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**Nominal Determination**

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## Editor's preface

In November 1996 a seminar on nominal determination was held at the Faculty of Modern Languages at the Copenhagen Business School. The two articles in the present volume of *Copenhagen Studies in Language* were given as papers on that occasion.

The first contribution by Gyde Hansen (Copenhagen Business School) summarises some results of a contrastive investigation into Danish and German article usage undertaken some time ago. Although the findings are still valid, a new perspective has been taken with respect to some of the problem areas: the "zero article" and the German *Verschmelzungsform*.

The other contribution by Iørn Korzen (Copenhagen Business School) presents the results of a new study of nominal determination with special reference to Italian and including brief comparisons with Danish.

The two studies are very different. The reason for that is not only that each of the three languages investigated - Danish, Italian and German - naturally uses articles in its own characteristic way but also that two different methods of comparison are used: while Hansen's study is contrastive from the outset, Korzen begins with an analysis of determination in one language and makes his comparison afterwards. As a result, nominal determination is seen from many points of view.

Finally this volume contains two book reviews. Elisabet Ormelius-Sandblom's book *Die Modalpartikeln ja, doch und schon* is reviewed by Peter Colliander (Copenhagen Business School) and Andreas Späth (University of Leipzig) and Carl Bache's *The Study of Aspect, Tense and Action* is reviewed by Michael Herslund (Copenhagen Business School).

Gyde Hansen

## Studies on the use of articles in Danish and German

Gyde Hansen

### 1. Introduction

The studies below summarise some of the results of a contrastive analysis of article usage in Danish and German undertaken between 1980 and 1985 and published in 1986.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that the study is not completely recent, the results are still valid, and a number of colleagues, especially translators, have asked me to summarise some of the main differences in Danish and German article usage. This has resulted in the following four studies.

The main and most interesting differences and difficulties in Danish and German article usage lie in the "missing article" or "zero article", which is used in both languages, and the special German *Verschmelzungsform* (a contraction of a preposition and an article). In the first three studies (sections 3, 4, and 5) I have concentrated on the use of these two forms. However in relation to my earlier work I have adopted a different view on one important issue. In the early eighties, I assumed that it was easier to describe article usage if one presupposed the existence of a zero article in the paradigm. In the present work, I have decided to view the "missing article" from a different angle. Influenced by discussions of the zero article (e.g. Löbner 1986 and Pérennec 1993) I have tried not only to show that under several conditions there is no article, but also to find out *why* it is possible to manage without articles in some cases and not in others. In addition, I now hope to be able to show comparable tendencies in Danish and German, especially because the *Verschmelzungsform*, a kind of "minimum article" in German, seems to be used in cases where there is no article in Danish.

The fourth study deals with the use of articles with generic reference. This is a fascinating area, as many different conditions in the fields of morphology, syntax, phonetics, semantics and pragmatics have to be considered simul-

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<sup>1</sup> Hannon 1986a. It can be seen from some of my examples that the study was carried out a while ago.

taneously - though not in the same way in both languages. Also in the case of generic reference I have analysed the use of noun without article.

When Danes communicate in German - whether they are speaking, writing freely, or translating - it soon becomes clear that German is not their mother tongue. Incorrect word order may be the clearest indicator, but article usage also frequently reveals that a language user is not native.

Despite numerous rules at sentence level, it is above all the parameters of (1) context and (2) pragmatic conditions that determine the use of a particular construction. Time and again it becomes evident that the greatest difficulties appear where rules and explanations go beyond sentence level, i.e. where the whole text or communicative situation has to be considered.

In teaching German as a foreign language, there is normally not much focus on article usage - articles are considered to "follow automatically with the NP". This might be the reason why translators and more advanced students of German in cases of doubt often ask for a quick explanation or a simple rule. Unfortunately, existing grammatical descriptions give little help. As things stand, it is difficult to give clear and complete rules which do not result in new problems or misunderstandings. If one attempts to give rules for the rather complicated use of the *Verschmelzungsform* in German, the result tends to be that it is used idiosyncratically: some students employ the form everywhere, others omit it even where it should be used and others again ignore the rules and rely on intuition, e.g.:

(1) \*Der Fragebogen wird an dem Abreisetag in dem Bus auf dem Weg zum Flughafen eingesammelt. (Fragebogen von Tjæreborg-Reisen.)

The context determines that only *am Abreisetag* and *im Bus* are possible. In the following example, only *in dem* is correct:

(2) \*Tjæreborg-Thema berührt der Prinz in königlichen Jubiläumsbuch "En familie og dens dronning" (Eine Familie und ihre Königin), das am 8. Oktober 1996 erscheint. (a student's translation)

The problem is that many grammars approach the description of article usage phenomenologically, i.e. they start from the article form and ask what it is able to express. German grammars state rules of the following kind:

"Der bestimmte Artikel ist unverzichtbar...", "Der bestimmte Artikel steht vor ...", "Der unbestimmte Artikel wird gebraucht, wenn ...", "Der Nullartikel steht vor ...", "Die Zählnameinziehung von Präposition und bestimmtem Artikel ist obligatorisch wenn: ..." (Helbig & Buscha 1996: 367, 375, 377, 388).

Rules of this kind are followed by lists of occurrences - almost invariably without a context. But how does one proceed if what one wishes to express is not subsumed in the lists or does not resemble the cases described? Since most of the examples are context-free, little help can be gained from them.

Article usage can only be described if the information structure of the text, i.e. the text semantic and pragmatic conditions, are considered. Naturally, a great deal of other factors in other fields (morphology, syntax, phonetics) and other levels of description (text, sentence or word level) are also of significance and have to be taken into consideration, but the text semantic and pragmatic conditions are the most important. It is in this area, that the main function of the articles lies. By means of the articles the text receiver is guided through the text and is enabled to arrange the objects and states of affairs the sender is talking about in the textual world. For instance, by using articles the sender expresses whether or not he or she regards the receiver as being able to identify a mentioned object. The use of articles also signals whether the sender is referring generically or specifically to objects or states of affairs.

Other problems in existing descriptions in grammars are that the articles are often linked to a special type of reference, e.g. the definite article to "bestimmte Determination" and the indefinite to "unbestimmte Determination" (Duden 4, 1995: 309).

Unfortunately generic reference is normally described as related to "identifiability" (Helbig & Buscha 1996: 372) and often has the labels "bestimmt" or "unbestimmt" attached to it (Duden 4: 309).

A description of article usage in generic reference presupposes that this type of reference is not mixed up with the other types of reference.

Even if one is concerned with one language only, it is problematical to relate a specific form of article to a specific function. One and the same form may have many different functions depending on the context. In a contrastive study between two or more languages it is completely impossible to ascribe specific forms to specific functions, since the relation between the use of the

articles and the reference of the NPs need not be the same in the different languages.

To the extent this was possible, my goal has been an adirectional,<sup>2</sup> comparison of Danish and German (Burgschmidt/Götz 1974: 18). For this purpose a *tertium comparationis* had to be found to which article usage in both languages could be related. This *tertium comparationis* was taken above all to be the meaning associated with the use of the different articles in both languages. Inspired by Frege (1965) and Heger (1971),<sup>3</sup> I assumed that meaning is something which lies beyond the languages, but which nevertheless can only be approached by means of the individual language.

## 2. Methodology

The decision to adopt a contrastive approach meant that I had to be very careful both with respect to choice of analytical method and the way in which the term 'reference' is used. I expect contrastive analyses to focus on different aspects depending on the language pair and also on how meaning in the different languages is structured. My language pair is Danish - German, and my choice has been governed by this.

It was made a condition that the methodology adopted should lead to results on the basis of empirical studies of texts - results which could explain the reasons for the problems Danes experience with articles when they communicate in German. An overall descriptive and analytical framework was needed which could interpret the reference signals in texts, and which would not, as a result of traditional ways of thinking, impose a subdivision into categories on my material that could not be controlled and which would therefore govern or blur the results of the study. I wanted to be free of the restrictions of existing descriptions of article usage that were semasiological and thus, in my opinion could be inadequate.

<sup>2</sup> This is problematical in cases where one language has a possibility of meaning differentiation which is absent in the other. In these cases, I used as my *tertium comparationis* the meaning in the language which had the greatest degree of differentiation.

<sup>3</sup> Heger (19971: 39) talks about the "noem" as a language independent semantic feature.

## 2.1 Inventory of determiners and articles

It was difficult to establish what kind of entities articles actually are, i.e., to find out which forms could be regarded as articles and which functions they have. In early Danish grammatical descriptions such as Mikkelsen (1911), Diderichsen (1946) and Hansen (1927/1967) there is already a tendency to consider articles as belonging to a larger functional class of "determiners". Vater (1963) developed a functional class of 'articles' which includes a great deal more than what one traditionally conceives of as an "article", i.e., *der* and *ein*.<sup>4</sup>

When drawing up my inventory I started from a bilateral semiotic conception. Following Hjelmslev (1966: 10), I regarded language both as a system and a process, which are mutually dependent. I had to find my *tertium comparationis*, the meaning which was expressed in both languages, by means of articles. But it was not clear which signs could be regarded as articles. As a result, the semasiological method, which attempts to investigate a restricted set of expressions in terms of their meaning, had to be excluded. Furthermore, I did not know the meaning of the articles well enough to be able to use the onomasiological approach, i.e., using meaning to enable one to isolate a specific set of signs as being articles.

In the end, I opted for a compromise between the two methods and isolated the articles and their meaning by means of first the semasiological and then the onomasiological approach. As stated, I assumed that a sign in a text is assigned meaning both through its membership of a specific class of units that can be replaced by each other in a paradigm and through its syntactic position and function in the sequence of the sentence. The first condition was therefore that a sign fulfilled certain syntactic criteria like distribution, permutation and relation. By means of these I found certain members of the functional class of articles, which I then proceeded to investigate according to the textual meaning shared by the forms.

In order to discover other members of the class of articles which could have similar functions but did not meet the first criterion (in other words, the onomasiological step of my approach) I used the functional meaning shared by

<sup>4</sup> See Hansen (1981) for a more detailed discussion.

articles, which I defined as being: *giving signals for the type of reference intended by the sender when using an NP*.

One can always discuss which forms should or should not belong to the functional class of articles - I opted for the following article forms in Danish and German:

Danish: *en, den, denne, hver, enhver, nogen/nogle, hvilken, hvad, sådan, ingen, adskillige, flere, hin, possessive pronoun, al, enclitic article, selve, genitive form and 0-article*<sup>6</sup>

German: *ein, der, dieser, jeder, mancher, einige, welcher, solcher, kein, irgendein, irgendwelche, etliche, mehrere, jener, possessive pronoun, alle, etwas, genitive form and 0-article*

It turned out to be too comprehensive a task to carry out a contrastive analysis of the entire functional class. I chose the German forms *der/ein/0-article* and the *Verschmelzungsform*, and the Danish forms *den/en/enclitic form/0-article* and undertook a comparison between the two sets.

Since the possessive pronoun sometimes is used in Danish where *der* is required in German, and since the genitive form is used as a premodifier with the function of an article in Danish where *der* is used in German, the whole functional class had to be considered.

## 2.2 Corpus

My corpus consisted of approximately 10,000 NPs in Danish and German contexts. Different text types from different areas were represented: newspaper articles, novels, narratives, works on biology, philosophy, social studies, and

<sup>6</sup> Whenever Danish *den* or German *der* is employed I take this to include the declined forms *ihet, de and die, das, die* respectively. The same holds true for *en, et and ein, eine* respectively. As the article *der* often is no more "definite" than the article *ein*, for example in generic reference, I avoid the terms "definite article" and "indefinite article".

<sup>7</sup> The 0-article is discussed in section 2.5.4.

technical texts, including instruction leaflets and manuals.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.3 Reference

As stated above, the articles give signals for the type of reference intended by the sender when using an NP. In order to analyse the examples, text-semantic and pragmatic criteria were needed, i.e. definitions of the various types of reference in texts. Reference is a key concept for article usage, but there are many definitions of reference; consequently, opinions are divided as to which expressions can be used for reference and as to what kind of objects they can be used to refer to. The questions are of the following type. Is it only possible to refer to objects and states of affairs by means of NPs? Is it possible to refer to objects and states of affairs by means of some NPs and not by others? Does one only refer to specific, existing objects or also to fictional objects which only exist in our imagination or in hypotheses? Is it a question of reference if one refers to a whole class which also includes objects which have existed but no longer exist and objects that will exist in the future. In other words, is there such a thing as generic reference?

