bought **oil** for the car  
 b. He bought \*(a) **parasol** for the house.
- (17) a. **Oil** is expensive.  
 b. \*(A) **parasol** is expensive.  
 c. **Parasols** are expensive.

The nature and sources of the mass/count distinction are a topic of on-going research (cf. Chierchia 2010; Massam, ed., 2012, and references therein, Doron & Müller this volume).

### 1.5 *Articles and (In)definiteness from a Crosslinguistic Perspective*

In a nutshell, the conceptual issues which underly today's research on noun phrases include the following: What are the sources of (In)definiteness effects associated to noun phrases? How do morphology, syntax and semantics interact in the expression of Number? What are the sources of the so-called Mass/Count distinction, and is it universal? Must argument noun phrases contain a covert "Determiner" in Languages Without Articles? Can "Definiteness" be viewed as a universal, language-independent, cognitive category? As regards Languages With Articles, why and to what extent do definite articles vary as to their morphology, distribution, and semantic effects? To what extent is the acquisition of determiner systems by L2 learners influenced by their L1 grammar? Are there mechanisms of reference construal common to all natural grammars? Does the vocal or visual nature of the *signifier* have a crucial incidence on such mechanisms?

## 2 **This Volume**

The eleven articles selected for this book each contribute partial answers to some of the above questions. The proposed analyses are based on first-hand data from sixteen typologically diverse languages or dialectal groups.

The four papers grouped in Part I ("Noun Phrase syntax and interpretation: in search of crosslinguistic regularities") seek to bring out interpretive and morphosyntactic invariants in noun phrases, beyond the occurrence or non-occurrence of articles: the first text bears on Information Structure, the second on Number, the third on the Mass/Count distinction, and the fourth on the syntactic structure of noun phrases in Languages Without Articles.

Nomi Erteschik-Shir ("Information Structure and (In)definiteness") discusses the two most prominent examples of the interaction between Definiteness and Information Structure (abbreviated IS in what follows): Topicalization has been associated with Definiteness (specificity) and existentials with Indefiniteness (the "definiteness effect"). Both phenomena exhibit seemingly idiosyncratic exceptions to the assumed correlations. This paper demonstrates that these exceptions are resolved by a careful analysis in terms of IS. Section 2 defines the primitives of IS, topic and focus, and shows how subordinate ISs afford an explanation of the fact that specific indefinites can provide topics.

Section 3 shows how topicalization is constrained differently in Danish, Norwegian, Hebrew, Catalan and Russian in view of their different canonical ISs as well as other language-particular properties. Although the initial position in Germanic languages is generally dedicated to topics, non-topics in this position also impact IS by formingthetic sentences. Section 4 offers an analysis of the definiteness effect in existential clauses and gives some evidence that here again differences in canonical IS account for syntactic and morphological variation across languages.

Asya Pereltsvaig (“Number and Numberlessness in Languages With and Without Articles”) is concerned with the representation of number in article-less languages, focusing on two distantly related languages—Russian and Armenian—and an unrelated language, Tatar. It is argued that morphological number and semantic number are mediated by syntactic number, encoded even in article-less languages via a dedicated functional projection, NumP. Thus, an argument is made against the strongest anti-DP position that denies any functional projections inside a nominal in an article-less language. Instead, it is shown that at least the projection of NumP must be assumed even for article-less languages.

The focus of this paper is on the so-called number-neutral nominals, i.e. nominals that denote ‘one or more X’. Semantically, such nominals are neither singular (‘one X’) nor plural (‘more than one X’). Pereltsvaig argues that the semantic number-neutrality of such nominals results from the lack of the syntactic number feature, normally hosted in NumP, which she shows to be absent from such nominals. Depending on the language, such number-neutral nominals can be morphologically either singular or plural. Pereltsvaig further shows that the morphological expression of number neutrality does not correlate with whether a given language has articles or not.

Edit Doron and Ana Müller (“The cognitive basis for the Mass/Count distinction: evidence from bare nouns”) seek to tighten the link between the Mass/Count distinction and its cognitive basis. They first discuss Karitiana, where the Mass/Count distinction is semantically active although it fails to be signalled by syntax or morphology, then Hebrew, a language which has plural morphology but where countability is argued to arise from the semantic identification of *stable units* (in the sense of Chierchia 2010, who regards the cognitive contrast  $\langle \pm \text{stable-unit} \rangle$  as the basis of the count/mass distinction), rather than from morphological number. On the basis of further hitherto undiscussed data from Hebrew involving mass nouns with atomic structure, Doron and Müller argue that the cognitive model of the Mass/Count distinction sketched by Chierchia (2010) should be improved so as to include what Chierchia calls “fake mass nouns” among regular “mass” nouns, whose atomic structure crucially involves *unstable units*.

