Definiteness and Polydefinites

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INTRODUCTION

The definite article may show a distributional flexibility crosslinguistically:

(1)  a. [...] dass die Insekten nicht aussterben können.
    that the Insects not become-extinct can
    ‘...that insects cannot be extinct’ (German Generics)
b. I Anna i γλοσολόγος
The.f.nom Anne the.f.nom linguist.nom
    ‘Anne the linguist’ (Greek modified nominals)
c. Les dodos sont éteints.
The.pl dodo.pl are extinct.pl.
    ‘Dodo’s are extinct.’ (French generics)
d. The friend the linguist
    ‘My friend the linguist’ (Scottish English poss. nominals)
Through an examination of the data and previous analyses proposed to account for their distribution, I discuss an alternative account.

**Proposal:** The flexible distribution of the definite article can be sometimes better explained if we assume that the definite article can be semantically underspecified for definiteness.

By this, we have **three** types of definite determiners: *expletives*, and *fully or underspecified* definite determiners;

- Three degrees of definiteness: full, partial, and zero definiteness
Questions

1. How do we distinguish among these three types of determiners?
2. What type of analysis can derive the various word orders?
3. Which system of definiteness can account for the various degrees?
Methodology

1. Data Collection; first observations on the morphosyntactic properties of the Greek definite article;
2. Literature review, and reflection of first theoretical and empirical implications;
3. Bringing the conclusions together; Hypothesis formulation (proposing the syntax); testing the hypothesis against the data; → Derivation of syntax possible;
4. Formulating theoretical question: what are the semantic properties that drive the distribution of the article?
5. Theory development on definiteness; testing it against Greek and cross-linguistic data; revise results, connect them and test them to the theory;
The Greek definite article

The Greek definite determiner appears with various types of nominals, including proper names, possessives, and kind-denoting generic subjects and objects:

(2) a. *(O) Jannis perimeni *(tin) Eleni.
The.nom.nom John.nom.m wait.3s the.f.acc Helen.f
‘John is waiting for Helen.’ (Proper names)

b. ὁρισε ἑνὰ vivlio *(sti) sinaðelfo tu.
gift.3pst a book to-the.f colleague his
‘He gave a book to his colleague.’ (Possessives)

c. O Stratis ehase to vivlio *(tis) Annas.
The.m.nom Stratis.m.nom lose.3pst the.n book.n her.gen Anna.gen
‘Stratis read his/Anna’s book’ (Possessives)

c. *(Ta) skilakia latrevun *(ta) biskota.
The.pl puppy.pl adore.3pl the.pl biscuit.pl
‘Puppies love biscuits.’ (Generic subjects and objects)
The Greek definite article may also appear more than once in a nominal, whether that is a noun or an adjective:

(3) a. *(To) kenurjo (to) kocino (to) poðilato, *(to)ɣriɣoro
    The.n new.n the.n red.n the.n bicycle.n the.n quick.n
    ‘The new, red, quick bike’

    b. O kaθijitis o χλοσσολόγος
    The.m.nom professor.m.nom the.m.nom linguist.m.nom
    ‘The professor – the linguist (e.g. not the psychologist)
• How do we account for the flexible distribution of the Greek article in all these types of constructions?
• What licences in particular constructions with multiple definite determiners? Is it a syntactic requirement that is responsible for them?
  ▪ What about other languages? Is this unique to Greek or not? why or why not?

→ Let us first consider constructions with multiple determiners and then examine if their properties can be accounted for under a unified account with the rest of the definite constructions;
Polydefinites

→ Constructions involving multiple instances of a determiner followed by an adjective, as shown in 3a, or 4 below (term by Kolliakou, 2004);

(4) To ksilino to molivi (ohi to metalliko)

   The.n wooden.n the.n pencil.n (not the.n metallic.n)

   ‘The wooden pencil (not the metallic one)’ Or

   ‘The pencil the wooden one (not the metallic one)’
For Alexiadou and Wilder (1998) the following orderings are possible:
1) [Art Adj] [Art Adj] [Art N]
2) [Art Adj] [Art N] [Art A]
3) [Art N] [Art Adj] [Art A]

1. a. I asimeña i çiropijti i pena  the silver the handmade the pen
   b. I çiropijti i asimeña i pena  the handmade the silver the pen
2. a. I asimeña i pena i çiropijti  the silver the pen the handmade the silver the
   b. I çiropijti i pena i asimeña  the handmade the pen the silver
3. a. I pena i çiropijti i asimeña  the pen the handmade the silver
   b. I pena i asimeña i çiropijti  the pen the pen the silver
• The Det + Adj sequence form a restrictive DP (Kolliakou, 2004);
• Lekakou & Szendrői (2007, 2008, 2010) add that this restrictive DP is a case of close apposition; they argue for a process of identification of Referential roles, as in Williams (1981, 1989), which takes place under sisterhood, and the result is interpreted as an intersective set:

\[(5) \quad \text{DP1, 2 } [R1 = R2] \rightarrow \text{refers to entity that belongs to the intersection of}
\]
\[
3 \text{the two sets designated by the smaller DP subparts}
\]
\[
\text{DP1[R1] } \quad \text{DP2[R2] } \quad \text{taken to be structurally identical.}
\]
\[
(\text{the car}) \quad (\text{the red one})
\]
However, the matrix noun and the modifying nominal must involve an *asymmetric* relation.

First, the definite adjectival nominal always agrees in gender with the head noun;

Second, in the case of a noun in the modifier, the predicate only agrees with the head noun:

Consider the agreement facts below:

(6) a. [I  *falena*] [to  θilastiko] ine  *terastia/*terastio

    The.f  whale.f  the.n  mammal.nbe.3shuge.f/  huge.n

    ‘The mammal whale is huge.’

b. [O  *Xristos*] [to  anipsaki  tu] ine  *eksipnos/*eksipno.

    The.m  Chris.m  the.n  nephew.n  his  be.3s  smart.m/  smart.n

    ‘His nephew Chris is very smart.’

The modifying nominal must be in asymmetric relation with the head noun.
In Kyriakaki (2011) it is argued that the definite adjectival nominal is a restrictive/non-restrictive adjunct that originates postnominally.

The restrictive reading is obligatory in prenominal positions, i.e. prenominal modifying nominals are restrictive; postnominal ones are ambiguous between restrictive and non-restrictive readings:

(7) a. i mitera mu i aɣapimeni
    The.f.nom mother.f gen.1s the.f.nom beloved/favorite.f
    ‘my dear mother’

    b. # i aɣapimeni i mitera mu
       The.f.nom beloved/favorite.f the.f.nom mother.f gen.1s
       ‘my favorite mother’
Prenominal restrictive modifiers
(8) a. I arseniki i ghata ine sto parathiro ke i thiliki
    The.f male.f the.f cat.f is on-the window and
    the.f female.f
    ston kanape.
    on-the couch
    ‘The male cat is by the window and the female one on
    the couch.’

b. Ø ghata ine sto parathiro ke Ø (i ghata)

    The.f cat.f is on-the window and the.f cat.f
    ston kanape.
    on-the couch
    ‘The cat is by the window and (the cat) is on the
    couch.’
Focus is the reason that the prenominal modifier is always interpreted restrictively;
The focus involved is contrastive or informational (only stressed);
(9) a. Ja sena pira to kitrino to forema
    For you got.1s the.n yellow.n the.n dress.n
    ‘I got the yellow dress for you’
b. Ja sena pira to kitrino to forema
    For you got.1s the.n yellow.n the.n dress.n
    ‘It is for you that I got the yellow dress’
In the syntax, the modifying nominal is generated as an adjunct to nP; when prenominal, i.e. focused, it raises to FocP;

(10) Pu ine [i ASIMEENA i pena]?  
   Where be.3s the.f.nom silver.f the.f.nom pen.f  
   ‘Where is your silver pen?’
This analysis captures the similarity of restrictive DPs to restrictive relative clauses, which are argued to attach to a nominal projection: In Jackendoff (1977) it is an N’-projection, in Kayne (1994) and De Vries (1996) it is a DP.

Multiple DPs are also possible now, i.e., as adjuncts to nP;

(11) Iđhes [tin pena [tin asimenja] [ti lepti]]?
   Saw.2s the.f.acc pen.f the.f.acc silver.f
   the.f.acc thin
   ‘Have you seen the silver, thin pen?’
(12)  Idhes [tin pena tin asimenja ti lepti]?
Saw.2s the.f.acc pen.f the.f.acc silver.f the.f.acc thin
Have you seen the silver, thin pen?
For prenominal modifiers:

A. A fronted constituent in spec FocP: Since each one offers new information narrowing down the set, they could also be treated as a constituent in the specifier of FocP which satisfies the strong feature on Foc.

B. Multiple spec FocP: with each fronted modifier in a separate specifier.
The proposed structure accounts for the various word-orders of polydefinites but: the question remains: what is the licensor of polydefinites? Why about generics, proper names, and possessives? How do we account for them? 

Can we assume that the Greek definite article an expletive and is thus the result of the spell-out of inflectional morphology?
Previously:
it has been argued that the Greek definite article is an *expletive* (Roussou & Tsimpli 1994, Lekakou & Szendrői 2010).
Roussou and Tsimpli (1994) on generics
The definite article is inserted:
- to satisfy the lexical government requirement proposed by Longobardi (1994),
- to allow the nominal to function as an argument.
- Generics are indefinite, the definite article must therefore be an expletive.
But:
→ Are such generics really indefinite? This property of genericity does not entail that the nominal is indefinite;
→ As they also observe, Longobardi’s analysis does not account for definite generic objects. They suggest that his analysis needs to be revised;
An alternative direction is necessary; in particular, one that examines first whether or not the determiner contributes to definiteness.
Lekakou and Szendrői (2010) on polydefinites and proper names:

- the definite article is a semantic expletive, because it is used with proper names; it is inserted to render the nominal argumental, and to spell out morphological case.

Polydefinites are the result of case marking, making the prediction that every language with case marking should exhibit polydefinites.

This analysis discusses in more length various aspects of the definite article;
But:

→ It also does not present evidence for why the article does not carry any definiteness. The argument on proper names alone does not sufficiently show that the definite article is an expletive;

→ The claim that the determiner is only inserted to spell out case along with their prediction that polydefinites are present only in languages with case marking seems to be problematic;
In Scottish English (ScE), morphological case is absent, yet the determiner can appear more than once and create similar constructions (*the friend the footballer*).

The determiner does not always serve as a clear morphological marker, i.e. there are many paradigmatic syncretisms; while, if it were solely inserted to spell out case, we should be able to find in indefinite contexts, too; alternatively, if case were definiteness marking for them, it should be absent in indefinites altogether.
Before we conclude that such determiners are expletives, we need to examine whether this is indeed the case. To do so, I next set the diagnostics that help us determine whether or not a definite determiner is an expletive;
3 Diagnostics for expletives

(i) A definite determiner is an expletive, if it can appear in existential indefinite DPs. Otherwise, it is semantically definite. In Italian for instance, the determiner can appear in existential indefinite DPs:

(13) In quella casa ci sono [i fantasmi]
    In that house there be.3pl the.pl ghost.pl
    ‘In that house there are ghosts.’ (indef. reading OK) (Zamparelli, 1992: 21)
In contrast, Greek uses bare nominals for this type of indefinite meaning:

(14) a. Se ecino to spiti iparhun (*ta) fadasmata.  
    In that the house exist.3pl the.pl ghost.pl  
    ‘In that house there are ghosts.’
b. Efera molivi/ molivja ke stilo.  
    Brought.1s pencil.n/ pencil.n.pl and pen.n/ pen.n.pl  
    ‘I brought a pencil/ pencils and a pen/ pens.’
c. ðen iparxun (*ta) loghia ja afto pu eghine.  
    Neg. exist.3pl the.n.pl words.n.pl for this.n that happened.3s  
    ‘There are no words for what has happened.’

In fact, the Greek definite article is never found in indefinite existential contexts.
(ii) Definite articles that specifically appear with kind-denoting generics are not necessarily expletives; kind-denoting generics are definite in a way;

- Lyons (1999) also argued that generics involve definiteness: the reference to a whole ensemble is what characterize generics as familiar, and thus partially definite.
- Indefinite singulars cannot be used as kind-referring terms (Oosterhof, 2008: 7). This is true of subjects but also of objects:
Indefinite subjects as generics

(15) a. # Ein dodo ist ausgestorben. (German)
   b. # A dodo is extinct. (English)
   c. # Een Neanderthal is uitgestorven. (Dutch)

   A Neanderthal is extinct.

Indefinite objects as generics

(16) a. # Die Holländer haben einen Dodo ausgerottet. (German)
      The Dutchmen have a dodo exterminated.
   b. # The Dutchmen exterminated a dodo. (English)
   c. # De Hollanders roeiden een dodo uit.
Definite singulars/ plurals are perfectly acceptable as generics:

**Definite Subjects as Generics**

(17) a. De Neanderthaleral is uitgestorven. (Dutch)
    The Neanderthal is extinct.
    b. De Neanderthalers zijn uitgestorven.
    The Neanderthals are extinct.
    c. Le dodo est éteint. (French)
    The dodo is extinct.
    d. Les dodos sont éteints.
    The dodos are extinct- PL.
    ‘Dodo’s are extinct.’
**Definite objects as generics**

(18) a. De Hollanders roeiden de dodo uit. (Dutch)
   The Dutchmen wiped the dodo out.

   b. Die Holländer haben den Dodo ausgerottet. (German)
   The Dutchmen have the dodo exterminated.
Since generics are grammatical only with the definite article, and not with the indefinite one, we can conclude that generics must involve definiteness;

By this assumption, definite articles accompanying generics must not be expletives; rather, it is an indication that they are specified with definiteness.
In Greek, the definite article is also obligatory with kind-denoting readings, this is true of both subjects and objects:

**Subjects as generics**

(19) a. Ι ὁ ὄνοσαύρι exun eklipsi.  
   The.pl dinosaur.pl have.3pl extinct.inf  
   ‘Dinosaurs are extinct.’

   b. ? O ὁ ὄνοσαύρσ exi eklipsi.  
   The.s dinosaur.s have.3s extinct.inf  
   ‘The dinosaur is extinct.’

   c.#Enas ὁ ὄνοσαύρσ exi eklipsi.  
   A.s dinosaur.s have.3s extinct.inf  
   ‘A dinosaur is extinct.’
Objects as generics

(20) a. O Edison anakalipse tin ilektriki lampa.

   The.s Edison invented.3s the.s.acc.f electric.f lightbulb.f

   ‘Edison invented the electric lamp.’

b. # O Edison anakalipse mia ilektriki lampa.

   The.s Edison invented.3s a.s.f electric.f lightbulb.f

   ‘Edison invented a electric lamp.’

c. I Elefandes latrevun to/ ta/ (#ena)fistiki/fistikja

   The Elefant.pl love.3pl the.s/ the.pl / a peanut/ peanuts

   ‘Elephants love peanuts.’
(iii) Definite determiners that lack systematicity in their distribution are more likely to be true expletives.

→This criterion refers to determiners that are optional in some contexts, with no change in meaning.

Italian proper names is such an example (Longobardi, 1994: 15):

(21) (Il) Gianni mi ha telefonato
  The.def John me have.3sg call.prtc
  ‘John called me up.’

➢ In Greek, the determiner appears systematically with proper names, generics, and possessives.
These 3 diagnostic tests will be used to determine whether or not a definite article is an expletive.

In the case of Greek, the definite article is *not* an expletive:
- it does not appear in indefinite existential DPs;
- it is obligatory with kind-level generics;
- it shows a systematic distribution;

It therefore must be contributing definiteness, or at least some aspect of it.
Since it is possible that determiners contribute some, but not all, definiteness, we can conclude that in addition to the typical definite determiners and the semantic expletives, there is a third type of definite determiners, those that are underspecified for definiteness.

