The System of Definite Determiners

Question: Which forms are undoubtedly reduced forms?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular Definite</th>
<th>Masc</th>
<th>Fem</th>
<th>neut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced</td>
<td>de hund</td>
<td>d hand</td>
<td>s huus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>dä hund</td>
<td>die hand</td>
<td>das huus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>dää hund</td>
<td>die hand</td>
<td>daas huus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“the dog”</td>
<td>“the hand”</td>
<td>“the building”</td>
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Observations: + Differences: vowel quality, quantity and stress
+ We have form syncretisme in the feminine paradigm. Additional syncretisms may arise in faster speech.
+ All three forms only differ significantly in the case of neuter constructions
+ Full and demonstrative differ with respect to stress. Stress is a reflex of focus. Lengthening of the vowel might be a phonetic effect of stress.

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Observations: + Same determiners as in the feminine singular paradigm.

Evidence for reduction: Sandhi Phenomena: Place assimilation of a coronal to the following obstruent: We observe Sandhi phenomena with reduced d/s and a following obstruent (see Féry/Meier 1993 for the full picture).

(1) d frau → pfrau “the woman” (singular)
    d fraue → pfraue “the women” (plural)
    s säckli → säckli “the bag-diminutive”
    etc.

Side remark: The availability of reduced feminine/plural forms is restricted by morphsyntax: no Sandhi. [Patricia Cabredo Hofherr suggests that prosody plays a role, p.c.]

(2) di fantastischi frau vs. *pfantastischi frau “the fantastic woman”

Questions:
- **Phenomena:** What governs the choice of the reduced article? Is the choice semantically or pragmatically determined? Where is the split?
- **Theory:** There are several theories that explain/describe the meaning of definite articles. Is one theory suited best for Zurich German? Do we need more than one of the rival theories to describe all the phenomena?
- **Cross-linguistic variation:** Are the phenomena in all languages/dialects uniform?
Claims:
- **Phenomena:** The choice of the article is pragmatic in nature.
- **Theory:** A fine-grained familiarity theory will do the job.
- **Cross-linguistic variation:** ???

The Theory (here informal: see van Genabith et al. 2011 for the most recent published version, recent talks by Hans Kamp on so-called articulated contexts.)

Anaphora/Presupposition Resolution in old DRT (simplified)

(3) A man bought a guinea pig. The guinea pig was big.

Starting point (first sentence of 3): empty discourse context.

Step 1: We add the first sentence to the empty discourse context

3a) [ ] ✤ [x, y: man(x) & gp(y) & bought(x,y)] = [x, y: man(x) & gp(y) & saw(x,y)]

Step 2: We build a representation for the second sentence:

3b) Preliminary DRS: <{[z: gp(z)]}, [z: big(z)]> Bipartite structure
   Presuppositional part, new information

Step 3: Anaphora Resolution/Presupposition resolution: We compare the presuppositional part with the old context and single out the discourse referent that satisfies the presupposition. (= Familiarity condition on definite NPs) → y is the so-called *justifying discourse referent (JDR)*.

3c) [x, y: man(x) & gp(y) & bought(x,y)] <{[z: gp(z)]}, [z: big(z)]> Discourse context Preliminary DRS

Elimination of the presupposition (since the JDR has the property required) and introduction of a condition on the values (here identity relation) of the new referent and the JDR.

3d) [x, y: man(x) & gp(y) & bought(x,y)] ✤ [z: big(z) & z = y]
   = [x, y, z: man(x) & gp(y) & bought(x,y) & big(z) & z = y]

Ingredients: justifying referent and a new referent, and a relation between them and conditions on the relation or the location of the referents (conditions for the justifying referent and new information on the new referent): discourse context.

Problem 1: It is odd to start with empty discourse contexts.
Problem 2: Use of discourse new definite descriptions.
Idea: justifying referent must not necessarily come from the discourse context. There are other contexts that may supply referents: Transfer to the discourse context if necessary.

Articulated contexts (from Kamp): Context components (DRSs and entity libraries):

Context = discourse context (K_dis): DRS gained by processing linguistic context
   + environment context (K_env): set of representations of elements of the immediate utterance situation. **The door, that chair, this blackbord, …**
   + encyclopedic context (K_enc): set of representations of known entities: combinations of discourse referents and DRSs: **the (actual) pope, the sun, …**
   + generic context (K_gen): Set of representations of items of generic world knowledge. **If there is a party there is also beer.**
Claim 1: The **full article** use in Zurich German is anaphoric (see also Schwager 2007 on Bavarian, Studler 2008, Schwarz 2009 on German P-Det contraction). Full article interpretation is almost always standard presupposition resolution. Three cases: Case 1 and 2 are standard DRT, Case 3 necessitates a first adjustment.