Željko Bošković and Serkan Şener (“The Turkish NP”) argue for an analysis of the Noun Phrase in Turkish—a Language Without Articles—involving no Determiner Phrase above the NP node, an assumption in line with Bošković’s general theory of Noun Phrase structure developed in his previous works (cf. Bošković 2008), and which runs against the “DP Hypothesis” as developed by, e.g., Longobardi (2000). Empirical evidence in support of Bošković’s NP Hypothesis is provided for Turkish by the order of constituents within the Noun Phrase, and by some interesting constraints on interpretation. Bošković and Şener show that Turkish disallows stranding of possessors, demonstratives, numerals, and adjectives under ellipsis, a constraint expected under the NP Hypothesis, since under this theory these elements are “part” of the NP itself, hence cannot survive NP ellipsis. The authors however argue that a functional projection is present above NP in classifier constructions. Classifier constructions allow internal ellipsis within the Noun Phrase, with the elements located within the Classifier Phrase, hence outside of NP, surviving ellipsis. Bošković and Şener finally explore the possibility of a functional projection in predicate constructions and demonstrate that several cases which appear to involve internal ellipsis do not actually do so.

The six articles grouped in Part II take a close look at “definiteness”—its nature and markers—in five typologically different languages or language groups: West Germanic, Greek, Japanese, Martinikè creole, and French Sign Language (LSF). From a crosslinguistic perspective definiteness appears as a heterogeneous concept with respect to both morphology (definite articles may be full, reduced, expletive, cliticised or prefixed) and to semantics, since the term covers a range of different interpretations depending on the chosen markers. In one language (LSF), the relevance of semantic “Definiteness” for linguistic description is overtly questioned.

Rebekka Studler (“The morphology, syntax and semantics of definite determiners in Swiss German”) scrutinizes the three possible translations of English *the* in Swiss German: a strong article, a weak article, and a proximal demonstrative, all three historically derived from the same demonstrative morpheme. These three determiners are definite to the extent that they all signal the referent as uniquely identifiable, but they differ as to their distribution and interpretations. The strong definite selects nominals construed as anaphorically unique, the weak definite, nominals construed as inherently unique (e.g. proper names, inalienables, superlatives.), and the proximal demonstrative, nominals construed as deictically unique. Studler argues that each “definite” determiner heads its own syntactic projection within the larger noun phrase.

Patricia Cabredo Hofherr (“Reduced definite articles with restrictive relative clauses”) further discusses the competition between full and reduced def-

inite articles in West-Germanic languages (Austro-Bavarian German, Fehring Frisian, Swiss German dialects), and the traces of such a system in Standard German, focusing on those definite Noun Phrases which contain a restrictive relative clause. In the literature on definite determiners in Standard German and Austro-Bavarian, it is claimed that restrictive relative clauses cannot combine with reduced definite determiners in their Noun Phrase. In other West-Germanic varieties, however, this restriction does not hold. Cabredo Hofherr shows that these diverging conclusions are due to two interrelated factors: (i) the systematic incompatibility between reduced definite determiners and restrictive relative clauses only concerns *contrastive* restrictive relative clauses; (ii) the examples of restrictive relative clauses considered in the different studies are not of the same type. She argues that while all the languages under consideration select the full definite determiner with contrastive restrictive relatives, languages differ with respect to definiteness marking with other types of restrictive relatives. A general tendency is that relative clauses construed as non-specific favour the selection of the reduced definite article.

Marika Lekakou and Kriszta Szendrői (“When determiners abound: implications for the encoding of definiteness”) investigate the grammar of “definiteness” in Greek. Their point of departure is the so-called polydefinite construction, whereby an adjective modifying a noun bears its own definite determiner, resulting in double (or even multiple) definite determiners within the same noun phrase. The analysis proposed by the authors crucially draws a parallel between polydefinites and close appositives (e.g. *my sister the dancer (not the writer)*), which also involve multiple definite determiners in Greek. The authors’ central claim is that multiple definite determiners are semantically expletive: they instantiate a type of syntactic agreement, while semantic definiteness arises from an empty functional head dominating DP. Independent evidence for this analysis is drawn from pseudo-partitives and PP-modifiers. Possible counterarguments against the proposed analysis, involving proper names and nominal co-ordination, are discussed and dismissed.