Next questions:

- What type of definiteness specification is involved?
- What type of analysis can account for the various forms of definiteness?
A definiteness account: The three degrees

- Definiteness has been previously analysed as a uniqueness (Heim and Kratzer, 1998) or familiarity presupposition (Heim, 1982);

- The familiarity or uniqueness requirement alone does not suffice to pick out a unique individual (Chung & Ladusaw 2004, Giannakidou 2004, Gillon 2006, 2009, among others).
Essence and structure

→ **Definiteness**: a functional category, DefP, active in languages with overt marking (Lyons 1999, among others)

- Kyriakaki (2011): Full definiteness consists of a combination of two features, **uniqueness** (Heim and Kratzer 1998) and **familiarity** (Heim, 1982);

Depending on the determiner, these features may map onto two distinct syntactic projections, an iota phrase (ιP) for uniqueness, and a Familiarity phrase (FamP).

- ιP is an argumental phrase, whose head takes FamP as its complement. FamP is a predicative nominal that can combine with other nominals:
Here, FamP combines with the NumP and a set of familiar entities is selected. ɪP is merged next, and a unique entity is picked out.

This mapping of the features of definiteness is present in nominals involving partial definiteness. In Greek, all definite nominals exhibit this type of mapping, since the determiner is a partially specified Fam head (see Kyriakaki 2011, for more).
Theoretical consequences

1. Determiners come in various degrees of specification of definiteness:
   a. A determiner spelling out both features of definiteness is fully definite;
   b. A determiner spelling out one feature, Fam, is underspecified for definiteness;
   c. A determiner spelling out none of the features is zero-specified for definiteness.

We thus have three degrees of definiteness: *full*, *partial* and *zero* definiteness.
2) The specification on the determiners determines its distribution:

- **Fully definite determiners** show a limited distribution; they are argumental DefPs where a unique and familiar individual is selected. Further restriction on the nominal is not possible (e.g. English *the* as in: *the professor the linguist*).

**Underspecified definite determiners** show a wider distribution. They are Fam heads, and as such, they can introduce generics, proper names, possessives, and can combine with RMN; these nominals exhibit the syntactico-semantic split in definiteness;

**Zero-specified or non-specified definite determiners** are true expletives and have the widest distribution. They do not contribute definiteness, they may appear in some definite nominals but not others, and they may sometimes appear with indefinites.
3) FamP can be dominated by a phrase other than iP: e.g. in the case of generics, which are shown to involve partial definiteness.

- Definite generics do not involve i, since a unique entity is not picked out. Instead, a whole set of entities sharing a property is singled out from sets of entities sharing different properties. They should thus involve a Generic operator instead.

- The familiar to us all ensemble is quantified over by the Generic operator (Carlson & Pelletier, 1995) and a set of entities with specific properties is singled out. Gen takes thus FamP as its complement and projects an argumental GenP.

(23) GenPe

3
Gen FamP<et>
3
Fam NumP<et>
0 5
the kozmos
people

- Note that if we assume that genericity does not come from the nominal, but from the predicate VP, Gen can raise higher at LF.
From this, two types of definite plurals are predicted:

- \( \iota \)Ps, the specific definites, where there is a unique individual/ set of individuals is selected by means of the iota function;
- GenPs, the definite generics, where a set of entities with specific properties is singled out.

→ Let us now look at some cross-linguistic data.
3. Exemplifying the degrees

Standard English (SE)

• The determiner the typically introduces common nouns.
  ➢ But: it does not appear with proper names or plural generics, i.e. definite plurals do not receive the generic interpretation.
  ➢ Moreover, further restriction on the noun, i.e. RMN, is not allowed:

  (24) a. *The Susanna is drawing on the canvas. (*Def + PN)
      b. #The beavers are intelligent. (#definite object generics)
      c. # Our gardener loves the hedgehogs. (#definite object generics)
      c. *The professor the linguist is taller than the professor the biologist
      d. *The professor {the linguist/the genius/the athlete} (*RMN)
**The** is more restricted in its distribution than the Greek definite determiner:

- It only combines with nouns picking out a unique referent, but not with nominals where a familiar referent is picked out, as in the case of proper names and generic nouns.

It cannot combine with RMN, i.e. further restriction on the noun is not possible.

- **These** forms a fully specified definite article: it is specified for both features of definiteness selecting a unique entity;
For proper names, possessives, generics, where there is no overt article, I assume that there is a null D (Longobardi 1994, among others).

• Null D brings definiteness to the DP (Massam & Ghomeshi, 2009);

• It also allows RMN:

(25) a. Susanna is drawing on the canvas.
    b. My neighbor/ John’s neighbor
    c. I saw my cousin Abigail/ John’s sister Abigail (not Shanna)
    d. John the professor is taller than John the doctor.
    e. Dinosaurs became extinct 40,000 years ago. (Carlson, 1977)
    f. Our gardener loves hedgehogs.
This distributional flexibility shows that null D in English definite nominals is a partially definite Fam head: in contrast to the, but similar to the Greek determiner, null D allows further restriction and can appear in various definite contexts involving a definiteness split.

In conclusion, in English the two definite determiners exemplify two degrees of definiteness:

- **Null D**: underspecified Fam head;
- **The**: a fully specified Def head;
(26)a. \( i \)P \hspace{1cm} b. DefP

3 \hspace{1cm} 3

\( i \) FamP \hspace{1cm} Def° \hspace{1cm} NumP...

3 \{the\} SE

(PossSE) 3

Fam  NumP...

\{\emptyset SE, DGreek\} (Generics, RMN, Proper names, etc.)
Proper names however, occur freely without a determiner. Alternations between the presence and the absence of the article are still possible (Longobardi, 1994: 15):

(27) (Il) Gianni mi ha telefonato
    The.def John me have.3s call.prtc
    ‘John called me up.’

(28)a. Il mio Gianni ha telefonato
    The.def my John have.3s call.prtc
    b. Gianni mio ha telefonato
    John my have call.prtc
    ‘My John has called.’
This optionality contrasts with what we have observed so far;

If we assume that there is a null determiner in the cases where there is no overt article, then null D and the definite article appear in exactly the same contexts;

In English though, the two definite determiners, null D and \textit{the}, are in complementary distribution with each other, and there is also a difference in meaning (i.e., familiarity vs uniqueness); in Greek, it is shown that the definite article appears systematically in all definite
This suggests that the Italian determiner is not specified with definiteness, but rather that it may be a true expletive, which is also what has been previously assumed (Vergnaud and Zubizaretta 1990, and Longobardi 1994, among the first);

Here, the possibility that the Italian definite article is an expletive easily follows:

- First, the Italian determiner violates the criterion that requires a systematic distribution, since it is obligatory in some contexts but optional in others.
- Second, and most importantly, the Italian definite article is also allowed in indefinite contexts, with no definiteness effects:

(29)a. In cantina ci sono [i topi] e sotto il lavello vivono [gli scarafaggi]
  sink.m live.pl the.pl cockroach.pl
  ‘There are mice in the basement and cockroaches under the sink’.

  b. Che fai per mestiere? – Fotografo [gli uccelli]
  What do for living.inf photograph.1s [the.pl bird.pl]
  ‘What do you do for a living? I photograph birds.’  (Zamparelli, 1992: 8)
Hence, unlike other types of definite determiners, such as those of English and Greek, the Italian definite determiner is not only optional, but it can also head nominals with existential indefinite readings.

We can therefore conclude that the Italian definite determiner constitutes a case of a zero-specified or non-specified definite determiner.
So far we have seen examples of all three types of definite determiners:

- an example of a fully definite determiner exemplified by the SE;
- an example of Fam exemplified by the Greek definite article;
- an example of a true expletive exemplified by the Italian determiner.

Next, I look at two more languages with definite determiners exhibiting a flexible distribution;
Definiteness: not a clear cut (in progress)

**French** typically disallows bare arguments. A determiner, definite or indefinite, must be used instead (Chierchia, 1998: 355):

(30) * J’ai mange biscuits dans mon lait.
   I have.1s eat.prtc biscuit.pl with my milk
   ‘I ate cookies with my milk’
Proper names do not come with a determiner, except for exceptional cases, such as names of rivers, countries, e.g. la Seine, la France (see Matushansky (2006), for more).

Definite Generics are possible. In fact, the definite article is obligatory to refer to kinds while the indefinite article is completely disallowed (cf. Krifka et al. 1995: 68):

Generic subjects

(31) a. *Les dodos sont éteints. (√definite article)
   The.pl dodo.pl be.3pl extinct.pl.
   b. *(*Des) Dodos sont éteints. (*bare/ indefinite article)
   Ind.pl dodo.pl be.3pl extinct-pl.
   ‘Dodo’s are extinct.’
**Generic objects** (Oosterhof, 2008)

(32) a. Edison a inventé l’ampoule électrique.
   Edison have.3s invented the lightbulb electric.

b. # Edison a inventé une ampoule électrique.
   Edison have.3s invented a lightbulb electric.

c. # Edison a inventé des ampoules électriques.
   Edison have.3s invented indef.pl lightbulb.pl electric.pl

d. Edison a inventé les ampoules électriques.
   Edison have.3s invented the.pl lightbulb.pl electric.pl

‘Edison invented the lightbulb.’

• On the one hand thus, the French definite article does not accompany proper names. On the other hand, it appears with generics, which Lyons (1999) has also argued to be partially definite (i.e., the reference to the kind makes generics *familiar*, and thus definite), and it shows a systematic distribution, i.e. it systematically accompanies definite nominals, such as count nouns, subject and object generics.

→ Can we conclude from this that is the French article is specified with definiteness?
Let us check whether it is compatible with indefinite readings.

(33) a. Dans l’évier, il y a {?les/ des} souris, et sous le frigo
    In the sink, exist the/ some mice and under the fridge
    vivent {?les/ des} cafards
    live the/ some cockroaches
    ‘In the sink there are mice and under the fridge live cockroaches.’

    b. [...] je ne bois pas {*le/ des} café.
    I neg drink neg the/ some coffee
    ‘I do not drink coffee.’ (i.e., I do not drink coffee any more)
Hence, it is possible that the French definite article is not an expletive, since:
(i) it is infelicitous in existential indefinite contexts; (ii) it exhibits a systematic distribution; and (iii) it appears with the semantically definite generics.

If this is true, then it should form an underspecified *familiarity* head.
The German definite article is expected to be semantically closer to English rather than Greek. However, this does not appear to be exactly the case.

Its distribution varies depending on the region:

- In Northern Germany it appears to behave more like *the*SE, in that its use is mostly commonly restricted to common nouns. Elsewhere though, and especially in the south, the definite article seems to show more flexibility in its distribution.
Proper names in Northern Germany do not typically come with a determiner. Elsewhere, it appears that the definite article accompanies proper names in a more systematic way. As shown by Moltmann (2013), proper names can be accompanied by an article, which is obligatory when modified by an adjective:

(34) a. Man darf *(den) Kailash nicht besteigen.  
   ‘One is not allowed to climb Kailash.’
   b. *(Der) Kailash ist heilig.  
   ‘Kailash is sacred.’
   c. *(Der) einflussreiche Goethe  
   ‘The influential Goethe’
QUESTION:
→ Is the German article an expletive?
In particular:
i. Is the definite article without the adjective obligatory?

ii. What is the difference in meaning between the German determiner or null D, i.e., if there are other factors that come to play (such as focus)?
Definite generics are possible in German. However, so are bare generics;

Brugger (1993:4) point out that there is a semantic distinction between the two types:
- Definite generics are the only way in German to denote kinds,
- Bare plurals denote a subspecies.

(35) a. #dass Dinosaurier dabei sind auszusterben
    that dinosaurs are becoming extinct
    b. dass die Dinosaurier dabei sind auszusterben
    that the dinosaurs are becoming extinct

The predicate aussterben is a kind-level predicate that is only felicitous with definite plurals.

This semantic distinction suggests that the definite article may, at least in the case of generics, contribute some aspect of definiteness.
Notice that in object generics, indefinite singulars or bare plurals are not possible:

(36) a. Die Holländer haben _den Dodo_ ausgerottet.
The.pl Dutchman.pl have.pl the.s dodo exterminated.

b. #Die Holländer haben einen Dodo ausgerottet.
The.pl Dutchman.pl have.pl a.s dodo exterminated.

c. #Die Holländer haben Dodo’s ausgerottet.
The.pl Dutchman.pl have.pl dodo.pl exterminated.

d. Die Holländer haben die Dodos ausgerottet.
The Dutchman have.pl the.pl dodo’s exterminated.