Case 1: Linguistic antecedent is an indefinite (4), a definite description, a name (5), a pronoun (epithets, e.g.; 6). Justifying discourse referent is available, identity.

(4) En ma hät es meersäuli kchauft. Das meersäuli isch groß.
A man had a guinea pig bought the(f) guinea pig is big
“A man bought a guinea pig. The guinea pig is big.”

(5) S Heidi hat zää meersäuli. Und was hät das Heidi mit dene meersäuli gmacht?
the(r) Heidi has 10 guinea_pigs and what has the(f) Heidi with the(f) guinea_pigs done
“Heidi has ten guinea pigs and what did Heidi do with the guinea pigs?”

(6) Epitets: accommodation of the descriptive content
Lueg sie aa. Rat wo das säuli gski isch
Look her at Guess where this piglet been have.
“Look at her. Guess where this piglet was.”

(7) “Classifiers”: accommodation of the descriptive content
De Hans hat d tierli gfüetteret. Die meersäuli händ hunger ghaa.
The(r) Hans has the(r) animals fed. The(f) guinea_pigs have hunger had
“Hans fed the animals. The guinea pigs were hungry.”

Observation: in all cases we could have used a pronoun instead of a definite description in order to refer to the discourse referents. → Kamp’s discourse context

Case 2: Linguistic antecedent is construable by summation, kind reference or abstraction of the linguistic antecedent (see Kamp & Reyle 1993). Justifying discourse referent(s) is(are) available, identity. Zurich German would articulate the FULL article here if the pronoun were replaced by a definite description.

(8) a. Summation: Bill took Mary to Acapulco. They (Bill and Mary, the couple) ….
b. Abstraction: Everybody read a book. They (all the people) …
c. Kind introduction: Few men joined the party. They (men in general) …

(*) Metonymic bridging
De Peter hät as nois bild kchauft. Er mág die maalerin.
The(r) Peter has a new picture bought he likes the(f) painter.
“Peter bought a new picture. He likes the way the painter paints (not the painter, the paintings!).”

Case 3: Group perception: “Antecedent” is an entity visually perceived by all participants of the dialog previous to the utterance (absentee antecedents: Tasmowski und Verluyten 1982).

(9) Situation: A mover comes in carrying a dresser. The owner of the apartment is looking at him and says:
Sie chönd die Kommode da ane schtele.
You can the(f) dresser there at put. “Your can put the dresser there.”
Idea here: The speaker’s and the hearer’s representations of the elements of the immediate utterance situation with respect to the dresser must be identical. The definite description is not discourse new. Visual perception is necessary in order to understand the sentence.

→ environment context (Kamp 2011)

Case 3* (demonstrative?): There is more than one dresser, and the apartment owner knows that. The singling out of the right referent depends on a gesture of demonstration of the speaker and the visual perception thereof of the hearer. Again we have group perception of the referent the moment the definite is understood by the hearer.

(9) Situation: A mover comes in carrying a dresser. The owner of the apartment is not looking at him. The mover says:
Wo chan i die kommode ane schtele?
Where can I the(dem) dresser at put
“Where can I put this dresser?”

Intermediate summary:
- Elements from the immediate utterance context seem to count as justified discourse referents.
- We need a speaker’s perspective that is possibly different from the hearer’s perspective on the contexts.
- Adding the environment context and making the elements of the utterance context accessible saves the standard solution for these definite descriptions with full article.
  “The referents are there.”

Claim 2: By using the reduced article use in Zurich German, the speaker signals that the discourse referents are not justified from the hearer’s perspective in the discourse context or the environment context. They have to be accommodated, but there are restrictions to the accommodation process. Reduced article interpretation is never standard presupposition resolution. Five cases: all discourse new definites!

Case A: No hearer perception of the element in the immediate utterance context. Previous to the utterance, the element is visually perceived by the speaker alone. The hearer constructs a new justifying referent just by hearing the sequence of words by the speaker “like new names”. (Roberts 2003, the weak uses the definites.) [Use is restricted to specific tasks, Löbner pc.]

(10) Situation: two travelers on the train, one reading the book the other one looking out of the window, suddenly saying: … It’s probably too late for the reader to look at the cat.
Lueg, kchatz!
Look the(r)_cat
“look, the cat!”

Case B: Proper names: No antecedents, reduced article with proper names of people, bare uses with almost all names for locations like cities (von Stechow, p.c.). → use of bare nouns is similar to use of nouns with reduced article.

(11) a) S Heidi hat d Maria troffe.  
The(r) Heidi has the(r) Maria met.  
“Heidi met Maria”

b) Züri isch e schöni stadt.  
Zurich is a beautiful city.  
“Zurich is a beautiful city.”
Thetic uses of discourse new definites.