For instance, Searle (1969) almost exclusively speaks of definite or unique reference. This would mean that only a very small selection of my examples could be regarded as having a referring function. Hawkins (1978) criticises this narrow view of reference, and includes plural definite NPs and indefinite NPs among the referring types. According to this view, several of my examples are referring NPs. Lyons (1977) distinguishes between several types of reference. But he retains a set of "non-referring definite noun phrases", e.g. in sentences with predicatives such as:

"Giscard d'Estaing is the President of France".

He also questions whether "indefinite expressions" are referring at all. Following Lyons, it was possible to classify a large number of my examples, but not all. There was no means of knowing whether the concepts of reference were broad enough, especially for an analysis of article usage in Danish, since there are as yet relatively few studies on reference and article usage in this language.

<sup>7</sup> Further information about the corpus can be found in Hansen (1986a: 388).

An important question for the contrastive analysis of article usage had to do with some NPs without article in Danish, where it was not quite clear if they were used to refer or whether they were used predicatively. It felt wrong to equate nouns without article automatically with non-reference, because in a sentence like:

(3) Norge fik *ny statsminister* og *han* ligner slet ikke Gro Harlem Brundtland. (JP, 26.10.96:1)

it is quite clear that *ny statsminister* refers to a person and that there is co-reference with *han*. Whereas one can omit the article *en* in Danish, in German it would be impossible to leave out *ein*. The translation would always have to be *einen neuen Ministerpräsidenten*.

Considering the context, it is not possible to conclude that a "missing article" implies non-reference, or that the fact that an NP is not accompanied by an article means that it is used predicatively or generically. Particularly in Danish, there are a great deal of constructions without an article but which nevertheless have clear reference. Besides, if I had assumed that NPs were non-referring just because they were not accompanied by an article, I would have had to postulate that reference existed in one of the languages, German, where there was an article - and non-reference in the other, Danish, where in a corresponding context more or less the same was expressed without the use of an article.

On the basis of my examinations of Danish NPs without an article and German NPs with *Verschmelzungsform*, I expected that there might be examples in texts of a gradual transition from "referring" use of NPs to more "predicative" use, which could be seen in the use of *Verschmelzungsform*. This led me to undertake further investigations of the various definitions of reference.

Over the years, reference has been investigated, defined and discussed from various angles. I drew on aspects of the two dominant views of reference - the representational and the instrumental - which can be traced back to Aristotle and Plato respectively (Keller 1995). The first view is *reference as relation*. Reference is the relation which exists between the linguistic sign and an object or state of affairs in the non-linguistic world. The other view is *reference as an*

*action*. Reference is an action for which a sender uses a sign in a specific communication situation.

*Reference as a relation*. As stated earlier, it was not clear what kind of objects it is possible to refer to with an NP. There are many NPs for which there is no object in the non-linguistic world. Semiotic models, e.g. Baldinger (1960) and Heger (1971), have made it possible to postulate that that which is referred to when there is no object can be equated with the mental picture that is evoked by a sign in a person's mind. That is, it is the sum total of what a person imagines on the basis of his/her individual experience. From this perspective the concept of reference was broad enough to be able to include abstract or fictitious objects or complete classes.

*Reference as an action in a context* has been defined by Strawson (1950): "Mentioning" or "referring" is not something that someone can use an expression to do. Mentioning, or referring to something, is a characteristic of a use of an expression just as "being about" something and truth or falsity are characteristics of a use of a sentence. (p. 326) and:

"The expression itself does not refer to anything, though it can be used, on different occasions, to refer to innumerable things." (p. 328)  
He emphasises the importance of the context in relation to reference:

"The context of utterances is of an importance which it is almost impossible to exaggerate, and by "context" I mean at least the time, the place, the situation, the identity of the speaker, the subjects which form the immediate focus of interest, and the personal histories of both the speaker and those he is addressing. Besides context there is, of course, convention - linguistic convention." (p. 336)

Lyons (1995: 79) makes a distinction between denotation and reference. "Denotation" corresponds to "reference as a relation". Reference is defined in a manner similar to Strawson:

"The important point to note, for the present, is that lexemes, as such, do not have reference, but may be used as referring expressions or, more commonly, as components of referring expressions in particular contexts of utterance."

This view of reference as an action assigned by the sender to a lexeme or a phrase enabled me to investigate patterns of use in texts. It was possible to include both sender and receiver. The fact that an NP is *used* by the sender to do something in a specific context and communicative situation makes the

contrastive analysis dynamic. An NP is by some means or other used to refer to an object or a state of affairs in a specific context; by means of the articles and the context the sender signals how this reference can or should be interpreted by the receiver.

My methodological starting-point was that reference is an action which a sender can perform with any expression; either the sender refers to an object or a state of affairs in the non-linguistic world or to the conception the receiver has of the object or state of affairs.

It makes a difference whether one takes the perspective of the sender or of the receiver. The sender might say: *I have bought a car*. At the time of the utterance, it is a specific car that can be identified by him/her, but this does not hold true for the receiver. In my study, I always take the point of view of the receiver. My question was: What does the sender enable the receiver to interpret and conclude from his/her use of the various articles? On the basis of the information structure of texts, one can work out the various types of reference, which, incidentally, can all co-occur in a text (Christopherson 1939; Hawkins 1978). By means of the articles the sender signals that he/she assumes the following:

**A: The receiver can identify the object or state of affairs the sender refers to**

1. on the basis of it being mentioned in the context;
2. on the basis of the situation created in the text (implication) or the situation in which the text is used (deixis);
3. on the basis of general knowledge.

**B: The receiver can not identify the object or state of affairs;**

1. he/she imagines a specific object about which he/she can expect to obtain further information;
2. he/she can not expect to obtain further information, since the NP is part of a fixed expression or a predicate without an identity relation;

### 3. he/she has to imagine a class of objects and can expect general information about the whole class (generic use).

The different signals that the receiver gets have been termed text semantic conditions (a category of pragmatic conditions which in written communication can be expressed by means of the text only). They override all other conditions at other levels such as the sentence, the phrase and the word. At these levels, word semantic and sentence semantic as well as morphological, syntactic and phonological conditions, which can also influence the use of articles, are added. Thus my analysis starts with the text and then moves back from word level to phrase and sentence level and text level again.

My working definition of types of reference as the overall *tertium comparationis* makes it possible to start primarily from the information structure of the text. This approach has the following advantages:

- Other functions such as marking the case in German sentences can be assigned an appropriate role.
- Generic reference can be dissociated from a categorisation as definite or indefinite. It is possible to perceive the subtle relations between specific and generic reference.
- By viewing reference as an action, it is possible to capture the fact that some nouns in certain contexts are used to refer to countable objects and in others to uncountable objects. This is particularly true of Danish NPs, e.g. *kultur/kulturer - publikum/publikummer - politiik/politikker*.
- It is possible to examine the rather complicated use of the German Verschmelzungsform, like *zum*, which can represent either *zu + dem* or *zu + einem*. Only by considering the context can we decide how the contracted form should be analysed and which rules govern the use of a contracted versus a non-contracted form.
- The use of NPs without an article in Danish becomes more transparent, making it possible to grasp small nuances of meaning and to capture possible transitional phenomena both in Danish and German article usage.

#### 2.4 Special article forms

Within the field of article usage, researchers have long been aware of a special



non-existing article which functions as a kind of linguistic crutch: the zero article. Furthermore, there are special constructions which are typical of Danish and German, e.g. the use of the enclitic article in Danish<sup>8</sup> and the *Verschmelzungsform* in German. In addition, the Danish premodifying genitive in many cases has a function comparable to that of articles. The existence of some of these forms opens up possibilities for variations of meaning in one language which may have to be expressed in a different way in the other language. These "special article forms" will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

#### 2.4.1 The definiteness morpheme

The Danish enclitic article has been variously termed the "definiteness form of the noun" (Danish: *navneordenes bestemte form*, Mikkelsen 1975: 187) or the "knownness morpheme" (Danish: *bekendthedsbøjning*, Diderichsen 1970: 31). This morpheme which is inflected in terms of gender, number and case, is used when there are no adjectives, preposed participles or descriptive genitive constructions before the noun, e.g. *huset/konen/børnene* (das Haus/die Frau/die Kinder). If any of these occur, the article *den/det/de* is used, e.g. *den gule hus/den grædende kone/de satans børn* (das gelbe Haus/die weinende Frau, die Kinder des Teufels).

In a contrastive analysis, one has to bear in mind that the use of compounds or NPs with different kinds of modifiers in texts operates differently in the two languages, thereby affecting article usage (Hansen 1986a: 76). For instance, in German, NPs with an adjective are often represented by means of a compound in Danish, which results in the use of an enclitic article: *das tägliche Leben - dagliglivet, die Berliner Mauer - Berlinermuren, das Schwarze Meer - Sortehavet*. Furthermore, *den* often precedes NPs with a restrictive relative clause. Here, the use of the definiteness morpheme may be too weak, making the slightly demonstrative meaning associated with the preposed article necessary.

<sup>8</sup> Enclitic articles also exist in related languages like Norwegian and Swedish.

#### 2.4.2 Genitive or an apposition as a premodifier with the function of an article

In Danish, all genitives are premodifiers, i.e. they can only occur before the noun. There are various types of genitives. The descriptive genitive, e.g. *en fire værelses lejlighed* (\*eine Wohnung der vier Zimmer), *en pokkers fræk idiot* (\*ein des Teufels frecher Idiot), *et kærlighedens bånd* (\*ein der Liebe Band) has the same syntactic position and function as a preposed adjective and, consequently, the use of articles is precisely the same as with preposed adjectives or participles. Other genitives, however, denote possession, agent or patient to an activity expressed by means of a verbal noun, and these preposed genitives have the function of an article, i.e. the function of disambiguating the reference.

In German, genitives are normally postposed, but in the case of proper names, e.g. *Peters Haus*, the genitive can be preposed and thus it fulfils the function of the article - as in Danish.

It is also important to note that the use of modifiers in the two languages does not completely correspond. A prepositional modifier in one of the languages can be represented as a genitive in the other, e.g. *die Zeitung von gestern - gårdsagens avis*. Or a compound can turn into a construction with a genitive, e.g. *das Tagesgericht - dagens ret*. In such cases, German has the article *der* and Danish has the genitive form functioning as an article (Hansen 1986a: 76).

In the same way, in Danish an apposition can take over the function of the article, e.g. *Bellaahøj Politistation - das Polizeirevier von Bellaahøj* and *Nakskov Havn - der Havn von Nakskov*. In such cases too, German has the article *der*. These differences immediately affect the use of articles (Hansen 1986a: 108).

#### 2.4.3 Verschmelzungsform

In constructions with a preposition, for instance when the NP occurs as a prepositional object, adverbial or prepositional modifier, German has the possibility of using the *Verschmelzungsform*. This is a contraction of a preposition and the article *der*, or a preposition and the article *ein*. The most common forms are:

Preposition	Dative (m., n., sg.)	Accusative (n., sg.)	Dative (f., sg.)
<i>an</i>	<i>am</i>	<i>ans</i>	
<i>in</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>ins</i>	
<i>von</i>	<i>vom</i>		
<i>zu</i>	<i>zum</i>		
<i>bei</i>	<i>beim</i>		<i>zur</i>
<i>unter</i>	<i>unterm</i>	<i>unters</i>	
<i>über</i>	<i>überm</i>	<i>übers</i>	
<i>vor</i>	<i>vorm</i>	<i>vors</i>	
<i>auf</i>		<i>aufs</i>	
<i>durch</i>		<i>durchs</i>	
<i>für</i>		<i>fürs</i>	
<i>um</i>		<i>ums</i>	

Of these forms, some belong to the German standard language, e.g. *zum*, *zur*, *im*, *ins*, *am*, *beim*, *vom*, whereas others, e.g. *vors*, *unters*, *übers* *durchs*, are regarded as colloquial forms.

