

# On the Expressiveness of the Definite Article in English

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**Abstract:** In this paper, I will address the expressive function of the definite article in English. Most of the previous researches were dedicated to its referential function, or hearer-oriented use. In this use, pragmatic factors are considered such as identifiability, familiarity, and uniqueness. A representative work of this kind is Hawkins (1991), in which he categorizes the use of the definite article into four classes like the following: (i) identifiability based on previous discourse, (ii) identifiability based on the immediate situation, (iii) identifiability based on knowledge included in the larger situation set, and (iv) identifiability based on predictable co-occurrences of entities. Epstein (1996, 2002a, 2002b inter alia), on the other hand, shows that the definite article also has a nonreferential, expressive function, or speaker-oriented use. He utilizes the concepts of accessibility and mental space to argue for the expressiveness of the definite article, which is associated with (i) prominence, (ii) roles, and (iii) point of view. Along similar lines, I will point out another expressive use of the definite article as observed in constructions like *the {fact/thing/problem/etc.} is*, where *the* serves not to identify an entity already mentioned in discourse, but to express the high topicality or relevance of a newly introduced proposition after the copula.

**Keywords:** definite article, reference, hear-oriented use, expressiveness, subjectivity, speaker-oriented use, *the NP is* constructions

## 1. Introduction

This paper argues that the definite article has not only a referential function, or hearer-oriented use, but also an expressive function, or speaker-oriented use. In particular, it deals with the expressive use of the definite article observed in constructions like *the {fact/thing/problem/etc.} is*, where *the* serves not to identify an entity already mentioned in discourse, but to express the high topicality or relevance of a newly introduced proposition after the copula. This paper is organized as follows.

In section 2, I will outline the referential function of the definite article, following Hawkins (1991), which is a representative work in the literature. In section 3, I will summarize the expressiveness theory of the definite article advocated by Epstein (1996, 2002a, 2002b inter alia), which can be categorized into three subtypes. In section 4, I will introduce some works that focus on the construction exemplified by *the {fact/thing/problem/etc.} is*, and discuss the properties of the construction. In section 5, I will argue that the definite article of the matrix subject of the construction is an expressive marker, not an identifiability marker and it signals the high topicality or relevance of the proposition after the copula. Section 6 is a short conclusion, mentioning further issues.

## 2. The Referential Function of the Definite Article

Most of the previous researches on the definite article in English were dedicated to its referential function, or hearer-oriented use. In this use, pragmatic factors are considered such as identifiability, familiarity, and uniqueness. A representative work of this kind is Hawkins (1991), in which he categorizes the use of the definite article into four classes like the following.

- (1) (i) **identifiability based on previous discourse (anaphoric use)**  
 Ex: I met *a professor*. *The professor* was drunken.
- (ii) **identifiability based on the immediate situation (deictic use)**  
 Ex: Pass me *the bucket*.  
 (There is only one bucket in the situation in which the interlocutors are.)
- (iii) **identifiability based on knowledge included in the larger set of situation**  
 Ex: *The president* resigned.  
 (There is only one president in the interlocutors' community.)
- (iv) **identifiability based on predictable co-occurrence of entities**  
 Ex: The man drove past in *a car*. *The horn* was blaring loudly.  
 (A car has only one horn.)

These are all based on the speaker's assumption about the status of the entity in the hearer's mind; i.e., they are hearer-oriented.<sup>[1][2]</sup>

### 3. The Expressiveness of the Definite Article

Epstein (1996, 2002a, 2002b) shows that the definite article also has a non-referential, expressive function, or speaker-oriented use.<sup>[3]</sup> He utilizes the concept of accessibility<sup>[4]</sup> and mental space<sup>[5]</sup> to argue for the expressive use of the definite article, which is associated with the following three categories: (i) prominence, (ii) role, and (iii) point of view.

#### 3.1. Prominence

There are two types in prominence; discourse prominence, i.e. high topicality<sup>[6]</sup> (example (2)) and categorical prominence, i.e. the entity's particular importance in the category to which it belongs (example (3)).

- (2) He started at 8:30 A.M., shortly after his wife, Lana, left for work. For Curt Blefary, the drink of choice was whiskey, a blend called Philadelphia. He took it with barely a splash of water and a handful of ice. By noon, he would have finished more than a quart.

With the drink came *the bitterness*, and with the bitterness, *the depression*. While he drank, Blefary read the sports sections, checking, enviously, on the progress of his former big-league teammates and friends. Gene Michael was running the Yankees. Bob Watson was in Huston. Frank Robinson in Baltimore. He would see no-name players – guys who had less talent and less notoriety than he's had – get hired as coaches or instructors.