(12) a) Tsune schiint. b) S baby schlaaft jetzt
“The(r)_sun is shining” “The(r) baby is sleeping now”

→ encyclopedic context: Kamp 2011

Idea here: Discourse new definites transfer a referent from the encyclopedic environment to the discourse context. The set of representations must be contextually restricted.

Case B: Subsectional anaphora (Van Deemter): The linguistic antecedent is a superset of the set containing the referent of the discourse new definite. There is a justifying discourse referent, but the relation is not identity (Hendriks/Dekker (1995): Non-Monotonicity).

(13) Mini neue nachbare sind schmapar net. /Pfrau isch lehreri.
“My new neighbors are very nice. The(r)_woman is teacher.
“My new neighbors are very nice. The woman is a teacher.”

(14) S Heidi und de Peter sind i tschtadt gfahre. S /maitli isch nervös gsi.
The Heidi and the(r) peter are in the(r)_city driven the(r)_girl was nervous PART
“Heidi and Peter went to the city. The girl was nervous.”

(15) De Peter hat es meersäuli und e chatz kchauf. S /meersäuli isch gfläcket.
The(r) Peter has a guinea pig and a cat bought the(r) guinea pig is spotted
“Peter bought a guinea pig and a cat. The guinea pig has spots.”

Case C: Other contrastive topics (The antecedent must be introduced by summation + subsectional anaphora): Super set must be constructed (see anaphoric uses), the justifying referent is a superset of the set containing the new definite’s referent.

(16) Situation: Bank robbery. Police man asks a witness: What happened?
En maa isch enere frau naa grant. /Pfrau isch gross gsi.
A man is a woman behind run the(r)_woman is tall Part.
“A man ran behind a woman. The woman was tall.”

Case D: Bridging: No linguistic antecedent in the discourse context: transfer from general world knowledge. Some part-whole cases of so-called bridging could be categorized in this section (see Schwarz 2009).

(16) Mis auto isch jetzt alt. Schtüürädli isch kabutt.
“My car is now old. The(r)_steering wheel is broken
“My car is now old. The steering wheel is broken.”

(17) S Heidi hat en neue Haarschnitt. CCoiffeuse hät es maschineli brucht.
The(r) Heidi has a new hair_cut The(r)_barber has a machine used

(18) Real, not metonymic bridging
De Peter hät as nois bild kchauf. Er mag Pmààlerin.
The(r) Peter has a new picture bought he likes the(r) maalerin.
“Peter bought a new picture. He likes the painter.”
Idea here: Referents for bridging definites derive from generic context and other information. Transfer of the derived referent to the discourse context. ⇒ Generic context (Kamp 2011)

**Case D: Denotational Contained use**: Speaker has an entity in mind. Heerer reconstructs an entity in his mind by relating it by a causal link to the entity that the Speaker is supposed to have in mind. The linking may activate world knowledge and allow for further inferences.

There is a link between a referent in the same sentence and the definite description. The value condition is satisfied sentence internally (“Carlson weak definites”, defective nouns (Himmelmann 1998, HajRoss named it); there are lexical restrictions; “non-referential” (Carlson et al 2005); semantic enrichment: slight shift in meaning; typical for expression that are part of a rich system of polysemy; ellipsis test allows for non-identity readings (Carlson et al. 2005); cross-linguistic variation between bare noun and definite (de Swart 2012, talk in Paris 2012); no modification without losing the semantic enrichment (cf. idioms)

(19) S Heidi gaat no i tschuell.
   The(r) Heidi goes still to the(r) school
   “Heidi is still going to school” (habit)

**Familiarity (Kamp 2011)**: The familiarity constraint of a definite description is satisfied iff information identifying its referent can be found in some component (or some components) of the context. The familiarity constraint of a definite description is violated when information identifying its referent can be found in no component(s) of the context.

**Three kinds of accommodation**: Accommodation of descriptive content, introduction of a new discourse referent (monotonic, non-monotonic), weakening of the relation between justifying discourse referent and new discourse referent.

**Conclusion:**

- **Phenomena**: The reduced article is used in order to introduce a hearer new topic (without antecedent in the previous discourse) or a contrastive topic (with antecedent) into the discussion. The full article is used in order to introduce a hearer old topic. The article choice is pragmatically determined. The split is governed by discourse

- **Theory**: A familiarity theory explains the Zurich German data.

- **Cross-linguistic variation**: Are the phenomena in all languages/dialects uniform?

- **Corblin (1996) on complement anaphora**: restricted maximal set: ZG uses the full article.

- Different aspects of accommodation, both full and reduced definite descriptions require accommodation from time to time: summation, etc. perception cases

- A remark on markedness (see Elsi Kaiser): The longer the item the less no.

- Corpora data possibly contain performance errors (Chomsky 1957). The transcription of oral data is always selection of information. Selection process may introduce additional mistakes: armchair linguistics.

**Selected References**: