

Articles across the world's languages

Laura Becker

Universität Leipzig

Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena

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Defining articles

- .Articles as comparative concept
- .Their function
- .Their domain
- .Their distribution

Grammar mining. General trends

- .Macroareas
- .Article types
- .Article inflection
- .Articles and other elements in the NP
- .Articles and their lexical sources

Summary

Articles as comparative concept

- . In order to compare articles cross-linguistically, one needs a definition of articles as comparative concept. (Haspelmath 2010)
- . Comparative concepts “are **not** part of **particular language systems** and are not needed by descriptive linguists or by speakers. They are not psychologically real, and they cannot be right or wrong. They can only be more or less well suited to the task of permitting **crosslinguistic comparison**.”
- . “Comparative concepts are **universally applicable**, and they are defined on the basis of other universally applicable concepts: universal conceptual-semantic concepts, general formal concepts, and other comparative concepts.” (Haspelmath 2010: 665)

Defining the concept "article"

I propose three types of criteria to define articles as comparative concept:

- . **function** (referentiality)
- . **domain** (noun phrase)
- . **distribution** (systematicity)

In addition, we need to distinguish between

- . definite articles and adnominal demonstratives
- . indefinite articles and the numeral *one*
- . nonspecific articles and negative polarity items

The function of articles:

Referentiality

The referential statuses

definite	Both speaker and hearer can fully identify the referent. e.g. European definite articles
- deictic	Identifiability by ostension. (demonstratives)
- anaphoric	Identifiability by previous mention. e.g. Wardaman, Lango, Runyankore, Abui, ...
- bridging	The nominal is identifiable because it is part of the frame of a preceding referent. ??
- unique	Identifiability by (situational) uniqueness. there seems to be no article marking only this function

specific	The nominal is linked to a unique referent. Mostly, it is the speaker who is able to identify the referent, while the hearer is not. e.g. Biak, Blackfoot, Arawak, Logba, ...
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nonspecific	The nominal is not linked to any unique referent. Any referent that meets the criteria can be linked to the nominal. Tongan, Biak, Blackfoot, Crow, Q'anjobal
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generic	The nominal refers to all possible referents of a kind. ??
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indefinite	will be understood as non-definite specific and non-specific e.g. European indefinite articles
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Examples of definite articles

(i) anaphoric

Lango (Eastern Sudanic, Uganda):

- (1) òkélò òbèdò pín
Okelo 3SG.sit.PER ground
'Okelo sat on the ground.' (Noonan 1992: 242)

...

- (2) òkélò-**mérê** tê rìngò
Okelo-**ANA** 3SG.THEN run
'Then the aforementioned Okelo ran' (Noonan 1992: 251)

Examples of definite articles

(ii) bridging

Although bridging is a (recognized as) a relevant referential function (e.g. Clark 1975; Hawkins 1978; Erkü and Gundel 1987; Löbner 1998; Schwarz 2009), there seems to be no particular formal expression (i.e. article) linked to this function in the languages of the world.

(3) Kofi tɔ-ɔ krataa bi. ɔtwerefoɔ **no** fi Kumase.
Kofi buy-PST book SPEC writer **DEF** come.from Kumasi
'Kofi bought a book. The author is from Kumasi.' Akan

(4) Марко ја купи книга-ва. **Нејзиж-от** автор е од Македонија.
Marko it.ACC bought.3SG book-DEF.PROX **POSS.3SG-DEF** author is from Macedonia
'Marko bought a book; its author is from Macedonia.' Macedonian

(5) mòkákè àndí kâti. è m̀tilèlì à bèli ndí mòtὰ béndì.
Mokake buy.3SG book **DEF** writer.CL1 CL1 be person.AM French
'Mokake bought a book; the author is French.' Mokpe

Examples of definite articles

(iii) Recognitional use

Recognitional uses involve the definite marking of the referent not based on physical perception or previous mention, but on e.g. shared (or common) knowledge or experience.

This use has rather been observed for demonstratives (e.g. Gundel, Hedberg, and Zacharski 1993: 203; Himmelmann 1996; Himmelmann 1997: 61f; Diessel 1999: 105f), but we find markers which are only used in this function, e.g. in Yapese (Austronesian) and Gooniyandi (Bunuban).

In Gooniyandi, in most cases, the marker is used for referents from shared previous experiences or conversations:

- (6) ngooddoo-ngga **ginharndi** goornboo wardgilayi-ngangi moolooddja-yidda
that-ERG DEF woman she.had.gone-with.us Mulurrja-ALL
niyaji-ngga barnnginaddi gaddwaroo
this-ERG she.returned.me afternoon
'The woman who went to Mulurrja with us brought me back yesterday.'

(McGregor 1990: 146)

Examples of definite articles

(iii) definite

Kaqchikel (Mayan) has a definite article (*ri*) that marks anaphoric, bridging, and situationally unique definites.

- (7) A: ninwayjo ntäj wäy.
want.1SG eat tortilla
'I want to eat tortilla.'
- B: **ri** wäy k'o chuchi qaq'
DEF tortilla EXIST near fire
'The tortilla is in the kitchen.' (anaphoric)
- (8) xk'atz'etkän jun jal tziajchik chila pa tinamit. **ri** ruwi jmul manutzachik.
see.PST.1PL INDEF house old there in village **DEF** roof totally not.useful
'We saw an old house in the village. The roof was completely destroyed.' (bridging)
- (9) **ri** ik' jani nqalaj chpam re aq'a re
DEF moon much is.visible in DEM night DEM
'The moon is very bright tonight.' (unique)

Examples of definite articles

(iv) unique

There seems to be no definite article restricted to unique uses; only definite articles that can also be used for anaphoric and deictic definites seem to be able to mark unique referents.

(10) ò ʒóŋgó ígbě
2SG NEG.look sun.**DEF**
'Don't look into the sun!' (ìgbě 'sun') (Mokpe)

(11) man tatzu ri q'ij
NEG.IMP look.2SG **DEF** sun
'Don't look into the sun!' (Kaqchikel)

(12) ja ik' konkaan nch'ech'ona jawra cha'q'a.
DEF moon very shine.bright.3SG this night
'The moon in very bright tonight.' (Tz'utujil)

(13) me-n-hu ɔsram ?no anumerɛ yi
1SG-NEG-see moon **DEF** evening this
'I will not see the moon this evening.' (Akan)

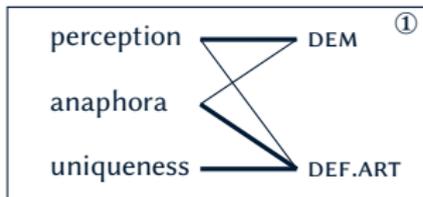
→ due to iconicity / economy / markedness effects?

→ grammaticalization: extension of definite articles to unique referents as last step?

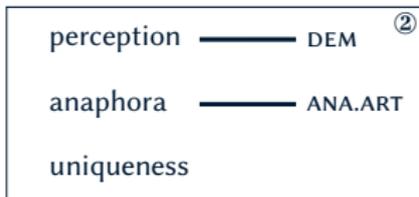
Definite articles

Across languages, the most common types of articles with definite functions are

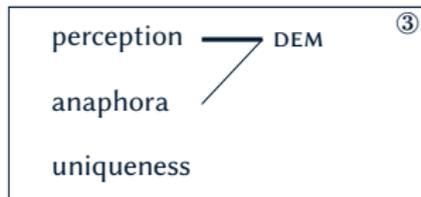
- ① definite articles (distinct from demonstratives), marking anaphoric, deictic, (situationally) unique referents
- ② anaphoric articles (distinct from demonstratives), restricted to anaphoric definite referents



→ e.g. English, Kaqchikel, ...

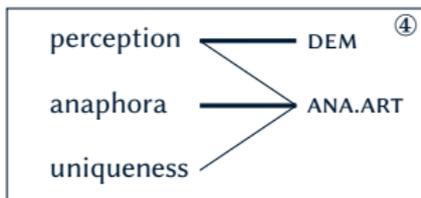


→ e.g. Lango, Wardaman, ...