#### 2.4.4 The zero article

In Hansen (1981, 1986a), I assumed the existence of a zero article which can occur in both languages. At the time, this was the view generally held in the German literature (e.g. Helbig/Buscha 1979, Oomen 1977, Vater<sup>9</sup> 1963/1979). Weinrich (1969: 63) observes the following:

“Dass man in der Linguistik mit Null-Werten rechnet, und dass speziell die Artikel-Paradigmatik ohne Null-Werte nicht adäquat beschrieben werden kann, ist eine Selbstverständlichkeit geworden, und bedarf keiner weiteren Rechtfertigung.”

Since then, many have attempted to abolish the zero article or as, Pérennec (1993: 19) puts it, “to pension off the zero article”, e.g. Löbner (1986) and Kolde (1989).

In the few existing Danish descriptions of article usage, no reference is made to the zero article, but it is said that something is missing and at the same time an attempt is made to describe what it is that is missing. Mikkelsen (1975: 193) terms the phenomenon “indefinite noun without indefinite article” (Danish:

<sup>9</sup> In later works, Vater draws a distinction between determiners and quantifiers and abandons the zero article. He talks about “artikellose NPs” (1984: 338).

*ubestemt navngord uden ubestemt kendeord*) and “definite noun in indefinite form” (Danish: *bestemt navngord i ubestemt form*). Diderichsen (1970: 53) says: “*en* is missing”, “*den* is missing” (Danish: *en mangler, den mangler*). Aage Hansen (1927: 12) refers to it as the “the bare form” (Danish: *nøgen form*) and then proceeds to distinguish between “indefinite form” (Danish: *udefineret form*) and “non-use of definite form” (Danish: *ikke anvendelse af bestemt form*).

Instead of assuming that something is missing, one could also adopt the view that there is an element one can do without. This is an approach adopted by Zemb (1978), whose starting-point is not the NP, but simply the noun itself. He says that nouns requiring an article to indicate the type of reference are not “vital” enough alone to cope with the function of reference (without the aid of an article). The vitality of a noun differs according to whether it occurs in the rheme or in the theme. Zemb states (1978: 367):

“C’est D, le ‘revitalisateur’ qui vient compenser un manque, lorsque le N n’est pas capable de situer l’identité existentielle d’une donnée thématique.” I shall here try to follow Zemb, but see his statement from the opposite angle and assume that it is possible to use a noun without an article because the noun is sufficiently vital to unambiguously indicate the reference in a text. I further assume that the possibility of dispensing with the article is determined by many different factors, above all conditions affecting the interaction between the meaning of the noun and the predicate of the sentence, the text type and the information structure of the text.

### 3. NPs without article in Danish - what possibilities are there in German?<sup>10</sup>

Danes have two major difficulties with respect to article usage, when they communicate in German. One of the problems is caused by interference, i.e. the use of an NP without an article is erroneously transferred from Danish to German. Another problem area is the use of the German *Verschmelzungsform*, where the difficulty is whether the contracted form should be used or not.

<sup>10</sup> This description of article usage is not exhaustive.

The following description will be based on the many cases where the article is omitted in Danish, and the noun alone is used to refer to an object or state of affairs. In German the noun alone would perhaps also be sufficient to enable the recipient to identify the object, but nevertheless there are only few cases where the article can be omitted.

I here assume the text semantic conditions mentioned in A1, A2, A3 (see p.18), i.e.: *The receiver can identify the object or state of affairs the sender refers to on the basis of it being mentioned in the context, on the basis of the situation created in the text (implication) or the situation in which the text is used ( deixis), or on the basis of general knowledge.*

### 3.1 NPs with a special referential capacity

Some Danish nouns, mostly nominalised adjectives or participles, seem inherently to include the referential meaning, e.g. *sidsnævnte* (the last mentioned), *undertegnede* (the undersigned), *vedkommende* (the person in question), *sigtede* (the suspect), *afdøde* (the dead person), *anholdte* (the arrested person) etc. They can be used to refer to a person in such a way that the receiver is able to identify the person in question from the context or situation. Thus in Danish, the article can be dispensed with, e.g.:

(4) Der kan ikke herske ringeste tvivl om, at de pågældende meddelere har optrådt illoyalt grænsende til kriminelt. *Vedkommende* bør - hvis de opdages - aldeles omgående afskediges. (JP, 17.9.98:10)

German: Es kann nicht der geringste Zweifel darüber bestehen, dass die entsprechenden Informanten sich illoyal, ja fast kriminell verhalten haben. (\**Betreffende*) *Die Betreffenden* müssen - wenn man sie findet - sofort entlassen werden.

(5) VB vil ikke ud med navnet, men klubbens direktør Henrik Lund, understreger, at der en af de nærmeste dage findes en løsning med enten danskeren eller Greg Schwarzer. *Sidsnævnte* har besigtiget forholdene i Vejle og vil gerne skifte fra Osnabrück i rækken under 2. Bundesliga. (JP, 20.1.98:14)

German: Der VB will den Namen nicht herausrücken, aber der Direktor des Klubs, Henrik Lund, unterstreicht, dass man in den nächsten Tagen eine

Lösung finden werde, entweder mit dem Dänen oder mit Greg Schwarzer. *Letzterer* hat sich die Verhältnisse in Vejle angesehen und möchte gern von Osnabrück, in der Reihe unter der 2. Bundesliga, nach Vejle überwechseln.

The same phenomenon is found in German, but it is restricted to a small number of nouns, e.g. *Letztere(r)*, *Erstere(r)* in (5), or to certain domain-specific text types - particularly legal texts.<sup>11</sup>

In Danish, most of these nouns without article are found with the NP as the subject at the beginning of a sentence. The few nouns that are used without an article in German occur when the noun is the subject at the beginning of a sentence. It would appear that Zemb's observation that nouns in the position of the theme may more easily do without the article (Zemb, 1978: 367) indeed holds for German and for most cases in Danish.

(6) Punkt ein Uhr wird die Menge totenstill, und durch die kleine Tür betritt, von Gefängniswärttern flankiert, *der Delinquent* den Hof, aus dem er nicht mehr weggehen wird. ... *Delinquent* hat ihn vor wenigen Stunden kennengelernt. ... Es ist der Vertreter der medizinischen Wissenschaft und wird festzustellen haben, dass *Delinquent* tot ist. ... Nachdem Monsignore Tylinck unverrichteter Dinge die Zelle verlassen hat, brachte man *dem Delinquenten* sein Abendbrot. ... Der Übersetzer hat die Vorlesung des Enunziats beendet und fragt *den Delinquenten*, ob er noch etwas bemerken wolle. ... Auch deutsch wird vorgelesen, eigens für *den Delinquenten*. (Lesebuch 1: 40)

Nouns of this type frequently occur in Danish. Since few instances exist in German and since they are restricted to certain text types, all these NPs without article in Danish should be assigned an article when translated into German, e.g. *sigtede* - *der/die Angeklagte*, *vedkommende* - *der/die Betreffende*. Only some special cases, e.g. *førstnævnte/sidstnævnte* - *Erstere(r)/Letztere(r)*, and some legal NPs, form an exception (i.e. no article).

### 3.2 NPs with a clear referential meaning by means of a modifying adjective or participle

A great deal of Danish adjectives and participles have a special identifying function; when they are used, the reference in the context is clear and the

<sup>11</sup> Some of the Danish nouns are also derived from legal texts.

article can be dispensed with. The items include ordinal numbers, superlatives and words like *venstre (left)*, *højre (right)*, *samme (same)*, *eget (own)*, *begge (both)*, *x-årige (x-aged)* and participles like *førstnævnte (first mentioned)*, *ovennævnte (already mentioned)*, *sidstnævnte (last mentioned)*, *nuværende (present)*, *nærværende (present)*, *daværende (the then)*, *forhenværende (former)*, *afldede (late)*, *fungerende (acting)*, *gældende (existing)*. Some are related to the nominalised participles in section 3.1:

(7) Mor havde et mægtigt blåt øje og far havde fået revet højre øre næsten halvt af. (Panduro: 111)

German: Meine Mutter hatte ein tiefblaues Auge und meinem Vater hatte man (\*rechtes Ohr) das rechte Ohr beinahe halb abgerissen.

(8) Anden akt giver sig bedre tid. (JP, 24.2.98: 2)

German: (\*Zweiter Akt gibt sich besser Zeit.) Im zweiten Akt lässt man sich mehr Zeit.

(9) I samme periode skabte Fritz Lang sin klassiker "Metropolis". (JP, 24.2.98: 3)

German: (\*In) Im gleichen Zeitraum/ Zur gleichen Zeit schuf Fritz Lange seinen Klassiker "Metropolis".

(10) Heroppefra kunne han se tagene på mange huse, og efter nogen tids undersøgelse blev han enig med sig selv om, at det der lå nærmest for mätte være taget på baghuset, hvor hans hest stod i nederste etage. (Bøtker:15)

German: Von hier oben konnte er die Dächer vieler Häuser sehen, und nachdem er sie ein Weilchen untersucht hatte, war er sich sicher, dass das Dach, das er ganz in der Nähe sah, das Dach des Hinterhauses sein musste, wo sein Pferd (\*in unterster Etage) im Erdgeschoss stand.

(11) Nu starter jeg imidlertid eget firma herhjemme. (Politiken, 6.1.81, I:7)

German: Jetzt richte ich mir hier zu Hause (\*eigene) meine eigene Firma ein.

(12) Han følte på begge ben. (Panduro: 18)

German: Er følte an beiden Beinen.

It is evident from the translations<sup>12</sup> that - with very few exceptions - German uses *der* or the *Verschmelzungsform*. A German example:

(13) Wir klappern alle in der Nähe befindlichen Läden ab. Im ersten Geschäft gibt es Wurst aber kein Fleisch. (Zeitmagazin, 10.7.81:8)

Sometimes, as in example (11), a possessive pronoun is used.

The few cases where the NP can be used without article in German typically involve indications of time, but only when the time can be seen from the situation ( deixis) e.g. *letzte/nächste Woche* and *beide*, i.e.:

(14) Letzten Sonntag wurde in Bayern gewählt. (15.9.1998)

(15) \*Letzten Sonntag möchte die SPD am liebsten vergessen.

NPs with *beide* can be used without an article. An example:

(16) Natürlich spielen die Parteien eine angemessene Rolle bei der Interessenvertretung, sagt die einzige CDU-Anhängerin der befragten Gruppe. ... Auch die CSU-Getreue glaubt, ihre Ansichten würden von den bestehenden Parteien zum Ausdruck gebracht. *Beide Studentinnen* gehen zur Wahl. (Der Spiegel 49, 1982)

It is also possible to find an NP with *eigen* without an article, but virtually only in fixed expressions: *aus eigener Tasche zahlen*. In other cases, an article is obligatory in German, e.g.:

(17) *Am eigenen Leibe* habe ich erfahren, dass viele Polizisten als legalisierte Chaoten anzusehen sind, weil sie nicht davor zurückschrecken, den "ungeschützten Rücken" eines Bundesbürgers als Frustventil zu benutzen. (Stern 41, 81:9)

<sup>12</sup> I have analysed the Danish and German use of articles independently using original parallel texts. For reasons of space, I here sometimes use the translations to show the German use.

It can be concluded, that in Danish, there are a large number of NPs which unambiguously can be used to refer to objects in the text or communicative situation, just by virtue of the premodifying adjectives or participles. There is no need for an article.<sup>13</sup>

In German, with few exceptions, the article can *not* be omitted. Doing so would, as the examples shown in the brackets (\*) indicate, sound like "broken German".

The same conclusion can be drawn as in section 3.1, namely, that all these NPs, which typically do not need an article in Danish, with very few exceptions require *der* or *Verschmelzungsform* in German.

### 3.3 Specific roles

When by definition an institution or organisation is associated with a particular role, the article can be omitted in Danish. Since the relation between the role and the institution is obvious, the noun virtually acts as a kind of proper noun, i.g. *husbond* (*husband/master*), *skipper*, *rektor*:

- (18) Jeg påstår, at *skipper* var ude af stand til at udføre sin pligt som ansvarlig for skibets føring. (Information, 23.10.81:5)

German: Ich möchte behaupten, dass (\**Kapitän*) der *Kapitän* ausserstande war, die Verantwortung für das Schiff zu übernehmen.

- (19) På kostskolen traf jeg Henrik. ... *Rektor* nægtede konsekvent at tro på hans skyld, uanset hvor meget han påstod at det skam var rigtigt at han havde stjålet en bil. (Panduro: 120)

German: Im Internat traf ich Henrik. ... (\**Direktor*) Der *Direktor* weigerte sich konsequent, an seine Schuld zu glauben, egal wie sehr er auch darauf bestand, wirklich ein Auto gestohlen zu haben.

In German, the article can *not* be omitted.

<sup>13</sup> In some cases adjective and noun have been contracted and have acquired the status of a proper name as *Højesteret* - *Das Oberste Gericht* (Hansen 1986a: 98, 130).

### 3.4 Reference to unique specimens

When referring to unique specimens, no article is used in Danish - presumably because there can be no doubt what it is that is referred to, e.g.:

- (20) Pave Johannes Poul har vakt forundring ved i en offentlig tale udtrykkeligt at udelukke muligheden for et sexliv i *himmerige*. (Politiken, 9.12.81: 2)

German: Papst Johannes Poul hat Erstaunen hervorgerufen, als er in einer öffentlichen Rede die Möglichkeit von Sex (\*in *Himmelreich*) im *Himmel(reich)* grundsätzlich ausschloss.

- (21) ... således at for eksempel en vind, der blæser fra *ækvator* mod nord afbøjes mere og mere mod øst, jo længere nord den blæser. (Jørgensen: 53)

German: ... so, dass z.B. ein Wind, der (\*von *Äquator*) vom *Äquator* nach Norden weht, immer mehr nach Osten abgelenkt wird, je weiter nördlich er weht.

In German, the article can *not* be omitted. Either *der* or the Verschmelzungsform is used. Though there is only one "Himmel" and one "Äquator" and reference should be clear without an article, this is not reflected in the German use of articles. Making do with the bare noun is impossible.

### 3.5 No article in Danish for phonetic reasons

Phonetically speaking, the use of the enclitic article in Danish is felt to be awkward with nouns ending in *-is*, *-us*, *-um*. Therefore, as a rule they are found without an article. Even in a larger context, the absence of an article does not confuse the recipient. He/she understands the reference, e.g.:

- (22) Alexander bliver hver dag transporteret fra *cirkus* til sin skole, der ligger på Frederiksberg, ... "Jeg har venner i næsten samtlige byer, som vi hvert år besøger med *cirkus*." (Circus Arli Tidende, 1998: 9)

German: Alexander wird jeden Tag (\*von *Zirkus*) vom *Zirkus* in seine Schule im Stadtteil Frederiksberg gefahren, ... "Ich habe in beinahe allen Städten, die wir jedes Jahr mit (\**Zirkus*) dem *Zirkus* besuchen, Freunde."

In colloquial speech, it is nowadays possible to find the enclitic article, e.g.:

*lukstussen (der Lukstus)*. This is sometimes even accompanied by an apostrophe, e.g.: *tinitus 'en (der Tinitus)*.

In all these cases, German follows the normal use of articles, i.e. *der* or the *Verschmelzungsform*, while it is possible to omit the article in Danish without causing misunderstanding.

### 3.6 More or less fixed expressions

In Danish, the article is also omitted in more formalised, fixed expressions, i.e. in expressions like *tælle puls (den Puls zählen)*, *vaske hænder (die Hände waschen)*, *børste tænder (Zähne putzen/die Zähne putzen)*, *male læber (sich die Lippen anmalen)*, *skifte skjorte (das Hemd wechseln) falde på knæ (auf die Knie fallen)*, *lufte hund (mit dem Hund gassi gehen)*. If necessary, the object can be identified from the context, as there often is a clear possessive relationship. With few exceptions, the object referred to by means of the noun is semantically the patient for the activity expressed by the predicate.

In German, the occurrence of nouns without article is restricted to a few expressions like *Hände waschen*, *Zähne putzen*, *Nase putzen*, but note: *er geht mit seinem/dem Hund gassi*, *er fällt auf seine/die Knie*, *sie malte sich die/ihre Lippen an*, *er reinigte sich die Nägel*, etc.

In Danish, this use has been extended to expressions which are not quite as fixed, e.g.:

(23) I begyndelsen af opholdet i hallen talte vi alle med ret dæmpede stemmer - undtagen Knud W. Jensen, der følte sig hjemme hos sig selv og ikke uvilkaarligt ændrede tonefald. (Brandt: 78)

German: Am Anfang sprachen wir in der Halle alle mit gedämpften Stimmen - nur Knud W. Jensen nicht, der sich zu Hause fühlte und (\*nicht unwillkürlich Tonfall änderte) nicht unwillkürlich den/seinen Tonfall änderte.

In Danish, there are many more of these more or less fixed expressions which are used without article. In German, *der* or the possessive *pronoun* is typically used.

In a contrastive analysis of the use of articles in Danish and German, it is

important not to lump these "fixed expressions" together with expressions like *Jeg har købt hus*,<sup>14</sup> as in e.g. Korzen (1996: 112):

(24) Jeg har skiftet skjorte - Ich habe *mein/das Hemd* gewechselt

(25) Jeg har skiftet tog - Ich habe *den Zug* gewechselt

but:

(26) Jeg har købt bil - Ich habe *ein Auto* gekauft

In (24) and (25), the receiver can identify an object if he/she wants to, but not in (26). Neither of these should be mixed up with NPs in my category B 2 (p.18) of fixed expressions as *holde øje med (keep an eye on)*, *være i stand til (be able to)*, *til slut (finally)*, *for alvor (seriously)* (Hansen 1986a: 235).

### 3.7 Proper nouns and abbreviations

With proper nouns, where there should be no doubt as to what object is being referred to, there are two opposite tendencies in Danish and German. Under certain conditions, fewer articles are used in Danish than in German and under other conditions *more* articles are used in German than in Danish. The overall result is that there are far fewer articles in Danish than in German. Below, I shall not mention the cases where names without an article can be used in both languages.

#### 3.7.1 No article in Danish - article in German

a) In the case of reference to a person, e.g. with a noun and an adjective premodifier, Danish, contrary to German has no article:

(27) Revolveren dumpede på gulvet og Gamle Horn stod midt på gulvet og råbte op. (Panduro: 123)

German: Der Revolver fiel zu Boden und (\*alter Horn) der alte Horn stand mitten im Zimmer und schimpfte.

<sup>14</sup> See section 5.

b) Again, there is no article in Danish when referring to institutions or streets<sup>15</sup>:

(28) I *Kreml* tillægges besøget stor betydning. (Politiken, 2.3.82:7)

German, however, requires an article:

(\*In *Kreml*) *Im Kreml* wird dem Besuch grosse Bedeutung beigemessen.

A corresponding German example:

(29) Bedeutet diese Einstufung, dass *der Kreml* die Abwerbung der Bundesrepublik mit absolutem Vorrang betreibt? (Die Zeit, 20.11.81:1)

(30) I sidste uge, da jeg var i *Zoologisk Have* med børnene. (Panduro: 83)

German: Letzte Woche, als ich mit den Kindern (\*in *Zoologischen Garten*) im *Zoologischen Garten* war.

(31) Vi kom gennem *Havnegade*, hvor de små rutebåde lægger til, men det var ikke stedet. (Ørum: 37)

German: Wir kamen durch (\**Hafenstrasse*) *die Hafenstrasse (Havnegade)*, wo die kleinen Ausflugsboote anlegen, aber das war nicht der richtige Ort.

A corresponding German example:

(32) Hier haben sie gewohnt. Hier auf *der Singerstrasse*. (Plenzdorf: 7)

c) When referring to countries, Danish uses enclitic article only with countries ending in *-i* (e.g. *Tyrkiet*), while German uses the article or the *Verschmelzungsform* with countries that are feminine or masculine, e.g.: *die Schweiz, die Türkei, der Irak, der Iran* - but no article with e.g. *Dänemark*.

d) Abbreviations rarely take an article in Danish, whereas this is nearly always the case in German, e.g.:

(33) Som teksten bliver udlagt i *Irak*, har Hussein demonstreret styrke til at modstå et pres fra *F/N* og en trussel fra *USA*. (JP, 24.2.98, II:1)

German: (\**In Irak*) *Im Irak* wird der Text so ausgelegt, als habe Hussein seine Stärke bewiesen, dem Druck (\**von UNO*) *der UNO* und den Drohungen (\**von USA*) *der USA* zu trotzen.

### 3.7.2 More articles in German

In German, particularly in southern Germany, an article is used with first names when mentioning a person:

(34) Kurz darauf kam er zum Einsatz und fiel bei Monte Cassino, fast an dem gleichen Tag, als *die Brigitte* von einem SS-Kameraden den kleinen Heiko bekam. (Lesebuch I: 54)

This also holds true when the case has to be marked unambiguously:

(35) Die Auffindung *der Oktavia* ist ein besonderer Glücksfall. (Zeitsmagazin, 20.11.81:2)

### 3.8 Verschmelzungsform in German

In the previous sections, it was shown that many Danish NPs are used as if they are “vital” NPs. They can be used to signal identifiability without the aid of an article. At first sight, it would appear that it is unlikely to omit the article in German in these cases. This is what the differences between the languages in terms of article usage seem to indicate, but nevertheless it is possible to detect comparable tendencies or strategies in the two languages. This will be shown with respect to the German *Verschmelzungsform*.

For the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* it is crucial to know exactly whether the receiver is able to identify the object or state of affairs because it has already been mentioned in *the context (A1)*, on the basis of *the situation* created in the text (implication) or *the situation* in which the text is used (deixis) (A2), or because of *general knowledge (A3)* (p.18).

But first it is important to know that there are certain conditions where the *Verschmelzungsform* can never be used:

<sup>15</sup> In the same way with some newspapers, places, etc.

a) When the object denoted by the noun needs to be highlighted in the context, e.g.:

(36) Er ist weitergelaufen, wieder ohne zu sehen, wohin er ging, und da ist er wieder einem Auto vor den Kühler gelaufen und *in dem Auto* sass ein Mann, dem Paul schon vor zwei Stunden seine Adresse gegeben hatte. (Plenzdorf: 248)

b) Nor is *Verschmelzungsform* used if a characteristic expressed by means of a premodifying adjective needs to be highlighted, e.g.:

(37) Eine Stadt, über die man immer sagt: Es ist wie vor hundert Jahren. Anfängen hat man *an dem einen Ende*, das steht fest. Aber das andere Ende, wo ist das? (Lesebuch I: 40)

c) The *Verschmelzungsform* is not used if information which is important for the identification of the object referred to with the noun is provided afterwards by means of postmodifiers, e.g. a restrictive relative clause:

(38) Präsidenten-Mord in Kairo. Der Tod im "Land der Liebe". ... Der hinterhältige gemeine Tod erteilte ihn *in dem Land*, das er *erst kürzlich noch als ein "Land der Liebe" gerühmt hatte*. (Die Zeit, 9.10.81:2)

or a defining infinitive:

(39) Dies war der Grund, weshalb Jimmy Carter fast zwei Jahre lang wartete, bevor er sich endlich zu dem *Beschluss durchrang*, sowohl die neue Rakete als auch das enorme Bunkersystem bauen zu lassen. (Die Zeit, 9.10.81:3)

In these cases, the article *der* is used to hint cataphorically at the additional information which lies in the postmodifiers.

Otherwise the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* is as follows:

In the first case (A1), i.e. when the object has already been mentioned in the text, the *Verschmelzungsform* or *der* are used almost indiscriminately, e.g.:

(40) Dann brachten sie zugunruhige Rotkehlchen aus ihren normalen Wohnkäfigen im Institut in die Stahlkammer und setzten sie dort *in den*

*Registrierkäfig*. ... Sie bevorzugten keinerlei Richtung, sondern hüpfen wahllos *im Käfig* umher. (Weismann: 121)

In this example *in dem* would also be possible.

(41) Auf einmal blieb er vor dem Büfett stehen, hob *das offene Kästchen* des *Steckkalenders*, sah es kurz an auf ausgestreckter Hand und schleuderte es auf den Boden ... (p.251)  
Ich gab es auf, schloss das Fenster und sammelte die verstreuten Datumskarten *in das Kästchen* und stellte es auf den Tisch. (Lenz: 252)

In this example *irs* would also be possible.

In the two other cases, one normally uses *Verschmelzungsform*, e.g. in the case of A2 (identifiability from the situation/implication, deixis):

(42) *Im Frühling* darauf habe ich in einer Strafkompagnie Minen geräumt. (Lesebuch II: 146)

and in the case of A3 (identifiability on the basis of general knowledge):

(43) So war es, dem einzigen Bericht zufolge, den wir darüber besitzen, *im Anfang*. *Im Paradies*. (Die Zeit, 5.3.82:16)

There seems to be a clear relation between the use of a noun without an article in Danish and the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* in German. A condition that naturally must be fulfilled in order to undertake this comparison is, of course, that a prepositional phrase is used in German, i.e. that the *Verschmelzungsform* is syntactically possible. Some of the examples, which have already been discussed are given below:

(9) *I samme periode - Im gleichen Zeitraum/Zur gleichen Zeit*

(10) *i nederste etage - im Erdgeschoss*

(20) *i himmerige - im Himmel*

(21) *fra ækvator - vom Äquator*



(28) *I Kreml - Im Kreml*

(30) *i Zoologisk Have - im Zoologischen Garten*

(33) *i Irak - Im Irak*

Like the noun without article in Danish, the *Verschmelzungsform* + NP in German appears to signal that the reference can be made unambiguously with minimal help from articles. But while most of these NPs are capable of standing completely on their own in this situation in Danish, German typically still requires some support, i.e. the *Verschmelzungsform*, which at the same time indicates case and gender.

The vitality of the NP in both languages largely depends on the NP and on the kind of preinformation (from the context, the situation or from general knowledge) the receiver has.

### 3.9 Conclusion

When using an NP without article in Danish to refer to identifiable objects we find the following possibilities in German:

<i>no article</i>	<i>Verschmelzungsform</i>	<i>der</i>
	(if syntactically possible)	

NPs can occur *without* an article in Danish either when there are signals in the text making the reference unambiguous or when the NP can be assumed to be generally known, e.g. in the case of unique reference or in the case of proper names. Altogether, there are many different types of NPs in Danish texts which - without the aid of articles - appear to be sufficiently vital to be used to indicate unambiguous reference. The Danish language user exploits every possibility to avoid the use of an article and omits it consequently.

As my examples have shown, the degree of vitality of a noun or an NP at first sight seems to be quite different in Danish and German. Far more NPs in Danish than in German are considered as vital enough to be used without an article.

In German only proper names appear to be equally vital. The omission of articles is restricted to a small number of other cases.<sup>16</sup>

However, the fact that an NP needs an article in German where there is no article in Danish in a corresponding text probably not only has to do with the sender's and recipient's perception of its vitality, and the possibility of identifying the object unambiguously, but also with a need to indicate gender and, even more importantly, case, word order being less fixed in German than in Danish. This need to indicate case and gender is pervasive and can also be seen in some of the examples in the following studies.

That the vitality of the NP is also considered in the German use of articles can be seen from the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* (3.8).

### 4. A different story - article usage in Danish and German in selected technical texts

So far, we have seen that in cases where the receiver can identify the object the article can frequently be omitted in Danish, whereas this is impossible in German. However, this is not always the case. From a study of a number of German domain-specific texts, it would appear that it is sometimes the other way round. It is possible to omit articles in certain situations in German where they are obligatory in Danish. This will be shown with respect to a number of text types containing directive speech acts, i.e. assembly manuals, operation manuals and instruction manuals aimed at users with varying degrees of domain-specific knowledge.

#### 4.1 Directive speech acts

Manuals largely consist of directive speech acts. I follow Kussmaul (1990: 369-379), who has described the illocutionary indicators in directive speech acts of "instructing". He points out that instructions can be expressed in at least 11 different ways (e.g. infinitive, imperative, modal verb, etc.) in German. In

<sup>16</sup> Apart from the example with *Letzterer/Ersterer* (5) and some NPs in legal texts, a few place and time locations can occur without an article, e.g. *Anfang*, *Ende*, *Mitte*, *Richtung*.

Danish there are at least 6 possibilities (e.g. s-passive, imperative, modal verb, etc.) for expressing requests.

#### 4.2 Degree of professionalism

In my study, two types of sender-receiver relationships were examined: communication between professionals and communication between professionals and laymen. Baumann (1992: 29-47) has defined a professional as "a person who possesses the way of thinking of a professional, i.e. the special methods and behaviour that characterise a specific domain which can be delimited professionally."

#### 4.3 Communication between professionals in manuals in the case of identifiability (A)

When professionals address each other in German manuals, they often refer to objects by using NPs without an article. The following syntactic and semantic conditions apply:

- the instructions are given by means of the infinitive
  - the NP is the direct object in a directive sentence
  - the object which is referred to by means of the NP is the **patient** in relation to the activity expressed by the verb.
- In addition, the following text condition applies:
- the instructions are given in a series of operational steps.

When dealing with objects or states of affairs in a domain-specific world, German professionals manage with a minimum of articles. They are used to reading and understanding domain-specific texts in which the syntax and morphology are strongly reduced.

An example of a text where all the above conditions apply can be found in a manual for the Ramix Single Lever Mixer A 3503. The objects mentioned can be identified from the text situation (A2), since the Single Lever Mixer A3503 implies water supply, cartridges and screws, etc.

#### (44) **Wartung**

Unter normalen Bedingungen ist diese Armatur wartungsfrei.

Auswechseln der Kartusche:

Zulassungen absperren und Kartusche wie folgt ausbauen. Schraube am Griff lösen. Griff und Kappe abziehen. Schrauben lösen und Rosette abnehmen. Schrauben lösen und Kartusche abnehmen. Sitz und Dichtflächen der Dichtringe sauber machen.

In German, instructions can also be indicated by means of linguistic forms other than the infinitive (4.1). In such cases, a 'normal' use of articles, i.e. *der* is found. For instance, in the following manual for the ELEKTRA drill TB 800 W4, the receiver is directly addressed by means of the imperative.

#### (45) **Montageanleitung**

1. Nehmen Sie die Grundplatte aus dem Karton und befestigen Sie diese auf einer entsprechenden Werkbank.
2. Nehmen Sie nun den Gussmaschinenkörper aus dem Karton. Setzen Sie das Gehäuse auf die Säule und fixieren Sie dann beides in der Grundplatte. Ziehen Sie nun die beiden Innenschrauben fest.

It can be seen from the examples above that in this text type the choice of article in German is determined by the linguistic form used to indicate the instruction. With instructions expressed by means of the infinitive, the use of an article is far less common. With other types of instructions, e.g. indicated by means of the imperative, the article is used.

In corresponding texts in Danish, instructions can also be given by means of various linguistic forms (4.1), but in most cases an enclitic article is used. This is illustrated in the following example.

- (46) Poleremidlet poleres på i cirkelnde eller tværgående bevægelser. Man lader poleremidlet tørre. Stikket tages ud af stikkontakten. Lammeuldshæften sættes på. (Manual for Ekscentersliber)

In Danish manuals in which professionals address each other, it is irrelevant for the choice of article how the instruction is expressed. In all types of directives, the enclitic article is used. When translating into German, however, the choice of article depends on the way in which the instructions are given: in the case of the imperative, the definite article is used; in the case of the

infinitive, the zero-article is normally employed in these texts, e.g. German with imperative:

(46a) Polieren Sie *das Poliermittel* kreisend oder in Kreuzgangbewegungen ein. Lassen Sie *das Poliermittel* trocknen.  
Ziehen Sie *den Stecker* aus der Steckdose.  
Setzen Sie *die Lammwollhaube* auf das Gerät.

German with infinitive:

(46b) *Poliermittel* kreisend oder in Kreuzgangbewegungen einpolieren.  
*Poliermittel* trocknen lassen.  
*Stecker* aus der Steckdose ziehen.  
*Lammwollhaube* auf das Gerät setzen.

#### 4.4 Communication between professionals and laymen in manuals in the case of identifiability (A)

When professionals communicate with laymen in German, it is more difficult to decide whether or not to use an article. Here too the article is often avoided and this signals competence and professionalism. The following is an example taken from a user's manual for the Siemens coffeemaker TC90:

(47) *Kanne* nur mit aufgesetztem Kannendeckel auf die Warmhalteplatte stellen. *Filterträger* ausschwenken.

Many German manuals using the infinitive vary between constructions without an article and constructions with article, e.g. in the case of the Krups (GmbH, Solingen) toaster Toastronic:

(48) *Den Röstgradeinsteller* auf die gewünschte Position stellen.  
*Absenktaste* ganz herunterdrücken. Die Taste rastet ein. Dann *die Auftastaste* drücken.

Again, in other manuals the German version varies between different instruction indicators, e.g. the imperative, the infinitive or a construction with a modal verb, and this affects the use of the article, as in the following instruction manual for Braun's Steam iron 5000:

(49) Ziehen Sie immer *den Netzstecker*, bevor Sie Wasser in das Bügeleisen einfüllen. Halten Sie *das Gerät* ausser Reichweite von Kindern. *Das Gerät* darf nie ins Wasser getaucht werden. *Das Netztafel* darf nicht mit heissen Gegenständen oder der heissen Bügelsohle in Berührung kommen.

So füllen Sie das Bügeleisen mit Wasser:  
- immer erst *den Netzstecker* ziehen.  
- *Dampfreoler* auf "+“ (= aus) stellen.  
- *Bügeleisen* aufrecht stellen und das Wasser langsam in die Einfüllöffnung füllen.

In German, variation is possible at different levels. There are various linguistic forms to indicate instructions. If the infinitive is used, it is possible to vary between omitting the article or not. If one employs the "shortest version" i.e. the infinitive without an article, it is important to recognise that this might have a negative effect as far as reader-friendliness is concerned (Kussmaul 1990: 377).

In Danish, the choice of article follows the same rules as in the case of communication amongst professionals: it is possible to express directives in various ways, but whichever type is used, the enclitic article is employed.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In all kinds of instructions, Danish usually has the enclitic article,<sup>17</sup> whereas the use of noun without article is widespread in German.

My research in the use of articles in manuals shows that many conditions have an influence on the perception of the vitality of NPs: convention, the text type, the communicative situation, the relation between sender and receiver, the kind of preinformation, the kind of NP and syntactic conditions. All these conditions are relevant but quite different in the two languages.