Makoto Kaneko (“The semantics and syntax of Japanese adnominal demonstratives”) discusses the grammatical properties of the Japanese adnominal demonstratives *a-no*, *ko-no* and *so-no*. As regards interpretation, he claims that, while conveying familiarity (an assumed ingredient of semantic definiteness) by means of the demonstrative prefixes *a-*, *ko-* and *so-*, they lack uniqueness or maximality (another assumed ingredient of semantic definiteness), and that the whole demonstrative phrase is existentially quantified. As regards syntax, he proposes to analyse Japanese adnominal demonstratives as NP-adjuncts, an assumption supported by three morpho-syntactic properties: (i) the demonstrative prefixes, *ko-*, *so-*, *a-* systematically display the same morphology as that

of the WH-prefix *do-*; (ii) the Japanese demonstratives may be preceded by a restrictive modifier, like other adjunct modifiers; (iii) they behave with respect to the ellipsis of the following NP as other *no*-marked expressions clearly identified as adnominal adjuncts. Kaneko argues that these hypotheses further shed light on some data from L2 acquisition.

Anne Zribi-Hertz and Loïc Jean-Louis (“From Noun to Name: on definiteness marking in Modern Martinikè”) explore the morphosyntax of definite noun phrases in Martinique creole, where three different overt morphemes qualify as “definiteness markers” since they unambiguously identify a unique referent. They however differ from one another as to their morphology, distribution, and interpretive effects. The enclitic determiner *-LA* signals the referent of its DP as *pragmatically* definite, in Löbner’s (1985) sense, viz. as crucially identified by means of anchoring to the discourse context or utterance situation. Two other morphemes, *l(a)-* and *lé(-)*, are shown to form *semantically* definite DPs (in Löbner’s sense) which unambiguously identify individual terms independently of the discourse context and utterance situation: *l(a)-* is a word-level prefix, while *lé(-)* occurs either as a free morpheme (with common nouns) or as a prefix (with some country names). The distributional and semantic properties of *l(a)-* and *lé(-)* DPs make them similar to definite proper names. The authors argue that *l(a)-* and *lé(-)* form a subtype of definite DPs they call *Names*, characterised by their syntactic and semantic properties regardless of the “proper” or “common” nature of their head noun.

Brigitte Garcia and Marie-Anne Sallandre (“Reference resolution in French Sign Language: the effects of the visuo-gestual modality”) seek to identify the linguistic units which contribute to the construal of nominal reference in French Sign Language (LSF). A central observation is that these units include not only lexical signs, but also another type of items the authors characterise as *non-conventional*, which frequently occur in actual signed discourse and involve unlimited creativity on the part of the signer. This second class of units has been acknowledged in all the works on sign languages reviewed by Garcia and Sallandre, but the analysis of these items fails to be consensual among researchers. After having laid out the main assumptions available at this stage in the specialised literature, the authors present their own semiological approach to non-conventional units. In contradistinction with other authors working on noun phrases in sign languages, who only take into account conventional lexical signs, Garcia and Sallandre argue, on the basis of a corpus of attested data from LSF, that a linguistic description of sign languages should take into account both lexical and non conventional units, as well as the different ways in which the two types of units alternate and combine in discourse.

The single article which makes up Part III examines the noun-phrase issue from the perspective of second-language acquisition, focusing on the means used to trigger generic or Kind interpretations.

Tania Ionin, Elaine Grolla, Silvina Montrul and H elade Santos (“When articles have different meanings: acquiring the expression of genericity in English and Brazilian Portuguese”) report on an experimental study of the expression of genericity in the acquisition of English by native speakers of Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, and in the acquisition of Brazilian Portuguese by native speakers of English and Spanish. English, Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese differ as to which noun-phrase types are open to generic and kind interpretations. On the basis of these discrepancies, specific, testable predictions are made regarding the effects of cross-linguistic influence on the expression of genericity in second-language acquisition. These predictions are tested in a small-scale study, by means of a written, context-based Acceptability Judgment Task. The results show that transfer from the learners’ native language has a limited effect and is overridden by considerations of register and/or input frequency.

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