→ e.g. Russian, ...

What about other scenarios?



→ Hausa?



→ Indonesian?

Examples of specific articles

specific (excluding definites)

Most languages with a marker for specific referents have a separate definite (or anaphoric) marker. Therefore, the specific marker cannot be used for definite referents in most cases, as e.g. in Akan (Kwa).

- (14) kaa no yɛ papa **bi** aa me-hyia no wɔ Kumase dea
car DEF be man SPEC REL 1SGmeet 3SG be.at Kumasi POSS
'The car belongs to a (certain) man I met in Kumasi.'
- (15) m'-ayɔnkofɔɔ **bi** baa-a me-hɔ ɛnɔra anadwo
POSS:1SG-friends SPEC come-PST POSS:1SG-THERE yesterday night
'Some friends of mine came to my place last night.'
- (16) adwuma **no** aa ɛ-fa-a yɛn no n-nya m-fasɔɔ bebree
work DEF REL 3SG-take-PST 3PL CD NEG-get profit many
'The company that hired us does not make enough money.'
- (17) me-nya-a anka me-wɔ yere ***no**/ ***bi**
1SG-get-PST before 1SG-have wife DEF/ SPEC
'I wish I had a wife.'

Examples of specific articles

specific (including definites)

This function seems to be really rare, and rather restricted to systems with a specific article, but no separate definite article, as in Blackfoot (Algic):

- (18) owa-**i**
egg-**NONSPEC**
'an egg' (Taylor 1969: 11)
- (19) owáá-**yi**
egg-**SPEC**
'an/the egg' (Taylor 1969: 12)

Are there “anti-specific” articles?

Specific markers are most frequently used (illustrated?) with referents that the speaker can fully identify, while the hearer cannot.

→ Are there markers for referents that are identifiable by the hearer but not by the speaker?

Gamilaraay (Pama-Nyungan, Australia) has a marker that might come close to that:

The “definite marker” *-ma* combines with interrogative markers to indicate that the speaker does not know the referent, but expects the hearer to do so (Giacon 2014: 173).

(20) minyaaya-**ma** ngindaay gii-b.aaba-y
where-DEF 2PL get-TOT-PST
Where were you all?

(Giacon 2014: 174)

Examples for nonspecific articles

Markers that indicate nonspecificity of the referent are rare cross-linguistically.

Q'anjobal (Mayan)

- (21) ay mi jun-**oq** yatut thioxh b'ay yich calle?
EXIST Q a-**NSPEC** house.of.God at back street
'Is there a church at the end of the road?'
- (22) ay **jun** yatut thioxh b'ay yich calle.
EXIST **a.SPSEC** house.of.God at back street
'There is a church at the end of the road.'
- (23) asi' yul jun-**oq** tuktuk.
go.IMP in a-**NSPEC** mototaxi
'Take a mototaxi (any of the ones in the street).'
- (24) tzeb'ach yul **jun** tuktuk. mayal wawrtej naq tz'umon ch'en.
come.IMP in **a.SPEC** mototaxi already called CL driver
'Come taking a mototaxi. I already called the driver.'

Are there generic articles?

So far, I did not find a good candidate for generic articles. The closest are two markers from Crow and Lavukaleve.

Crow (Siouan)

Crow has a marker *-t* that is used for referring to the totality of a class of potential referents, according to the grammar. But it seems to be rather a “totality” marker, focusing on the completeness of the referents.

- (25) éhk huchalahúua shoopá-**t** kuss-chisshíi-wa-hche-k awé
those directions four-**TOT?** GOAL-go.back-1A-CAUS-DECL season
shíishiahe shoopá-**t** kúh koolá-k
different four-**TOT?** also be.there-DECL
'I made them go back to those four directions; the four different seasons are
there as well.' (Graczyk 2007: 232)

Lavukaleve (Solomons East Papuan)

Lavukaleve has a “demonstrative marker” that is used for unspecific, generic referents (Terrill 2003: 175). Unfortunately, the grammar does not provide good examples to say more about the status of this marker.

Are generic expressions / referents universal at all?

In some languages, there seems to be no good way of expressing general referents (referents of general statements).

→ Is there no way to encode it or is the expression only different from what we expect?

- (26) nucha ŋechaŋ **mu'uchi** airu **gü**
I like/love **many** dog **PL**
'I like many many (all the) dogs.' (Tikuna)
- (27) yü **kainu** jaturiküa ibebü.
I **all** transport not.like
'I do not like cars (in general).' (Cubeo)

Examples for indefinite articles

The indefinite article in Awakateko (Mayan)

The indefinite article *jun* in Awakateko is used in indefinite specific and nonspecific contexts.

- (28) at **jun** tiox stzi' a'
EXIST **INDEF** church river.bank water
'There is a church at the river banks.' (indef. specific)
- (29) nawaj **jun** moy
want.1SG **INDEF** car
'I want to have a car.' (indef. nonspecific)

Examples for referential articles

Rapanui (Austronesian)

In Rapanui, in most contexts except for predicative positions, nouns are accompanied by the marker *te*: it is used to mark definite, specific, and nonspecific referents. Therefore, it has been labelled referential article in the grammar.

- (30) 'ina he mā'eha mo u'i i **te** kai.
NEG PRED light for see NMLZ ACC **REF** food
'There was no light to see the food.' (Kieviet 2017: 93)
- (31) 'i te noho iña tuai era 'ā **te** taŋata e tahi te 'iŋoa ko
at REF stay NMLZ ancient DIST IDENT **REF** man NUM one REF name PROM
Tu'uhakararo.
Tu'uhakararo
'In the old times (there was) a man called Tu'uhakararo.' (Kieviet 2017: 238)
- (32) Ko mate atu 'ana ki **te** vai mo unu.
PRF die away CONT to **REF** water for drink
'I'm dying for water to drink.' (Kieviet 2017: 237)

Examples for referential articles

Rapanui

However, given that it seems to occur in complementary distribution with the marker *he* used for nouns in predicate position, it is not clear, whether *te* is a referential article or an “argument marker”.

- (33) **He** taŋata tau manu era
PRED man DEM bird DIST
‘That bird was a human being.’ (Kieviet 2017: 242)

It could also be a “nominal marker”, since it can occur with verbs in argument positions. Also, lexemes in Rapanui are often ambiguous between being a noun or a verb, which is determined by context.

- (34) a. He pōrekoreko te ŋā **poki** 'i Tāhai.
NTR born:red REF PL **child** at Tahai
‘Children were born in Tahai.’ (Kieviet 2017: 76)
- b. Mai te hora era ō'oku e **poki** nō 'ana ...
from REF time DIST POSS.3SG.O IPFV **child** just CONT
‘From the time when I was a child ...’ (Kieviet 2017: 76)

Elements with similar but distinct functions:

What is not considered as article

Article or nominal classifier?

Ughele (Austronesian, Solomon Islands)

The grammar distinguishes three articles in Ughele: the personal article *e*, the common article *na*, and the focal article *ai* (the latter stays rather unclear in its function).

- (35) a. meke naghe **e** Peni ...
and say **PROP** Peni
'and Peni said ...' (Frostad 2012: 100)
- b. Zioni **na** viu le-lea-na
Zioni **COMM** bird RED-good-ATTR:3SG
'Zioni is a very nice bird.' (Frostad 2012: 97)

Instead of viewing this as an article system, I would analyze it as a classifier system with two classes: proper nouns and common nouns, which both need to be marked by classifiers accompanying the noun.

Case markers

Finnish

The accusative-partitive alternation in e.g. Finnish can modify the interpretation of the referential status of the noun. An object in the accusative is rather interpreted as definite, while an object in the partitive gets an indefinite reading.