#### 5. Special article usage in Danish

When a new referent which the receiver is not yet capable of identifying is introduced into the textual world, this is normally accomplished by means of the article *en* in Danish and *ein* in German. When referring to uncountables or

<sup>17</sup> I found few exceptions. Further investigation in this field is necessary.

more than one object, both languages use a noun without an article, e.g.:

- (50) *The unge piger sad og skrællede frugter ved et hvidt bord.* (Brandt: 39)

German: *Drei junge Mädchen sassen an einem weissen Tisch und schälten Obst.*

Sometimes one refers to countable objects in one of the languages, where the other language uses a mass noun, e.g. *frugter/Obst*. It is also possible to find the plural used in one language and the singular in the other, e.g. *bukser/Hose*. But all in all there should be no major difficulties with article usage in the text semantic field called **B1** (p.18): *The receiver can not identify the object or state of affairs; he/she imagines a specific object about which he/she can expect to obtain further information.*

However, seen with German eyes, Danish in this area has one rather unusual case of article use. By using a noun without an article when referring to certain countable objects, the focus seems to be removed from the specific object. Instead of imagining the specific object, the receiver has to imagine the characteristic or central features of the object referred to (Hansen 1986a: 199):

- (51) *Forsikringen betalte begravelsen. Der kom kranz fra riggernes fagforening.* (Hjort: 46)

German: *Die Versicherung bezahlte die Beerdigung. Es kam (\*Kranz) ein Kranz vom Fachverband der Schiffstakler.*

- (52) *Hul på den store navigationsgåde kom der først, da den tyske zoolog Gustav Kramer sidst i 40'erne fik lejlighed til helt at hellige sig videnskabeligt arbejde.* (Jørgensen: 55)

German: *(\*Loch auf das grosse Navigationsrätsel) Einer Lösung des grossen Navigationsrätsels kam man erst näher, als sich der deutsche Zoologe Gustav Kramer Ende der 40'er Jahre ganz den Wissenschaften widmen konnte.*

Below, for comparison, an example is given of a case where the object itself is the focus of attention:

- (53) *Samtidig har skibstilsynet udstedt forbud imod at skibet forlader Hirtshals, fordi der er konstateret et hul under vandlinien.* (Information, 24.10.81:1)

German: *Gleichzeitig hat die Hafenz Polizei dem Schiff verboten, Hirtshals zu verlassen, denn es wurde ein Loch unter der Wasserlinie entdeckt.*

When the article *en* is used in Danish for introducing a new object into the textual world, the NP leads the receiver's attention to the new information, he/she can expect. By refraining from using *en*, attention is removed from the individual object; instead it forms part of the predicate and the whole predicate constitutes the new information. A rhythmic unit is created between the verb and the NP (Hansen 1986a: 203). Syntactically speaking, it is normally a case of a noun functioning as a direct object or an adverbial. The construction is particularly frequent with verbs having to do with owning, buying, having or getting (*eje, købe, have, få*). Some examples are given below:

- (54) *Manden måtte bo der, for han havde nøgle til porten.* (Ørum: 32)

German: *Der Mann musste dort wohnen, denn der hatte (\*Schlüssel) einen Schlüssel für das Tor.*

- (55) *En af mine bekendte fik hund og tog den med i bilen og kørte ud på landet. Hunden skulle lære at sidde under kørslen, og blive i bilen, stille og roligt, når ejeren skulle på et ærinde.* (Familie Journalen 16, 1998: 29)

German: *Einer meiner Bekannten schaffte sich (\*Hund) einen Hund an und nahm ihn im Auto mit aufs Land. Der Hund sollte das Stillsitzen beim Autofahren lernen und er sollte ruhig allein im Auto bleiben, wenn sein Herrchen etwas zu besorgen hatte.*

Similarly, we find *købe hus* (\*Haus kaufen), *få plads* (\*Anstellung bekommen), *holde møde* (\*Sitzung halten), *vente svar* (\*Antwort warten), *lave drejebog* (\*Drehbuch schreiben), etc. Mostly this construction is found with frequent activities (as buying, having) and with nouns referring to things people ordinarily buy or have, as *købe bil, få hund, få barn* (buy a car, get a

dog, get a baby). When referring to more special objects or when an action is unusual, the article is not omitted, e.g.:

(56) \*Hun købte helikopter.

German: \*Sie kaufte Hubschrauber.

(57) \*Hun købte hat.

German: \*Sie kaufte Hut.

The presence of an adjective before the noun does not appear to affect the possibility of omitting the article; on the contrary, the adjective *ny* appears to be one more reason for using an NP without article.

(58) Holland fik onsdag *ny dronning* under jubel og slagsmål mellem tusinder af demonstranter og politi i Amsterdams gader. (Information, 1.5.80:1)

German: Holland bekam am Mittwoch (\**neue Königin*) eine *neue Königin*, unter Jubel und Prügeleien zwischen Tausenden von Demonstranten und der Polizei in den Stassen von Amsterdam.

We also find: *få endeligt svar* (\**endgültige Antwort bekommen*), *holde ekstraordinært møde* (\**ausserplanmäßige Sitzung halten*), *have sårbart og vågent instinkt* (\**verletzlichen und wachen Instinkt haben*), *undgå sort skærm og død radio* (\**schwarze Mattscheibe und totes Radio vermeiden*), etc.

Below, some examples are given of a noun without article in Danish in a prepositional phrase:

(59) Jeg gik til læge i går, vores gamle huslæge, der har kendt mig fra barn. (Søndags BT, 20.8.81:15)

German: Ich ging gestern (\*zu Arzt) zum Arzt, unserem alten Hausarzt, der mich seit meiner Kindheit kennt.

(60) Derefter blev brochen sendt til *guldsmed*. (Panduro: 80)

German: Danach wurde die Brosche (\*zu Goldschmied) zu einem Goldschmied gebracht.

(61) Hun skulle på *husholdningskole*, men faktisk er der ingen, der rigtig ved, hvor hun er. (Politiken, 28.11.81.II:12)

German: Sie sollte (\*auf Hauswirtschaftsschule) auf eine *Hauswirtschaftsschule*, aber niemand weiss genau, wo sie ist.

(62) Selv da en aldrende lady af stand en aften skulle ud til *selskab*, og havde glemmt at tage alt andet end juvelerne på; da hun gjorde sit entré i foyeren, blev det dårligt nok bemærket og slet ikke noteret. (Politiken, 17.1.82, III:4)

German: Sogar als eine ältere Dame von Stand eines Abends (\*zu *Gesellschaft*) zu einer *Gesellschaft* eingeladen war, und ausser ihren Juwelen überhaupt nichts an hatte; als sie das Foyer betrat, bemerkte man das kaum und man registrierte es überhaupt nicht.

Heltoft (1996) states that the bare form of a Danish noun is its predicate form:

“Den nøgne form af et dansk substantiv er dets prædikatsform, og danske substantiver er dermed ikke født som nominalkerner. ...” (p. 10)

(Translation: The bare form of a Danish noun is its predicate form, and thus Danish nouns are not inherently the nucleus of an NP. ...)

“Artiklen og bestemmerne i bredere forstand er den pragmatiske kerne i nomialet (de forankrer det og bringer dermed substantivet til at referere, ” (p.19)

(Translation: The article and determiners in a broader sense form the pragmatic nucleus in the NP (they fix the noun and thereby enable it to refer to objects and states of affairs)

The question is whether we are dealing with reference at all in Danish in the examples where there is no article *en* or if we have to do with “cases of syntactic noun incorporation”, Heltoft, (p.10) and Nedergaard Thomsen (1992: 192). In some of the examples a kind of “incorporation” would appear to be the case, e.g. (51) and (52), but in other examples I suggest that there is a clear indication of reference, e.g. (62), (55). In the case of (62), there must be reference to a specific party, since the sentence continues with her “entré i foyeren”. In the case of (55), we must be dealing with a specific dog that has been bought. It is referred to in the next sentence by *Hunden*. In cases with the

premodifier *ny* it is the adjective which has the function of directing the receiver's attention to information that follows.

In German the article *ein* or the *Verschmelzungsform* has to be used in all these cases. It would appear that the view held in German is that these NPs are used for referring, but I imagine that this idea of reference in German is simply caused by the consistent use of *ein*.

In Hansen (1986a), I chose to see this particular difference between Danish and German from a German perspective and considered the use of Danish nouns without article as a special possibility in Danish to differentiate meaning. Depending on the context, it is sometimes the complete activity that is focussed on and sometimes it is the object introduced. Using a noun without an article does not necessarily imply that the sender has decided on the issue of a distinction between reference or non-reference. The Danish receiver interprets the meaning that is intended from the context.

### 5.1 *Verschmelzungsform* in German

As in the results of the first study described in section 3.8, here too there seems to be a close connection between noun without an article in Danish and the *Verschmelzungsform* in German. However, it is worth remembering that the *Verschmelzungsform* is a contracted form consisting of a preposition and *ein*, e.g. *zu einem* = *zum*, *zu einer* = *zur*. We find the *Verschmelzungsform* in German and no article in Danish:

(63) Er hieß James Ellis, war schon Ende vierzig, und als ich ihn zum Abendessen einlud - es gab Schinkenomelett, Salat und Apfelpastete -, wurde ihm übel. (Böll: 37)

Danish: Hans navn var James Ellis, han var allerede sidst i fyrtierne, og da jeg inviterede ham til aftensmad - vi fik omelet med skinke, salat og æbletærte -, blev han dårlig.

The *Verschmelzungsform* in German ensures that case and gender are clearly marked. In constructions with an adjective, both the article and the *Verschmelzungsform* can be omitted, the declined adjective taking over the function of marking gender and case, e.g.:

(64) Aber in Bombay ist man gewohnt, die Dinge in grossem Stil zu betreiben. (Die Zeit, 9.10.81: 5)

(65) Dass der Belgier mit nachtem Oberkörper arbeitete, sagte ich schon .... (Lienz: 202)

If one investigates the relationship between nouns without an article in Danish and the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* in German in more detail, it becomes clear that German also has constructions where the noun seems to be more closely connected to the verb. This is illustrated by the following examples:

(66) Jeg gik til læge i går, vores gamle huslæge, der har kendt mig som barn.

German: Ich ging gestern zum Arzt, unserem alten Hausarzt, der mich seit meiner Kindheit kennt.

(67) Derefter blev brochen sendt til guldsmed.

German: Danach wurde die Brosche zu einem Goldschmied gebracht.

(68) Wichiezanska, der nu sammen med fru Maria bor i rækkehus i Gentofte, modtog forleden en officiel israelsk belønning for sin indsats under verdenskrigen. (Politiken, 23.11.81,II:3)

German: Wichienzanska, der mit seiner Frau Maria jetzt in einem Reihenhäus in Gentofte wohnt, bekam kürzlich eine offizielle Belohnung von Israel für seinen Einsatz während des Zweiten Weltkrieges.

In the last example (68) it is not possible to say *im Reihenhäus*. This would indicate a specific terraced house mentioned earlier in the context, i.e. *im* is interpreted as *in dem*. In the case of example (67), the preferred form would be *zu einem Goldschmied* rather than *zum Goldschmied*, whereas the reverse is the case in example (66), which has to be translated *zum Arzt*. This is because it is regarded as being more usual to go to a doctor than to take something to a goldsmith.

We had observed that with more special objects or unusual actions there is less possibility for incorporation. Our observation seems to hold for German

usage. With more common actions like going to a doctor (*zum Arzt gehen*), there is a tendency for incorporation, and this is expressed by the *Verschmelzungsform*.

In constructions with an adjective, similar differences can be observed:

(69) Den ene af dem, den højeste og tyndeste, *i opknappet skjorte* med opsmøgede ærmer, bar spaden på skulderen. (Brandt: 43)

German: Der eine von ihnen, der Grösste und Dünnsste, *im offener/mit offener Hemd* und aufgekrempten Ärmeln, trug den Spaten über der Schulter.

A parallel example:

(70) Dass der Belgier *mit nacktem Oberkörper* arbeitete, sagte ich schon ... (Lenz: 237)

Danish: At belgieren arbejdede *med nøgen overkrop*, sagde jeg allerede.

The expressions *mit offener Hemd* and *mit nacktem Oberkörper* are more common and the nouns can perhaps be considered to be incorporated into the predicate. Consequently, it is possible to manage without an article, also in German.

On the other hand, *med bredskygget hat* in the example below is considered to be referring. The article *ein* cannot be omitted in German:

(71) Om sommeren gik hun *med bredskygget hat*. (Hjort: 71)

German: Im Sommer lief sie mit (*\*breitrandigem Hut*) *einem breitrandigen Hut* herum.

## 5.2 Conclusion

In Danish, in the text semantic area **B1** there is frequent use of NPs without article instead of *er*. It is questionable whether the text semantic differentiation between **B1** and **B2** applies at all, and it is possible that some of the Danish examples perhaps could be moved to **B2** (p.18): *The receiver can not identify the object or the state of affairs; he/she can not expect to obtain information*

*about an object, since the NP is part of a fixed expression or a predicate without an identity relation.*

In my research (Hansen 1981, 1986a), I did not categorise in this way and I would not do it today either, because it is often not possible to differentiate clearly between more or less referring bare nouns in Danish – at least when one looks at real examples in real texts and not only at standard examples as *købe hus*. For the description of the use of articles in Danish and German, it is essential not to mix up these special Danish NPs without article with the predicates or fixed expressions in **B2** or to call all of them “incorporated”, especially because, as the use of the *Verschmelzungsform* has shown, there are transitional phenomena which would be lost.

Generally, one can conclude that the safest approach is *not* to transfer the Danish use of nouns without an article to German, but to translate these NPs with *ein*.