‘The Dutchmen have exterminated dodo’s.’

→ It is possible thus that the German definite article shares more properties with English null D and Greek D rather than
What about nominal modification? Appositives seem to be possible:

(37) [...] als das Kind – das jüngste von sechs – 
when the child the youngest among six – 
zu schreien und atmen begann. 
 to shout and pant started 
‘When the child – the youngest one among the six 
- started shouting and panting.’

The definite article, at least in Mid/Southern Germany, appears with proper names, with generics to denote a property of kinds, and it allows for modification;
• If the distribution of this article is systematic and it does not appear in indefinite existential contexts, it is possible that the German article is another underspecified Fam head, though an expletive counterpart is not ruled out.

➢ More research is necessary, and in particular one that also focuses on the use of the definite article in the various German regions.
4. Conclusions, benefits and further research directions

In this work I looked at the distribution of the definite article. Starting from Greek, I developed an analysis that can account not only for the Greek definite article but for definite articles of other languages as well: By assuming that definiteness consists of two features, uniqueness and familiarity, which map onto two distinct projections, the properties of the determiners now easily follow:

- Depending on the definiteness specification, the distributional properties of the determiners are correctly predicted and accounted for: Determiners spelling out both familiarity and uniqueness show a limited distribution, while those spelling out fewer or no features exhibit a more flexible distribution.

- This model allows definite determiners to spell out both, one, or neither of the features of definiteness giving rise to the three degrees of definiteness:
  - Full specification,
  - underspecification,
  - zero-specification for definiteness.
In particular:

- **English the** is a fully specified Def head spelling out both uniqueness and familiarity. Its limited distribution follows: the determiner selects a unique, familiar individual, rather than just familiar, and thus it cannot appear with nominals involving familiarity, such as generics and proper names, while it cannot be restricted further by RMN;

- **Greek D** is an underspecified Fam head, spelling out only one feature, familiarity. Its flexible distribution is predicted by its definiteness specification: it can introduce various definite nominals, as well as combine with RMN.

- **Italian D** appears to be a true expletive. It does not show a systematic distribution, since it is sometimes optional and it is also compatible with indefinite readings.
Future research directions

- Empirically, I would like to study closer the dialectal uses of determiners of German, French, Italian, as well as Portuguese and determine their syntactico-semantic properties.

- In the Northern parts of Germany for instance, as well as in the Southern parts of Italy, the determiner seems to be a fully specified definite determiner; In the southern parts of Germany and northern parts of Italy, the determiners seem to behave more similarly. Does this mean they are all expletives or is there a distinction to be made?

In Portuguese also, it seems that there are different types of definite determiners that exemplify the Fam/Def distinction, it would be interesting to investigate this in more length.
We have gained a closer view of the syntactic-semantic properties of definiteness, as well as new insights for the notion of expletives. By setting the criteria for expletives, and recognizing the need for an intermediate level of specification of definiteness more accurate descriptions of the determiners are made possible.

This analysis also offers alternative views to generics and proper names; By leaving the possibility open that the definite article accompanying them is not necessarily expletive, the definiteness, i.e. familiarity, properties of such nominals are made apparent.

By this account, we have a simple cross-linguistic tool that allows further research in this field.
Theoretically:

- My purpose is to study further the Syntax/Semantics of definite proper names, generics and mass nouns, which also seem to pattern similar in their use of the definite determiner, and determine the definiteness components and their syntax.

- Ultimately, my aim is to determine whether, and if so, which of the proposed features of definiteness are language-specific or universal properties of language.

- It would be very interesting to study languages marking definiteness, rather than definiteness, and examine whether a parallel model can be proposed. In this case, it would be interesting to determine the components involved.

- Finally, from a semantic point of view, the exact meaning of Gen, Fam and τ need to be studied, so that their formal properties are also determined.
Thank you!

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