- (36) a. Silja joi maidon.
Silja drank milk.**ACC**
'Silja drank the milk.'
- b. Silja joi maitoa.
Silja drank milk.**PART**
'Silja drank (some) milk.'

Such secondary functions of markers will not be considered here.

Obviative markers

Ojibwe (Algonic, Canada)

If there are more than one argument in the third person, they are distinguished by proximate vs. obviative marking on the noun. In certain cases, this choice reflects prominence in the discourse.

“Obviation is used to distinguish third persons in clauses, but may also be emphasize a particular character as a point of reference in a narrative or narrative portion” (Todd 1971: 183)

- (37) wgiwaabmaan dash niw zhiishiiban niibna bbaa-gomnid.
3SG:PRX.OBV.SAW then THOSE.OBV ducks.OBV many OVB.float.about
‘There he saw many ducks swimming about.’ (Todd 1971: 183)

Number markers restricted to definite nouns

In Mangarrayi (Mangarrayi-Maran, Australia), plural marking in narratives is restricted to prominent and already introduced referents.

- (38) a. malam \emptyset -yi-ñi-wa ðanji-**nawu**
man 3SG-go-PC-SUF end-**his**
'People were going to the room.' (Merlan 1989: 94)
- b. njabaranwa jarbiñ-**garan** wara-warguj \emptyset -jululu wara-warguj
two young.man-**DU** pick.up-RED ABS-belongings pick.up-RED
wur-manbu-ni-wa garan-gara-bayi malam-**garan**, dar?ma
3**DU**-run-PC-SUF those-two-FOC man-**DU** emerge
'(The) two men picked up (their) belongings, picked them up. They
went along, those two men, came out (into a clearing).'
- (Merlan 1989: 95)

The domain of articles:

The noun phrase

The position of articles in the noun phrase

The parameters for the position and form of the article in the noun phrase are:

free German <i>die</i> Katze	bound Armenian <i>katu-n</i> ‘the cat’
segmental Basque <i>emakume-a</i> ‘the woman’	non-segmental (tone) Mokpe <i>mólélí</i> ‘the food’
preposed Diyari <i>nhinha</i> kupa ‘the child’	postposed Supyire <i>ɲkùù-ɲi</i> ‘the chicken’
Infix Mayangna <i>waki-ni-sa</i> ‘the banana’	
NP as anchor Ute <i>kavayi ságharumu ’uway</i> ‘the white horse’	noun as anchor Turkish <i>büyük bir oda</i> ‘a large room’
on one element Zoque <i>yoya bi mas šaša?</i> ‘the fattest pig’	repeated Runyankore <i>o-mushaija o-murungi</i> ‘the good man’

Referential markers outside the noun phrase:

What is not considered as article

Articles must be in the noun phrase

Although some markers indicate the referential status of some nominal, they do not count as articles here, since they themselves do not occur the noun phrase.

Macedonian object doubling

- (41) He можам да **ja** најдам вода-**ta**.
NEG can.1SG COMP **3SG.F.ACC** find.1SG water-**DEF**
'I can't find the water.'

Agreement markers in Nyaturu, Bantu

- (42) a. n-a-onaa mwalimu
SM:1SG-PST1-see CL1.teacher
'I saw a teacher.'
- b. n-a-**mʊ**-onaa mwalimu
SM:1SG-PST1-**OM:CL1**-see CL1.teacher
'I saw the teacher.'

(Hualde 1989: 182)

Articles must occur with nouns

Other markers also indicate referentiality, occur in the nominal domain, but not (primarily) with nouns. Such markers are not counted as articles.

Possessive-based definite marker in Tarahumara

Tarahumara (Uto-Aztecan, Mexico) has a marker that indicates referentiality, but mostly modifies nouns in genitive and possessive constructions. Therefore, they are not counted as articles here:

- (43) a. nijé 'huéna-**ra**
1SG parent-**REF**
'my parents' (Cohen 1998: 130)
- b. echi Antonio huiye-**ra**
DEF Antonio mother-**REF**
'Antonio's mother' (Cohen 1998: 137)
- c. biré ripurá cusi-**rá**
one axe pole-**REF**
'an axe handle' (Cohen 1998: 120)

Articles must occur with nouns

Indefinite marker for pronouns in Gunin

The indefinite marker in Gunin (Worrorrnan, Australia) is primarily used with pronouns and not with nouns.

- (44) bari nganmiri, nginda-**ngurru**
 come it.will.take.us what-**INDEF**
 ‘Something is going to happen to us.’

(McGregor 1993: 42)

Germanic adjective forms

- (45) *der schwarz-e Hund* vs. *ein schwarz-er Hund* ‘a / the black dog’

...

The distribution of articles:

Obligatoriness vs. systematicity

Articles need to occur systematically

Can such a marker be a definite article, if it is not obligatory in definite contexts?

→ YES!

Instead of obligatoriness, I would rather use the notion of systematicity.

If the marker is not used with nouns that receive a definite interpretation in certain contexts that can be “predicted” by rules, it can still count as article.

Articles need to occur systematically

- . Restrictions due to morphosyntactic properties of the nominal

(48)

German

- a. Ich sehe **eine** Katze auf dem Dach.
I see **ART:INDEF** cat.SG on ART.DEF roof
'I see a cat on the roof.'
- b. Ich sehe **Katzen** auf dem Dach.
I see **cat.PL** on ART.DEF roof
'I see cats on the roof.'

- . Restrictions due to phonological properties of the nominal

(49)

Mokpe

- a. *è paŋga* 'the sand'
- b. \emptyset *ìkpá* '(the) salt'

- . Restrictions due to semantic properties of the nominal

(50) (*The) John gave (*the) Mary the book.

Articles need to occur systematically

- Restrictions due to pragmatic or extralinguistic factors?

e.g. Crow indefinites

- (54) a. dakáak-kaata-**m** húu-laa híi-k
bird-DIM-**ART.SPEC** come-SS reach-DECL
'a bird came, it reached him' (Graczyk 2007: 228)
- b. axée baláyyiikaashe dúup-**eem** alúutkaashe áppaa
father bow two-**ART:NONSPEC** arrow with
día-a-wa-ku-hee?
make-CONT-1B-give-AFF-INTERR
'father, will you please make me two bows as well as (some) arrows?'
(Graczyk 2007: 230)
- (55) a. bachee-**lák** baa-aash-dée-k
man-**ART.INDEF** INDEF-hunt-go-DECL
'a man went hunting' (Graczyk 2007: 230)
- b. éehk bal-héelee-n iisashpít-**dak** baappeé-k b-aliat-bee-m
that wood-among-LOC rabbit-**ART.INDEF** 1A.kill-DECL 1A-think-1A-DS
isáa-kaashi-k
large-AUGM-DECL
'there in the woods I thought I killed a rabbit, but to my surprise, it was
something very large.' (Graczyk 2007: 231)

Articles need to occur systematically

- Restrictions due to pragmatic or extralinguistic factors?

e.g. anaphoric articles in Konso (Afro-Asiatic, Ethiopia)

In Konso (Afro-Asiatic, Ethiopia), the definite article can be omitted in certain anaphoric contexts (in general, it is used in anaphoric contexts, though).

- (56) kaasa-**sit**-n=in karmaa-**si**? ?ijf-ay
gun-**DEF**-INSTR=1 lion-**DEF** kill-PF.3.M
'I killed the lion with the gun.' (Orkaydo 2013: 97)

In a story about a lion, mentioned before example (57), the lion, identifiable at that point, does not need to be marked as such by the definite article:

- (57) karmaa ka ɕapaleeta-asi? ɕaraa kaassuma=i kaassaf-ay
lion and monkey-DEM on question=3 ask-PF.3.M
'And the lion asked this monkey a question.' (Orkaydo 2013: 97)

Grammar mining. General trends

The sample

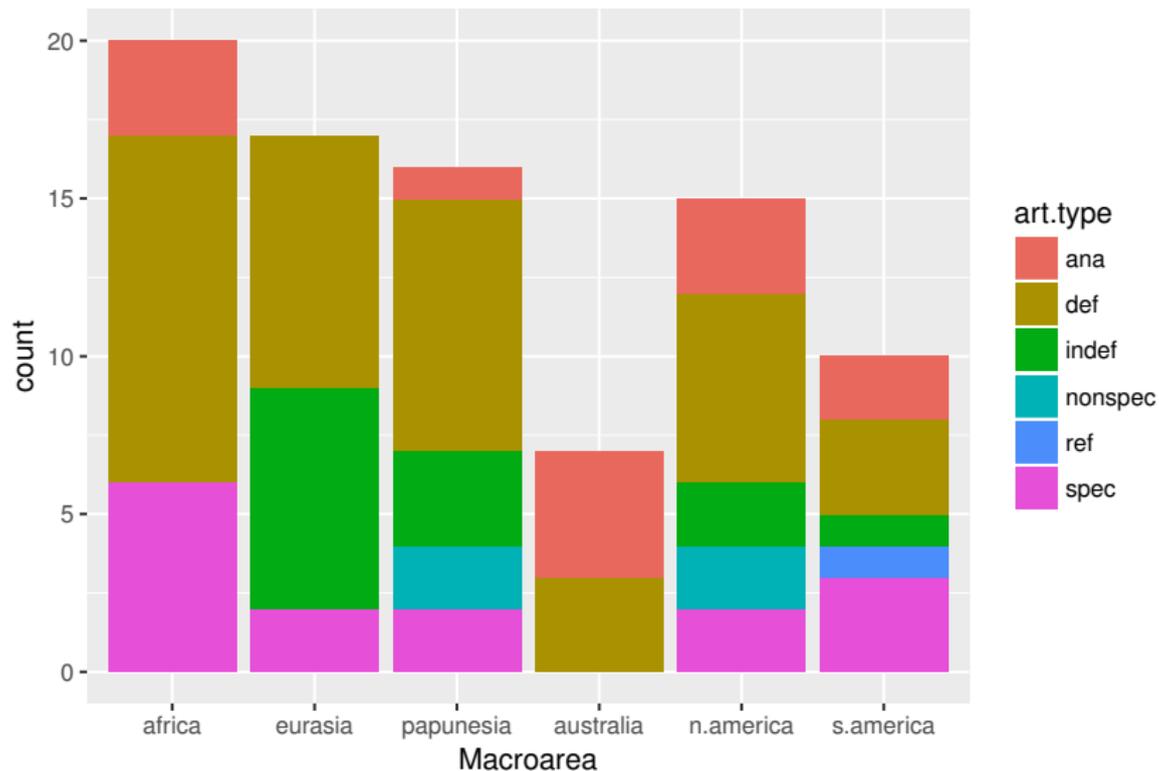
So far, I considered

- . 58 languages (divided into the 6 Macroareas used in WALSL)
- . 85 articles
 - . Africa (14/20)
 - . Eurasia (11/17)
 - . Papunesia (9/16)
 - . Australia (7/7)
 - . North America (9/15)
 - . South America (8/10)

Macroareas

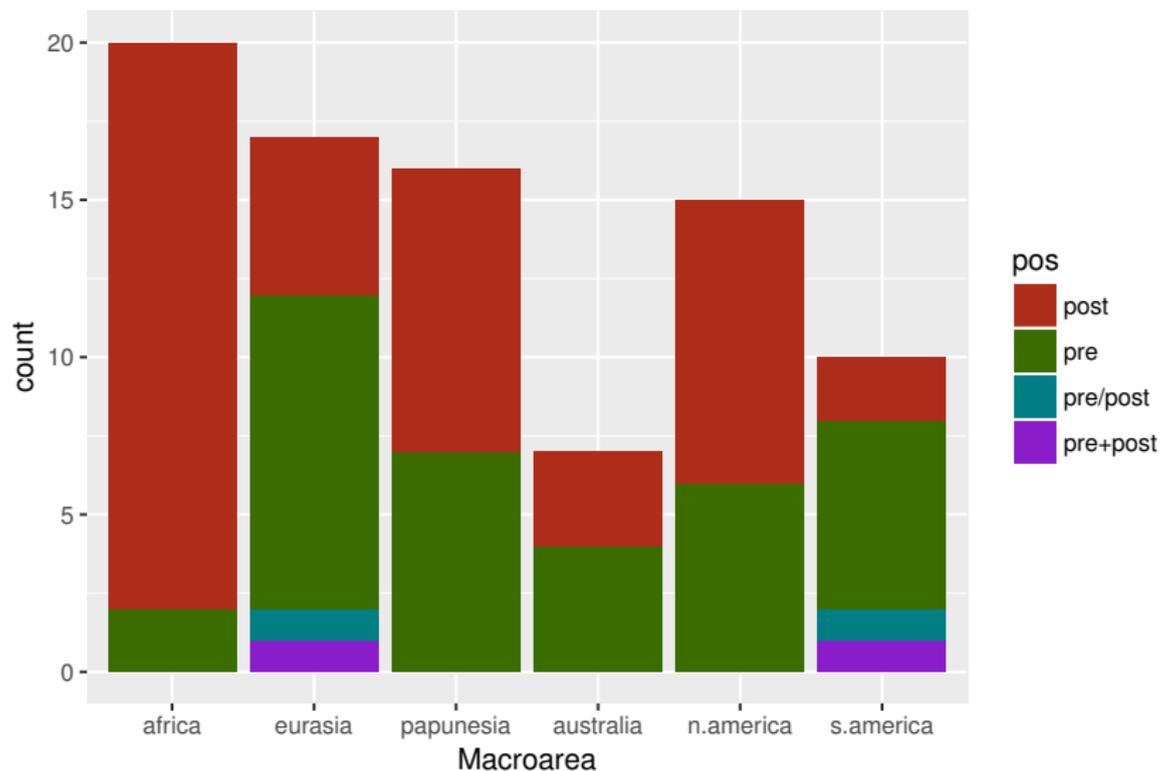
Macroareas

article type



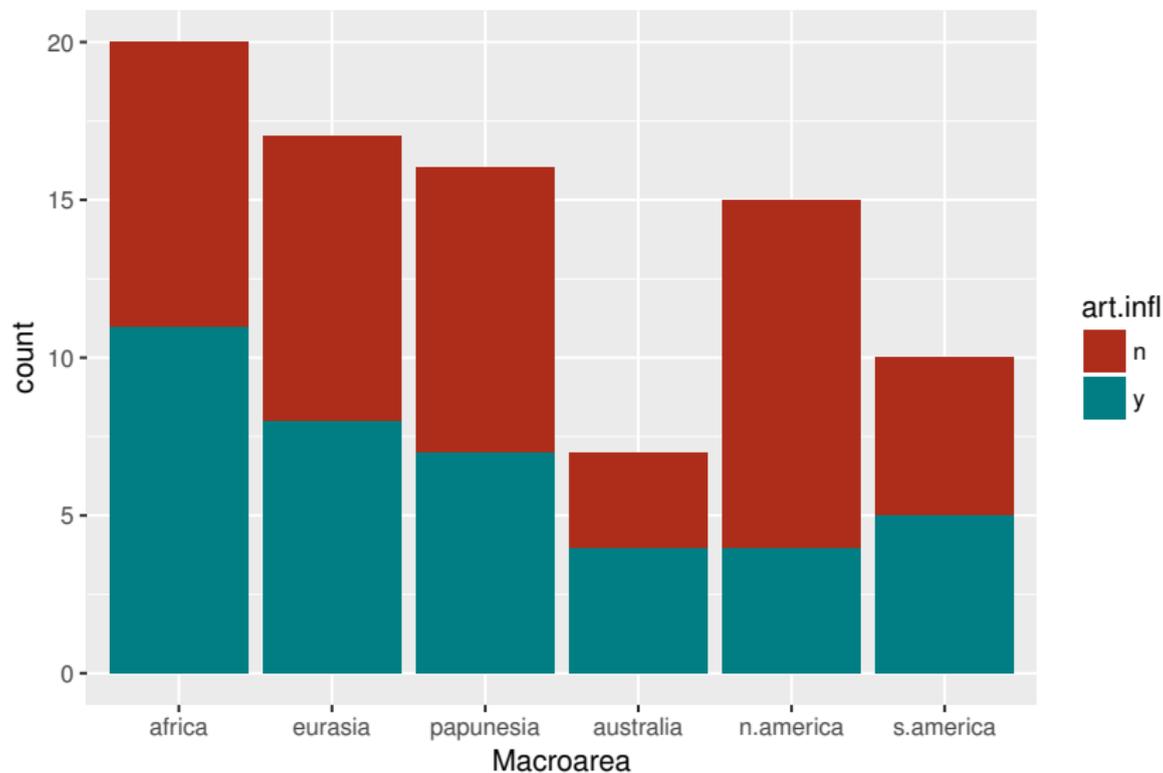
Macroareas

position of the article



Macroareas

Article inflection



Macroareas. Interrim results

- . **Article type**

We find many indefinite articles in Europe, many specific articles in Africa, and only definite/anaphoric articles in Australia

- . **Article position**

Articles in Africa follow other elements in the noun phrase and tend to be postposed.

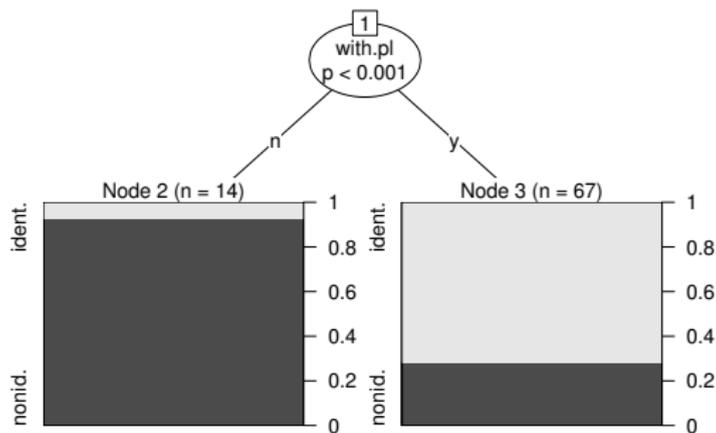
- . **Article inflection** (marking of number, gender, case)

There seems to be no areal tendency.

Article types

Article types

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art.type ~ geo + form + pos + art.infl + co.dem + co.poss + geo + gen +  
pred + with.pl
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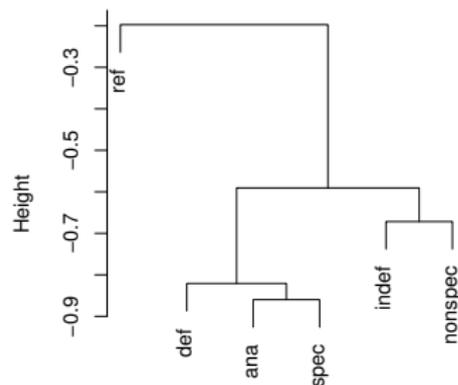


- From different formal properties of articles, only their compatibility with plural nouns is a relevant factor to distinguish between different articles types.
- Definite articles generally are compatible with plural nouns, while indefinite articles are significantly less compatible with them.

Article types

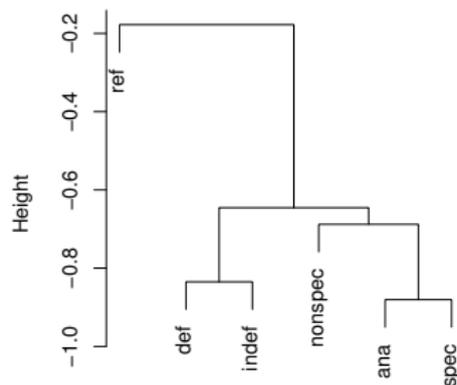
Article types can be clustered based on the formal similarities of the articles.

Article type



- The articles cluster according to their semantic values (basically: one def and one indef cluster).
- However, this should be due to the compatibility with plural nouns.

Article type without PL

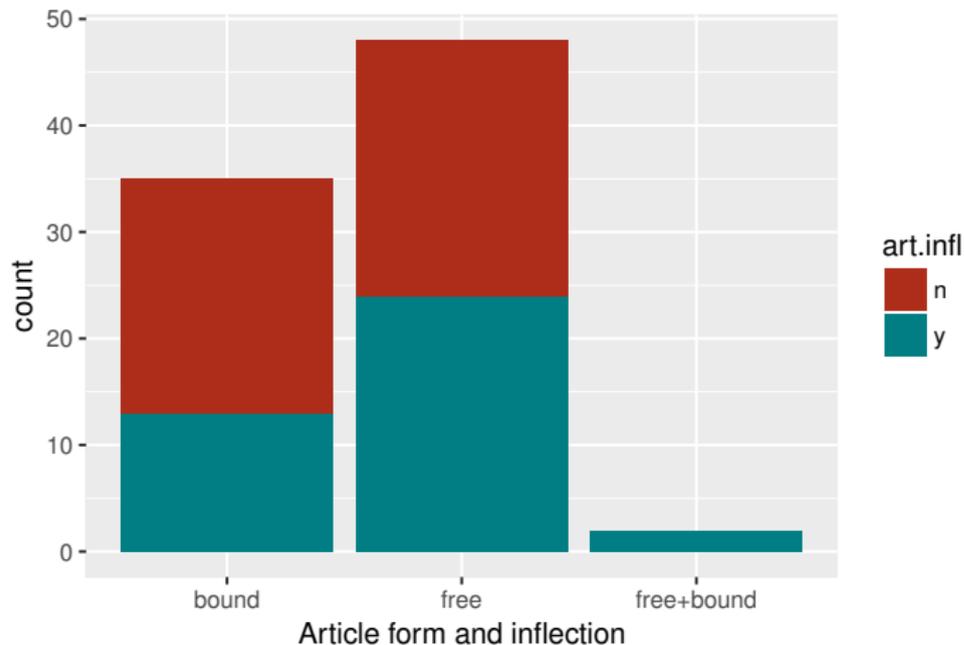


- Taking out compatibility with plural nouns, definite and indefinite articles form a cluster for being less restrictive in their semantics.
- This is manifested in their broader syntactic occurrence (in predicate position, with generic nouns).
- Anaphoric, specific, and nonspecific articles are more restrictive, probably less grammaticalized, and therefore also occur in syntactically more restricted contexts.

Article inflection

Article inflection

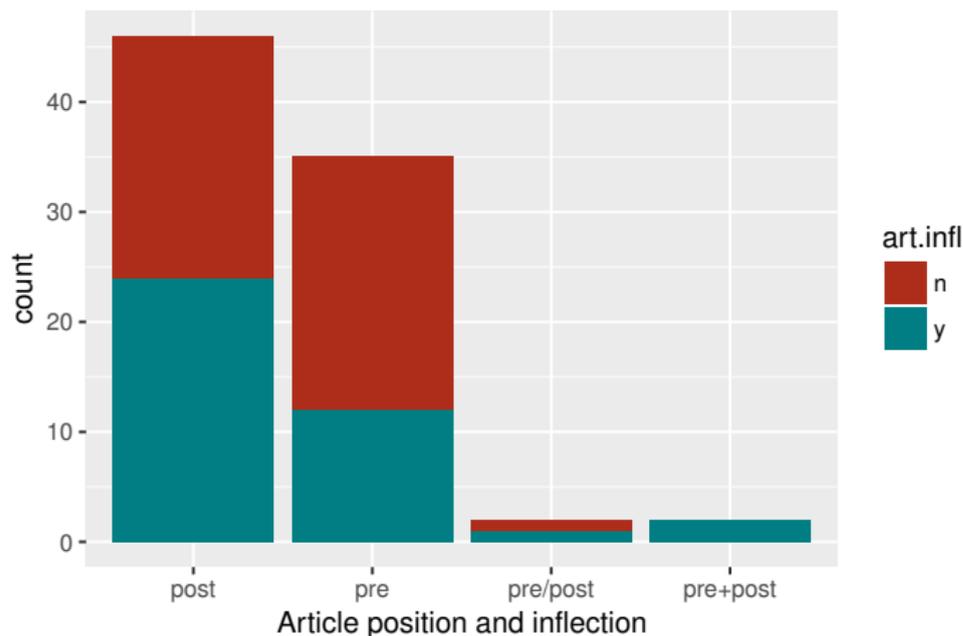
free vs. bound articles



→ The form of the article does not influence whether it marks number, gender, and/or case of the noun.

Article inflection

Position of the article



→ Neither does the position of the article does not influence whether it marks number, gender, and/or case of the noun.

Article inflection

ART inflection ~ noun inflection for NUMBER, GENDER, CASE

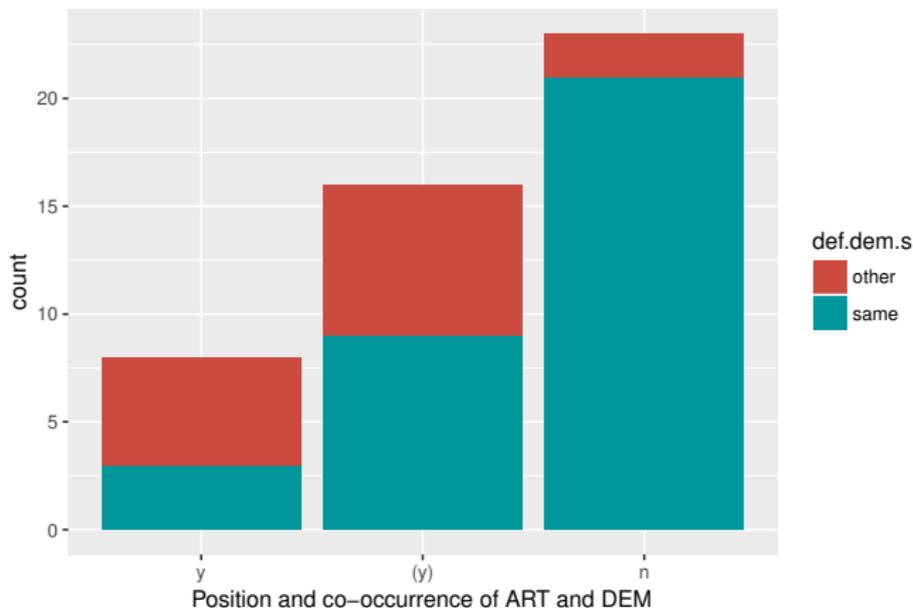
The inflectional pattern of articles seems to depend on the inflectional morphology of the noun itself.

	number	gender	case
as category	78	39	34
NOUN+ART	22	3	6
NOUN	44	9	20
ART	9	18	1

- . In general, multiple exponence within the noun phrase is avoided.
- . NUMBER is mostly marked on the noun only, but seems to show less pressure to be marked only on one element.
- . GENDER is mostly marked on the article only, but can also be expressed on the article alone (West African noun classes).
- . CASE is mostly marked on the noun (marked on both noun and article in Australian languages).

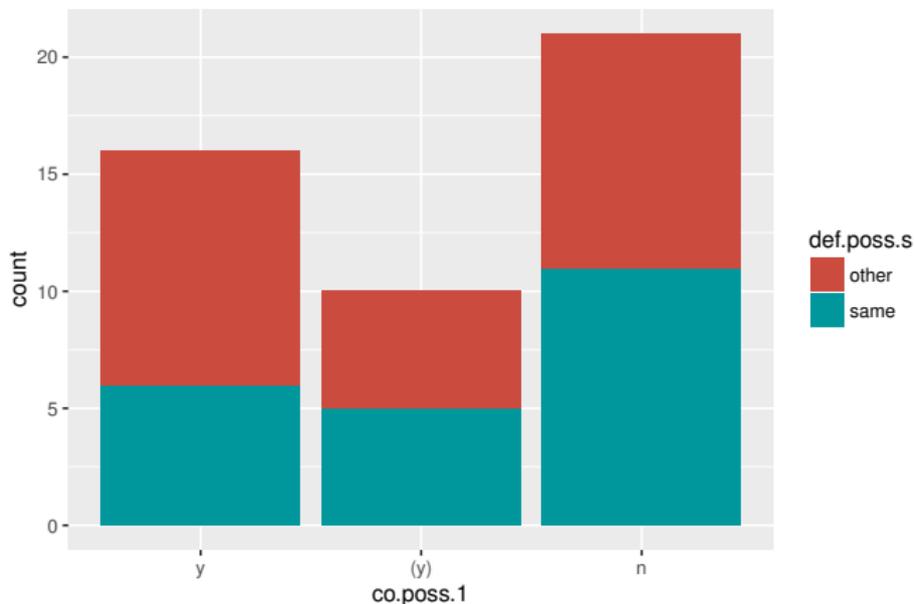
Articles and other elements in the NP

Definite articles with demonstratives



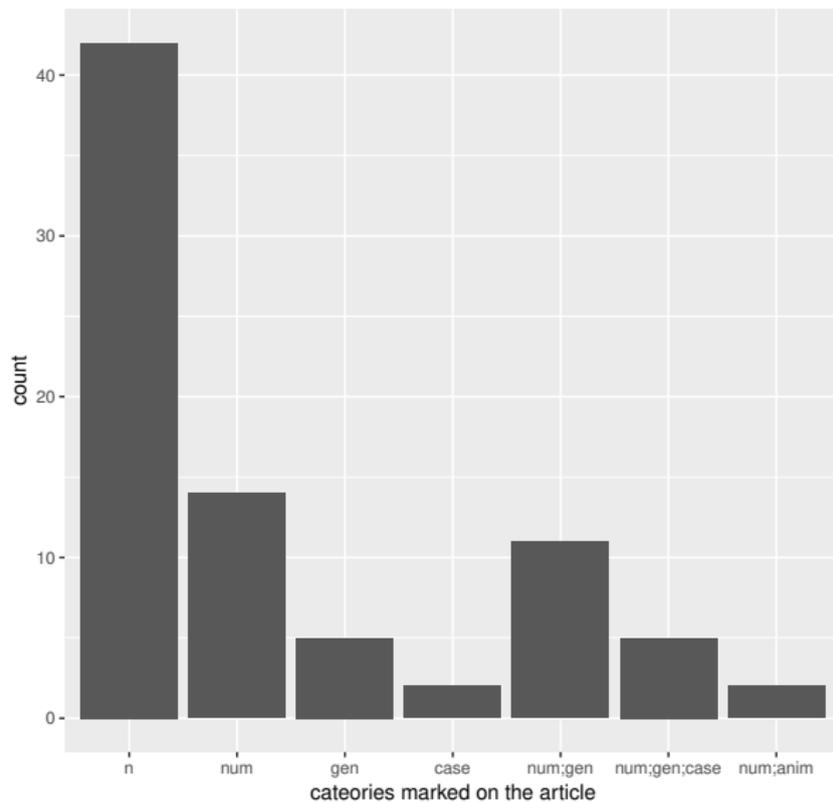
- Generally, definite articles tend to not co-occur with demonstratives, and they fill the same syntactic slot.
- However, if they co-occur, this is correlated with them occurring on different sides of the noun.
- This suggests that definite articles and their co-occurrence is rather restricted syntactically, and not semantically.