The differences between Danish and German only pose problems when the possibility emerges of translating into German by means of a *Verschmelzungsform*. And so do the special cases where German has a construction with adjective and noun without an article. In such cases, it has to be interpreted from the context, whether the NP is incorporated into the predicate or not.

## 6. Generically used noun phrases

We now move to text semantic condition **B 3: The receiver can not identify the object or state of affairs; he/she has to imagine a class of objects and can expect general information about the whole class (generic use)** (p.18ff).

As stated in section 2.1, I have avoided the terms “definite article” and “indefinite article” since they give a false impression of the function of the article. Neither do I feel that one should refer to “definite generic reference” and “non-definite generic reference” (Duden 4, 1995: 309) simply because one happens to be using the article *der* or *ein*. It has proved more useful to conceive of all forms of generic reference as one type of reference which bears no relation to definiteness, indefiniteness, identifiability, etc.

### 6.1 Indicators for generic reference

It is not always easy immediately to identify generic expressions as such, since it is not merely the use of articles that enables one to distinguish generic reference from other types of reference. Both in Danish and in German, there are other linguistic means of indicating either specific or generic reference, for instance the semantic content of the predicate, the tense used and any adverbs which may be present.

A specific situation may be built up in the context in such a way that objects or states of affairs are bound to place and time. The utterances may hold specifically for these objects, something which can also be discerned from the tense and the adverbs used in the utterance, e.g.

(72) *Næppe var jeg kommet ind i haven, før jeg hørte kvindestemmer og latter ret nær ved. Jeg listede mellem træer og buske og stod pludselig lige foran en lille sollys, gul gårdsplads ...* (Brandt: 39)

German: *Kaum hatte ich den Garten betreten, als ich ganz in der Nähe Frauenstimmen und Gelächter hörte. Ich schlich mich durch Bäume und Büsche und stand plötzlich vor einem kleinen sonnigen, gelben Innenhof.*

Here we are dealing with a description of a specific situation with reference to individual objects, and with utterances which can only refer specifically to these objects. Time and place are indicated by means of punctual adverbs like *næppe* (kaum), *ind i haven* (in den Garten), *ret nær ved* (ganz in der Nähe) and *pludselig* (plötzlich). The past tense is used.

The context may also mainly consist of general utterances, e.g.

(73) *Von alters her haben Schwalben eine besondere Bedeutung für den Menschen, insbesondere die Rauchschnalbe. Wer die "Feuerschnalbe" unter seinem Dach beherbergt, ist vor Feuer geschützt, bei dem schlägt der Blitz nicht ein. Wer ein Schwalbennest zertrümmert, der bringt sich um sein Glück. Wer eine Schwalbe aus dem Haus treibt, dem sollen die Kühe rote Milch geben ... - sagen verschiedene Spruchweisheiten. Alljährlich, Ende März/Anfang April kehren die Schwalben in ihre Brutheimat zurück, in ländliche Umgebung mit Dörfern und Gehöften, mit Wiesen und Teichen.* (Weismann: 105)

In contexts which are general, the predicates have a general meaning, i.e. a meaning which can apply to the entire class of objects referred to. This, for instance, applies to *haben eine besondere Bedeutung für den Menschen, kehren in ihre Brutheimat zurück* in the sentence above. One usually finds the verb in the present tense, as in this instance. If there are any adverbs, they will emphasise the general aspect which lies in repeated actions, e.g. *Von alters her, Alljährlich*. It is also possible to switch between specific and generic reference, as in the following example.

(74) *Ende Juli fängt das Ehepaar Sauer eine junge Klappergrasmücke. Ende August wird das Tier nachts zugunruhig, ein Verhalten, das an sich schon Rätsel aufgibt. Grasmücken sind Zugvögel und schlafen nachts.* (Weismann: 117)

Here one recognises the switch to generic reference from the fact that *Grasmücken* is not preceded by *die* (sing.) but appears as a noun without an article. The use of *die* would specifically have been associated with *eine junge Klappergrasmücke* and *das Tier*.

There are several linguistic means of alerting the receiver of the text to generic or specific reference. Here articles play a decisive role, they are so to speak the link - when needed, they guide the receiver backwards and forwards between specific and generic reference.

With generic use, conditions related to the different fields of language description, i.e. semantics, morphology, syntax, phonology and topology (word order) can be decisive for the use of the article. And some of the conditions within these areas can apply at word and phrase level, at sentence level and at text level. The semantic conditions have been further broken down into text semantics, sentence semantics and word semantics.

### 6.2 Articles used generically

When referring generically to countable objects, in both languages, we have four possibilities at our disposal.



In Danish:

Enclitic article/den (sing.): manden/den store mand  
 Enclitic article/de (plur.): mændene/de store mænd  
 en:  
 Bare noun: mænd

In German:

der/*Verschmelzungsform*: der Mann/zum Mann  
 die:  
 ein/*Verschmelzungsform*: ein Mann/zum Mann  
 Bare noun: Männer

When referring to a mass both languages have two possibilities.<sup>18</sup>

In Danish:

Enclitic article/den: kærligheden/den rene kærlighed  
 Bare noun: kærlighed

In German:

der/*Verschmelzungsform*: die Liebe/zur Liebe  
 Bare noun: Liebe

When referring to countable objects, all four possibilities can be used; however they have different shades of meaning:

(75) *Elefanten* sind schlechte Nahrungsverwerter. (Weismann: 92)

In this example the statement is true of all members of the class, but exceptions are possible.

If one substitutes the three other possible forms for the chosen bare noun, it is possible to see the different shades of meaning produced by each of the articles in the NP.

(76) *Der Elefant* ist ein schlechter Nahrungsverwerter.

<sup>18</sup> In the following I have concentrated on countables and the use of the four article forms.

Here we are dealing with one specimen acting as a representative of the entire species, the whole class. There are no exceptions.

(77) *Die Elefanten* sind schlechte Nahrungsverwerter.

The semantic content of the predicate is true, without exception, of all members of the class.

(78) *Ein Elefant* ist ein schlechter Nahrungsverwerter.

One member of the class is taken out as an example. Exceptions are possible.

### 6.3. Similarities and differences

In my analysis, each of the two languages was investigated separately after the *tertium comparationis* had been established and before a comparison was made between them. Here I shall restrict the discussion to a summary of the similarities and differences in the use of articles.

Which of the article forms are used in a specific context and which are not is determined by the conditions applying in the various fields of language description and at the different levels. The conditions which apply at the lower levels always hold at the higher levels as well.

#### 6.3.1 Similarities at word level

In both languages, there are semantic restrictions at word level in the use of the articles which emerge when the shades of meaning evoked by the articles are combined with the meaning of the noun.

There are some classes of objects whose elements cannot naturally be combined to form a class or species, e.g.

(79) Ich habe mich mit Marie darüber unterhalten, ob *ein Tier* wohl auch Feierabend haben könnte, eine *Kuh*, die wiederkaut, ein *Esel*, der dösend am Zaun steht. (Böll: 103)

Here it would hardly be possible to insert *das Tier*. One would regard the reference as specific and ask for a specific animal. However, if instead of

writing *ein Tier* one were to say *die Kuh*, the generic reference would not be lost. The only restriction is that there must be no specific earlier mention of "the cow".

- (80) Næst efter hunde er *vrede mænd* det jeg frygter mest. (Panduro: 102)

German: Ausser vor Hunden fürchte ich mich am meisten vor *wütenden Männern*.

Here, it would not be possible to insert *den vrede mand*. The receiver would take the reference to be specific and ask: "who do you mean?"

However, the concept of a class or species is obvious in the following examples:

- (81) Seinen kleinen Wintergarten hält sich *der Engländer* auch in der zweiten Etage eines Mietshauses in London. (Zeitmagazin, 20.11.81:72)

(82) Også om *laksen* ved man med sikkerhed, at den benytter sig af solen til den grovere navigation. (Jørgensen: 65)

German: Auch über *den Lachs* weiss man mit Sicherheit, dass er sich bei der Navigation nach der Sonne richtet.

As stated above, when referring generically to a mass, German and Danish only have two possibilities at their disposal. As in the case of countable objects, here too there may be semantic conditions at word level which are decisive for the choice of form.

### 6.3.2 Differences at word level

At word level we find the following differences between the two languages: In Danish, the genitive form often takes on the function of the article, even in the case of generic reference. In German one uses *der* in such cases, or the *Verschmelzungsform*, as can be seen in example (84).

- (83) *En kulturs mennesker* foretager sig mange ting. (Sløk: 52)

German: *Die Menschen, die einer Kultur angehören*, tun vieles.

- (84) I de tilfælde kan man tale om *en tids "menneske"*. Man kan med forbehold tale om det homeriske menneske, *det klassiske "Hellas" menneske*, *1100middelalderens menneske* ... (Sløk: 37)

(German: In diesen Fällen kann man *von einer bestimmten Zeit angepassten Menschen* sprechen. Man kann mit Vorbehalt vom Homerischen Menschen sprechen, *vom Menschen des klassischen Hellas*, *vom Menschen des Hochmittelalters*.)

At word level there are the following differences because of characteristic phonetic features of Danish. If the noun ends with *-is*, *-um*, *-us*, *-ier* or sometimes with unstressed *-en*, there can be restrictions in the use of the enclitic article. In the following example, the singular or plural of the enclitic article would be avoided<sup>19</sup>:

- (85) *En natportier* er vant til allehånde betrouelser fra fulde folk og fra gale folk, fra folk af enhver art. (Ørum: 26)

German: *Ein Nachtportier* ist an alle möglichen Bekenntnisse von Betrunknenen, von Verrückten, ja von ganz verschiedenen Leuten gewöhnt.

In German all four possibilities can be used: *Der Nachtportier*, *die Nachtportiers*, *ein Nachtportier*, *Nachtportiers*.

As can be seen from these examples, even at word level, the options may be restricted in different ways because of different conditions in the two languages.

### 6.3.3 Similarities at sentence level

At sentence level there are the following similarities in the two languages. The semantic content of the predication may result in a preference for a shade of meaning inherent in one or the other of the four possible forms, or one of the forms may be obligatory. For instance:

In cases, where the predication applies to the whole species, the enclitic form (sing.) or *den* is used in Danish while *der* is used in German.

<sup>19</sup> There is a Danish word with a completely different meaning *portiere* (curtain) it could be confused with.

(86) *Frederiksborghesten* hørte til Nordsjælland og her har man holdt ved den, uanfægtet af modeluner og magtskifte ved hove og i de højere rangklasser. (Politiken, 5.9.81)

German: *Das Frederiksborgpferd* gehörte zu Nordseeland und hier hat man daran festgehalten, ganz unbeeinflusst von den Launen der Mode und von Änderungen der Machtverhältnisse bei Hof oder in den höheren Rängen.

(87) En tid mente man at *den elektriske ål* var en undtagelse. (Jørgensen: 80)

German: Eine Zeit lang dachte man, *der elektrische Aal* sei eine Ausnahme.

If the receiver is to imagine a single specimen which serves as an example for all the members of the species and if the predication is not categorical, *er* is used in Danish and *ein* in German<sup>20</sup>.

(88) Wird *ein Hamster* auf offener Feldflur von einem Feind gestellt, richtet er sich drohend auf oder wirft sich auf den Rücken. (Weismann: 49)

If the predication allows for exceptions without simultaneously acting as an example (having exemplary status), a bare noun is used in both languages.

(89) Mir ist oft aufgefallen, dass *Ehefrauen* loyal gegenüber ihrem Mann sind bis zum völligen Wahnsinn. (Böll: 83).

If the predication represents a statement which holds without exception for all the members of a class and there is no question of a species, the enclitic article (plur.) or *de* is used in Danish and *die* in German.

(90) *Die Deutschen* sind ja heute adelsüchtiger und adelsgläubiger als 1810. (Böll: 118)

### 6.3.4 Differences at sentence level

At sentence level there are the following differences between the two

languages. It appears that syntactic relations which, in German, are specified by means of the cases are expressed by prepositional constructions in Danish. Consequently, in German, the possibility of noun without article cannot be used because of the need to mark the case. In such instances, case marking is an important function of the article *der* or *ein*. In Danish, where case marking is limited, it is possible to use a noun without article.