Definite articles with possessives

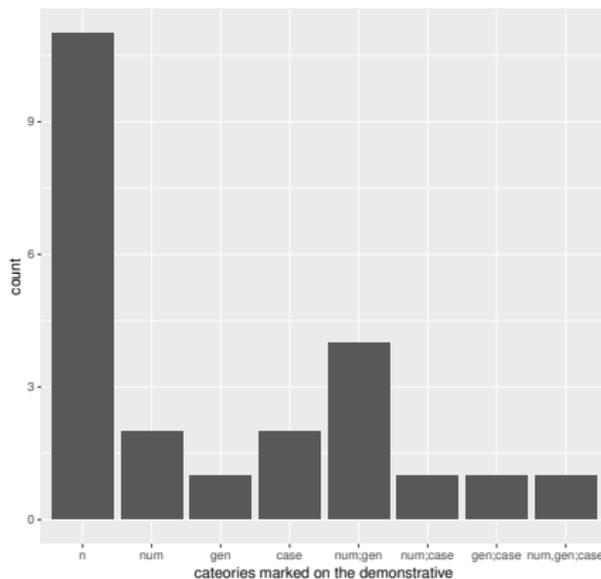
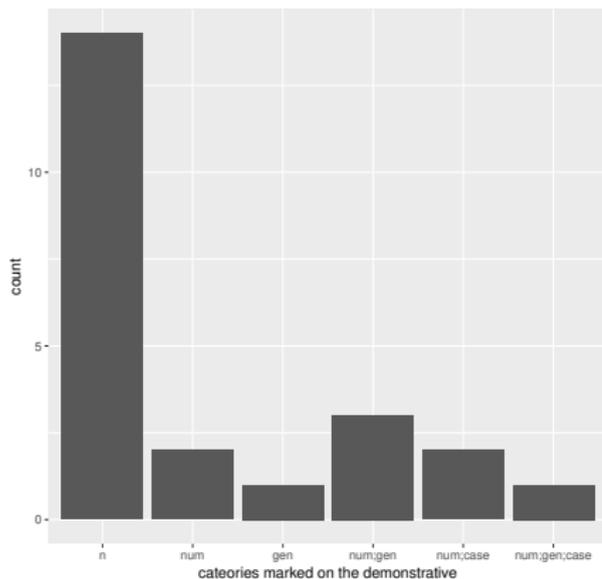


- With possessives, there is no such correlation as with definite articles and demonstratives.
- This suggests that definite articles and demonstratives are somewhat more similar (syntactically?) than definite articles and possessives.

Categories marked on the article



Categories marked on DEM and ADJ



- In general, articles show a similar behaviour as demonstratives and articles with respect to agreement with the noun.

Agreement hierarchy?

Looking at the marking of number, gender, (and case) on articles compared to attributive demonstratives, adjectives, numerals, and quantifiers, the following tendencies can be observed:

- . If the adjective shows agreement, the article also agrees with the noun.
- . If the numeral shows agreement, the adjective also tends to agree with the noun.
- . Quantifiers seem to agree with the head noun more often than numerals, but less often than adjectives.

A (very) tentative hierarchy for agreement in the NP could look like:

(58) ART > ADJ > (QUANT) > NUM

Articles and their lexical sources

Lexical sources for articles

What other sources are there for articles than the “obvious ones”?

demonstrative > definite article
numeral *one* > indefinite article

- . personal pronouns
- . possessive pronouns
- . copulas, stative predicates
- . participles
- . partitives

Lexical sources for articles

(i) definite articles from pronouns in Diyari (Pama-Nyungan)

- (59) a. thangkuthangkuparna ngathu **nhinha** yakalka-yi
morning-LOC 1SG.ERG 3SG.NF.ACC ask-PRES
'I will ask him in the morning.' (Austin 2013: 91)
- b. thana **nhinha** nganthi yingki-mali-yi
3PL.NOM DEF.ACC MEAT.ACC give-RECIP.PRES
'They give each other the meat.' (Austin 2013: 82)

(ii) definite articles from possessive pronouns in Amharic

- (60) tämari-w 'student-POSS / student-DEF'
(Appleyard 1995: 62)

Lexical sources for articles

(iii) definite articles from copulas

Arawak (Arawakan, Brazil)

- (61) a. lira wadili **to** da-rethi
that man **is** my-husband
'That man is my husband.' (Pet 2011: 43)
- b. **to** kodibio balyta ada dyna diako
DEF bird sit tree arm on
'The bird sat oon a branch.' (Pet 2011: 44)

Gaahmg (Eastern Sudanic, Sudan)

- (62) a. t̥ó-gg sèggār-g=**à**
cow-PL strong-PL=**COP.PL**
'Cows are strong.' (Stirtz 2011: 160)
- b. ɔ ē mūn nāán bāārg=**á** ŋáó-àn ṅā-lg nà
and with time that Baggara=**DEF.PL** serach.for-CONT.P girl-PL REL
ān-g-ì
young-PL=**RDM**
'At that time the Baggara were kidnapping young girls.'
(Stirtz 2011: 135)

Lexical sources for articles

(iv) anaphoric markers from participles

Koasati (Muskogean)

- (63) a. yilahá í:pa-li-:sáy-ok ká:n-á:ho:si-:s
orange eat-1SS-**PTCP**-FOC be.good-ADV-PST
'The orange I am eating is very good.' (Kimball 1985: 245)
- b. ...iko:si-:sáya im-alá-k ...
...aunt-**ANA** 3POSS-brother.in.law-SUBJ
'...the brother-in-law of this aforementioned aunt ...'
(Kimball 1985: 345)

(v) indefinite plural articles from partitives

Ch'ol (Mayan)

- (64) a. li ñox-ob-**tyak**
DEF elder-PL3-**PART**
'some of the elders' (Vázquez Álvarez 2011: 123)
- b. x-ja'a-ts'i'-**tyak**
NCL-water-dog-**INDEF**
'some nutrias' (Vázquez Álvarez 2011: 243)

Inflection of articles originating from pronouns

(free personal pronouns, adnominal possessive pronouns)

language	ART type	ART inflection	PRO inflection
Oko	def	num	pers;num
Lango	ana	/	pers;num
Amharic	def	num;gen	pers;num;gen
Papuan Malay	def	num	pers;num
Biak	spec	num	pers;num;anim
Warrwa	def	(case)	pers;num;case
Yankuntjatjara	def	case	pers;num;case
Diyari	def	num;gen;case	pers;num;case;gen
Sumu	ana	/	pers;num
Arawak	def	num;gen	pers;num;gen;anim

→ The marking of number, gender, and case on articles seems to be largely determined by the inflection of its source lexeme, i.e. mostly number in this case.

Articles do not seem to develop agreement morphology. They retain the morphology of their lexical source, or lose agreement marking.

Inflection of articles originating from demonstratives

Also for definite articles from demonstratives, we see that articles retain or lose agreement morphology, but do not develop new marking.

language	ART type	ART inflection	DEM inflection
Supyire	def	num;gen	num;gen
Konso	def	num;gen	num;gen
Sheko	def	gen	(num);gen
Tafi	def	/	num;gen
Hungarian	def	/	num;case
Armenian	def	/	num;case
Maori	def	num	num
Alamblak	def	/	num
Abui	ana	/	/
Ch'ol	def	/	/

Inflection of articles originating from the numeral

Again, we see the same tendency for indefinite articles originating from the numeral *one*.

An exception is the article in Konso, where the indefinite article adapts to the gender marking on other elements in the noun phrase, e.g. the definite article.

language	ART type	ART inflection	NUM inflection
Logba	spec	num;gen	num;gen
Konso	spec	gen	/
Tafi	spec	num;gen	num;gen
Hungarian	indef	/	/
Albanian	indef	/	/
Armenian	spec	/	/
German	indef	gen;case	gen;case

Inflection of articles: economy vs. diachrony

Economy



Diachrony

- . the inflection of the article depends on the inflection of the noun
- . multiple exponence is avoided

- . the inflection of the article depends on the inflection of its lexical source
- . the article can lose morphology, but does not develop new paradigms

Summary

Article types

- . The type of article and most other formal properties is not majorly biased by the geographical area.
 - . The only significant factor to distinguish between article types is their compatibility with plurals.
- Despite their differences, it we see that articles indeed behave like elements of one category cross-linguistically.

Inflection

- . The inflection of articles depends on morphological properties of its source.
- . Also, the inflection of articles depends on the morphological marking on the noun: number is quite frequently expressed on both, gender has a strong preference for being marked on the article only, while case is almost always marked on the noun only.

Other elements in the NP

- . The co-occurrence of definite articles and demonstratives seems to follow syntactic restrictions, if they occur in the same position, they tend not to co-occur.
 - . With possessive pronouns, we do not find such a correlation.
- Demonstratives and articles seem to be more alike than possessives.
- . There is a tendency for articles to be inflected more frequently than adjectives, quantifiers, and numerals.

Appendix

Definite article or demonstrative?

It is difficult to draw a well-motivated consistent line between demonstratives and definite articles.

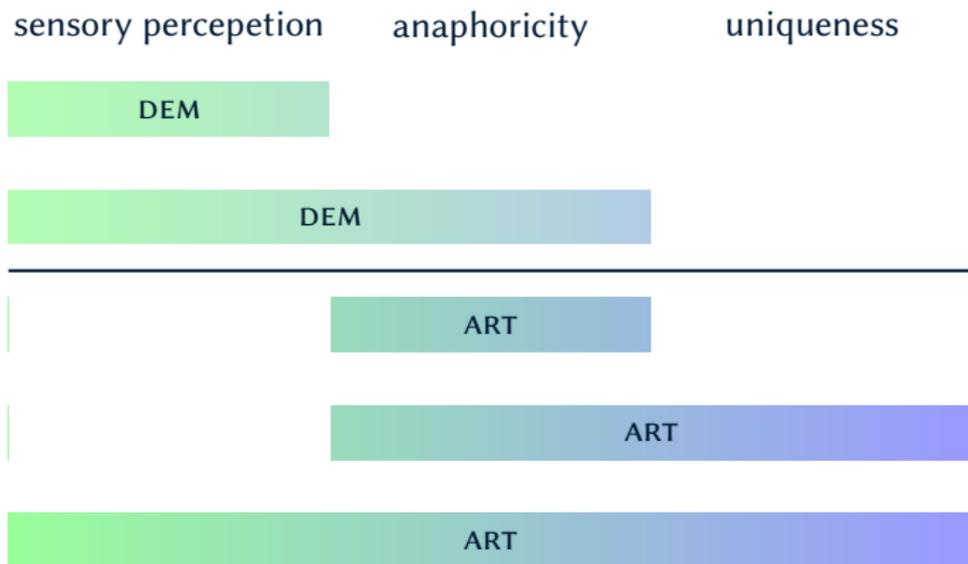
The contexts of (spatial) deixis, anaphora, and uniqueness of the referent can be viewed as a continuum from demonstrative to article, from less grammaticalized to more grammaticalized, etc.

In this vein, markers that code anaphoric reference are not always viewed as articles, but demonstratives:

“But this means that it may be unclear whether a determiner specialized in anaphoric use is an article or a demonstrative” Lyons (1999: 54)

Definite article or demonstrative?

I define the cut-off point as follows:



Indefinite article vs. the numeral *one*

The numeral *one* is the most frequent source for indefinite articles. In addition, even though a language might not have an indefinite article, the numeral can indicate non-identifiability of a referent that would be interpreted as salient, prominent, and thus identifiable otherwise.

→ How can we tear apart those two element and uses? When can we count such an element as article?

1. if it has different formal properties than the numeral *one*:
 - . its morphological form is different
 - . its position in the noun phrase is different
 - . it has a different stress / prosody pattern
2. if it is compatible with the plural (while the numeral is not)
3. if none of the conditions listed above apply, it can still be defined as article based on its function and distribution:
 - . it occurs frequently in context such as introducing new relevant, but not identifiable entities into the discourse
 - . it occurs with different noun types (animate, inanimate, abstract, etc.)
4. if non of these conditions apply, I do not consider the marker to be an article.

One simple or different complex articles?

In some cases, it is not trivial to decide whether we deal with one article, that has a separate semantic category with different values it can take, or if we should rather consider those separate articles, with an additional function each.

Macedonian definite article(s)

“distance”	singular			plural		
	M	F	N	M	F	N
DIST.NEUTR	OT	Ta	TO	Te	Te	Ta
PROX	OB	Ba	BO	Be	Be	Ba
DIST	OH	Ha	HO	He	He	Ha

Abui anaphoric article(s)

“distance”	speaker-oriented	hearer-oriented
PROX	do	to
MED	o	yo

One simple or different complex articles?

Tongan “emotional” articles		
	neutral	emotional
definite	(h)e	si’i
nonspecific	ha	si’a

Since these properties do not impose major changes on the referential function of the articles, I analysed them as one article with its own category, whose values are marked by the different exponents.

“Rare” properties of articles

In Abui, the anaphoric article is marked for speaker or hearer anaphoricity.

Abui (Timor-Alor-Pantar)

- (65) a. pelang **o** tut tah-a it-i
canoe **ANA.1** shore put.on.CPL-DUR lie.on-PFV
'that canoe (I talked about before) lies on the shore'
(Kratochvíl 2007: 115)
- b. na kul we ne-sura **to** he-bilen-r-i=te
1SG must leave 1SG.AL-book **ANA.2** 3II.LOC-colour-reach-PFV=INCP.C
'I must go and photocopy my book (that you just talked about) first'
(Kratochvíl 2007: 115)

“Rare” properties of articles

3SG pronouns as articles in Papuan Malay

Papuan Malay (Austro-Asiatic, Papua New Guinea) uses 3SG pronouns adnominally to mark the definiteness of the noun.

- (66) a. **de** bilang, ko tidor apa?
3SG say 2SG sleep what
‘He said, “why are you sleeping?”’ (Kluge 2017: 292)
- b. baru nene **de** mulai tanya saya
and.then grandmother DEF start ask 1SG
‘[...right then (I) met my grandmother, grandmother and then (my)
older brother, aunt’s child.]
And then grandmother started asking me ...’ (Kluge 2017: 355)

“Rare” properties of articles

Articles inflecting for person in Biak

In Biak (Austronesian), articles are marked for person and can be combined with first and second person as well.

- (67) mananwir an-**mko**-ya
village.chief DEF-**2PL**-SPEC
‘you village chiefs’ (van den Heuvel 2006: 206)

Articles that can modify adverbials in Wardaman

In Wardaman (Yangmanic), articles can also attach to adverbials and adjectives. (It is not entirely clear though, to what extent such adverbs and adjectives are nominalized.)

- (68) a. wudu-**wi** Ø-ba-ndi wuja-yi
little-**DEF** 3SG-burn-PST fire-INSTR
‘When he was little he got burned.’ (Merlan 1994: 93)
- b. bulju-**wi** Ø-yanggi yiwarna gandawag
long.ago-**DEF** 3SG-go.PST other.ABS moon.ABS
‘He went long ago, last month.’ (Merlan 1994: 93)

“Rare” properties of articles

Articles with pronouns in Rapanui

In Rapanui, the definite article marking proper nouns (if it can be considered article) also co-occurs with personal pronouns.

- (69) Ka rima ta'u a tu'a he mana'u haka'ou a ia ki a Roke'aua
CNTG five year by back NTR think again DEF 3SG to DEF Roke'aua
ararua ko Makita.
the.two PROM Makita
'Five years later he thought again of Roke'aua and Makita.'

(Kieviet 2017: 129)

Elevated genre articles in Crow

In Crow (Siouan, USA), definite and indefinite articles are replaced by a single marker in an elevated narrative genre, neutralizing the difference in referentiality otherwise indicated (Graczyk 2007: 233).