(91) Wen man in einem so dummen Auto fährt, kann man nicht einmal *einem Mädchen* winken. (Böll: 62)

Danish: Når man kører i sådan en tåbelig bil, kan man ikke engang vinke *til piger*.

This can also be seen in the following example:

(92) Når trækuroen kommer *over fugle* i fangenskab, er de tilbøjelige at flyve op i en bestemt retning ... (Jørgensen: 55)

German: Wenn sich die Zugunruhe *der Vögel in Gefangenschaft* bemächtigt, neigen sie dazu, in eine bestimmte Richtung hochzufliegen.

When possible, the *Verschmelzungsform* is also used for generic reference. Since, when referring to countable objects, one cannot infer whether the preposition is amalgamated with *der* or with *ein* (section 2.5.3), one has to deduce the meaning of the sentence when one wishes to translate into Danish. We may be dealing with an utterance which holds true of the whole species, i.e. a *Verschmelzungsform* of the preposition with *der*, e.g.:

(93) Wir erkennen aus dem Verhalten des Feldhamsters, dass ein wesentlicher Zug der Territorialität die Aggressivität ist. Sie ist *beim (bei dem) Hamster* als Einzelgänger überstark entwickelt. (Weismann: 51)

Danish: Hamsterens opførsel viser os, at et væsentligt træk af territorialitet er aggressivitet. Den er udviklet ekstra stærkt hos *hamsteren* som lever alene.

Alternatively, we may be dealing with a statement which can be regarded as

<sup>20</sup> I only show German examples.

exemplary. In such cases, the *Verschmelzungsform* may be the amalgamation of the preposition with *ein*, e.g.:

- (94) Sogar Ärzte haben Feierabend, neuerdings sogar die Priester. Darüber ärgere ich mich, die dürften keinen haben und müssten wenigstens das *am* (*an einem*) *Künstler* verstehen. (Böll: 103)

Danish: Endda læger har fyraften, og på det sidste også præsterne. Dette ærgrer mig, de burde ikke have lov til det, og de burde i det mindste have forståelse for dette ved *en kunstner*.

#### 6.4 Conditions at text level

At text level, two factors determine the use of articles in both languages. These are (1) pre-information and (2) the type of context:

##### 6.4.1 Pre-information

Pre-information from the context, the situation or on the basis of general knowledge can be related to the noun which is used to refer with. The question is if there is a possibility of coreference. The type of preliminary information is important. Two types of pre-information have an influence on generic reference: specific pre-information and general pre-information.

##### 6.4.1.1 Specific pre-information

If in a given context an object or a state of affairs has already been specifically referred to, the sender has to use the articles in a way that rules out any connection with this object and with any other specific information from the context or situation.

When there are no other constituents in the sentence which can remove the specificity at sentence level - such as the verb by means of a change of tense to the present, or an adverb which shows that it is a general statement - it is important to avoid the articles which would specifically be related to the already mentioned object or state of affairs.

- (95) Karls andre Kinder schliefen fest, ich war ungestört mit Gregor in der Küche, und als ich ihm die Flasche gab, hatte ich den Eindruck, dass das *Ei* in

der Milch ihm sehr wohlhat ... (p. 172) Ich habe *Kinder* wirklich gern, kann auch ganz gut mit ihnen umgehen, besonders mit *Säuglingen*, ich kann mir nicht denken, dass *ein Ei* *einem einjährigen Kind* schadet, aber dass Karl mich "Hurenbock" genannt hatte, kränkte mich mehr als Sabines "Mörder". (Böll: 173)

Here precisely those articles are avoided which could result in *Kinder*, *Säugling*, and *Ei* in the second sentence being equated with *Karl's Kinder*, *Gregor* and *Ei* in *der Milch*, i.e. \**die Kinder*, \**der Säugling*, \**das Ei*, \**das einjährige Kind*.

- (96) Ich fühlte mich zum ersten Mal halbwegs wohl in dieser Wohnung, es war warm und sauber, und ich dachte, als ich meinen Mantel an den Kleiderhaken hängte und meine Gitarre in die Ecke stellte, darüber nach, ob *eine Wohnung* vielleicht doch etwas mehr als eine Selbsttäuschung ist. (Böll: 19)

In this example, one can at the same time see how semantic restrictions can operate at both other levels.

*Der* in the singular is ruled out for text semantic reasons, since otherwise a connection would be established by coreference with *dieser Wohnung*. In addition, it would hardly be possible, even at word level, to regard *Wohnung* as a type or species. At sentence level it is not an utterance which applies without exception to all houses. Thus one cannot use *der* in the plural in this case. Consequently, of the four optional article forms, only *ein* and a bare noun can be used. A Danish example:

- (97) Elisa viftede *hvepse* fra orangemarmeladen. Ingen hørte efter. Jeg gentog min påstand. Elisa smilede venligt. Så satte *en hveps* sig på mit rundstykke, jeg for op og spjættede med armene. Elisa sagde som sædvanlig, at der intet farligt var ved *hvepse*. (Panduro: 85)

German: Elisa jagte *Wespen* von der Orangemarmelade. Niemand hörte zu. Ich wiederholte meine Behauptung. Elisa lächelte freundlich. Dann setzte sich *eine Wespe* auf mein Brötchen, ich sauste hoch und fuchtelte mit den Armen. Elisa sagte wie immer, dass *Wespen* nicht gefährlich seien.

introduction of new specific objects or conditions. Even if the object has not been mentioned earlier, all four possibilities, including *en/ein* and bare noun, can be used if there are no restrictions at the other levels. Both the following examples have been taken from a context which is about general philosophical considerations.

(100) Eller når et barn lærer sin verden at kende, sker det gennem sproget. (Sløk:23)

German: Oder wenn ein Kind seine Welt kennenlernt, so geschieht das durch die Sprache.

(101) Dieser Weg wurde in der Geschichte dort gegangen, wo Einzelne ihr Leben wagten, weil sie einer unbedingten Forderung gehorchten. (Jaspers:42)

As we can see from these examples, the use *in a general context* of *en* and a bare noun in Danish and *ein* and a bare noun in German is not automatically connected with reference to and information about new *specific* objects.

#### 6.4.2.2 Predominantly specific context or object mentioned at the beginning of the text

When an object or state of affairs is mentioned for the first time in a specific context or at the beginning of a text, *ein* and *en*, respectively, and a bare noun always act as a signal for reference and new information about a specific object, particularly if it occurs before a noun in the rheme or is stressed in the theme. When there are no clear signals in the sentence which are capable of showing that we are dealing with generic reference, e.g. adverbs, change of tense into the present (section 6.1), Danish *en* and German *ein* can not be used, nor can a noun without article always be used, since the receiver would expect further information about the specific object/objects referred to by the NP, e.g.

(102) En skråpe der blev transporteret de 5100 kilometer fra Wales til Boston i USA, hvor den blev sluppet løs, var tilbage på sin rede 122 døgn senere. En albatros blev flyttet 6500 kilometer fra sin rede, og den var tilbage 32 dage senere. Og så er der *brevduerne*. (Jørgensen: 51)

German: Eine Sturmschwalbe, die die 5100 Kilometer von Wales nach Boston

Here, two forms are ruled out in Danish, namely the enclitic article in the singular and an enclitic article in the plural, since these would be taken to refer specifically to the introduced *hvepse* and *en hveps*.

#### 6.4.1.2 General pre-information

If the object has already been mentioned in general terms, and if there are no other restrictions at the various levels, it is possible both in Danish and in German to use all four options, e.g. in Danish:

(98) Det blev en biforsker, der viste hvordan det hang sammen. Karl von Frisch - manden, der afslørede og oversatte biernes dansesprog fandt hurtigt ud af, at *honningbier* (*en honningbi/honningbierne/honningbier*) kan orientere sig efter solen. (Jørgensen: 62)

German: Ein Bienenforscher war es, der diese Zusammenhänge aufzeigte. Karl von Frisch - der Mann, der den Tanz der Bienen entdeckte und deutete, erkannte sehr schnell, dass *die Biene* (*eine Biene/die Bienen/Bienen*) sich an der Sonne orientieren kann (können).

(99) Hamster sind Einzelgänger und dulden Artgenossen nicht in der Nähe. Die Grenzen seines Reiches kennzeichnet(n) *der Feldhamster* (*ein Feldhamster/die Feldhamster/Feldhamster*) mit Duftmarken. (Weismann:49)

#### 6.4.2 Type of context

The expectations of the receiver are governed by the type of context. It is important for the use of articles to find out whether the immediate context overwhelmingly consists of general or of specific utterances. Several fields of language description have to be considered simultaneously, text semantics, phonology and topology. The article *en* and the bare noun in Danish and *ein* and the bare noun in German are normally used to signal that a new specific object is introduced into the text for the first time. The receiver expects further information about this very object. This is particularly true if the noun is placed in the position of the rheme or has the stress as the theme.

#### 6.4.2.1 General context

In an overwhelmingly general context the receiver is less prepared for the

in den USA transportiert wurde, wo sie freigeschossen wurde, war 122 Tage später wieder in ihr Nest zurückgekehrt. Ein Albatros wurde 6500 Kilometer von seinem Nest entfernt, und er war 32 Tage später wieder zurück. Und dann haben wir *die Brieftauben*.

The use of the article *en* and of a bare noun, i.e. *en brevdue* and *brevduer*, is ruled out here, as the NPs would be conceived of as referring to specific carrier pigeons.

(103) An feuchten Gestaden von Brüchen, Tümpeln, Teichen, Seen und Mergelgruben, verborgen im Blattschatten feuchter Pflanzen, lebt *die Bernsteinschnecke*. Sie liebt das Licht nicht und verbringt ihre Tage auf der Unterseite des dampfenden Laubwerks und ernährt sich redlich, im Grün grasend. (Lesebuch I: 119)

Here it would also be possible to say *die Bernsteinschnecken*. However, if one were to use *ein* or a noun without article at the beginning of the text, then the receivers would be in doubt as to whether specific reference rather than generic reference was intended.

### 6.5 Conclusion

It was my intention with this last study to show some of the many conditions that determine the use of articles with generic reference. Each of the four article forms is used with its own shade of meaning, and at the same time they are used to prevent specific and generic reference being confused.

Sometimes all four options can be used without restrictions, and sometimes only one form can show the generic reference unambiguously. There are various types of restrictions: the information structure in the texts and especially the kind of pre-information, the kind of text (more or less general), the expectations of the receiver and many grammatical rules from different fields and levels of description. Therefore it seems useful to have four article forms at one's disposal.

Contrary to my results in the other three studies about the use of noun without article in Danish, where this form was used when the noun was "vital" enough to be identified without the help of articles or where a bare noun

showed more or less incorporation, in generic use of a noun without article actually expresses its own shade of meaning.

### 7. General conclusion

With respect to the use of a noun without article in specific reference, which was my starting point in the first three studies (sections 3, 4 and 5), the following can be concluded. As the only function of the article in Danish is to signal the type of reference, the article is omitted when the reference is already clear and unambiguous on the basis of other signals in the text or on the basis of general knowledge (section 3), i.e. when the noun itself in the communicative situation is "vital" enough. In addition the article is omitted in those cases where reference to the concept of a specific object is less important (section 5), e.g. because the NP is in some way incorporated into or is part of a predicate.

In German, there is a comparable tendency for economic use of articles, but only in cases where the *Verschmelzungsform* (or an adjective premodifier) can be used to mark gender and case (sections 3 and 5) and for example in some LSP texts under special conditions (section 4). As German sentences have a more flexible word order, the articles are needed to show case.

With respect to generic reference (section 6), the conditions are quite different (apart from the fact, that here too there is a need to mark case in German). Both in Danish and German, the four article forms are used to signal different shades of meaning and in the text they have many different functions. Even a noun without article has its own functional area in the pattern of semantic possibilities. With generic reference "noun without article" has nothing to do with the "vitality" of the noun and does not signal, that the reference is clear without the help of an article.

As I said at the beginning, I tried to dispense with the "crutch" of the "zero-article". If there is an area where the "zero-article" is still justified, it is with generic reference.

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