And he would sit home, alone and unemployed, his left hip crumbling from a disease exacerbated by the alcohol, and wonder why it had never worked out for him. "It was the same day," Blefary said recently, sitting in the same easy chair where he used to pass his mornings. "I'd sit there drinking and drinking. I was in a total depression. I blamed everybody for my problems except myself."

...

Bitter when his playing career came to a premature end and his reputation as a drinker and carouser helped him from getting a coaching job, Blefary continued to drink after he left the game. The years passed, and the drinking got worse. His kids visited more and more infrequently. He got laid off from a job driving a truck, then worked at a temporary agency for \$4.25 an hour. He hated it, and he drank more.

(*The New York Times*, 2/26/95, sec. 8, p.2)

- (3) Mr. Forbs camp attributes its candidate's victory to the appeal of his flat-tax proposal and his message of "less government and more freedom." In fact, however, that is not the main reason he has been a factor in the campaign. His candidacy points out *the flaw* in a system where promiscuous spending can buy prominence that has not been earned in either public service or through distinguished performance in the private sector. Mr. Forbs is where he is not because of

accomplishments but because of his idiosyncratic willingness to spend lavishly his inherited fortune.

(*The New York Times*, 2/29/96)

In example (2), the definite articles in *the bitterness* and *the depression* have the property of high topicality in that these nominal concepts are discussed in the subsequent discourse. In example (3), the definite article in *the flaw* does not indicate that it is uniquely identifiable, but that it is an especially critical flaw and thus is prominent among flaws. Note that, in the two examples, an indefinite article can be substituted for the definite article since, in either case, the referential aspects (or the pragmatic factors) of the entity are the same, i.e. non-identifiable.

### 3.2. Role

The role (or variable) is the value-free interpretation of a nominal (e.g. *the President* in *The president is elected every four years.*), into which a given value (e.g. *Regan, Bush, Clinton* etc.) is inserted. This category is typically used in contexts in which the entity can be interpreted against the background of a broader knowledge structure such as a frame. However, the speaker can also trigger the role interpretation by introducing an entity with the definite article in a subjective way, where that interpretation usually does not hold with the indefinite article. With the indefinite article, the value interpretation would hold.

(4) Then, there is the color element. Mr. Clinton, according to Toni Morrison, the Nobel Prize-winning novelist, is our first black President, the first to come from *the broken home, the alcoholic mother*, the under-the-bridge shadows of our ranking systems. He is also the most relaxed and unaffected with black people, whose company and culture he clearly enjoys.

(*The New York Times*, 10/15/98, p. A31)

Here, *the broken home* and *the alcoholic mother* are interpreted as roles in the frame of black people, which (at least the speaker subjectively judges) archetypically includes factors such as those in it. Note that, here too, roles introduced with the definite article are not always uniquely identifiable. In fact, the two entities in the above example are non-identifiable. As we know, *a black home* and *an alcoholic mother* can be inserted instead and in that case, they are interpreted under the value reading.

### 3.3. Point of View

The point of view, the last category of the three, from which an entity is construed, can be signaled with the definite article. Again, entities referred to in this way do not have to be identifiable between the interlocutors, either.

(5) The big-market fan, forgotten consumer of the sports labor wars, pulled out \$20 bill the other night across the street from Madison Square Garden, but parking attendant shook his head.

“That’s \$23.75,” the attendant growled.

The big market-fan fumbled with the buttons on his coat, while grumpy peers waited in line. To begin with, the big-market fan was in one lousy mood. There was *the 45-minute jam-up* at the inbound Lincoln Tunnel. There was the usual eight-block bumper-car skirmish with Seventh Avenue cabbies. By the time the big-market fan reached the stuffed Park and Lock, \$23.75 was worth park, no lock.

(*The New York Times*, 12/23/94, p. B14)

In example (5), *the 45-minute jam-up* does not indicate that it is identifiable between the interlocutors, but that it is accessible, hence identifiable, from the viewpoint of the fan, which is neither that of the speaker nor that of the hearer.<sup>[7]</sup>

#### 4. *The NP Is Constructions*

*The NP is* constructions are constructions like *the {fact/thing/problem/etc.} is*, which are composed of a definite subject, a copula, a *that*-subordinator and a complement clause, or a proposition. The following examples are from Suzuki and Miki (2011).<sup>[8]</sup>

- (6) a. *The fact is that* I cannot drive.  
b. *The thing is* that I am tired.  
c. *The horror is*, I can't opt out.  
d. *Trouble is*, they mustn't be seen carrying an illegal dragon.

The construction of this kind has been studied mainly in the field of Construction Grammar. To the best of my knowledge, however, only the copula (*double-is*) and the construction as a whole have been targeted at. The definite article in the construction has been paid little attention to, mentioned marginally as one of the construction's properties. Before we go on to the definite article in the construction, let us summarize some of the previous studies on the construction.

##### 4.1. *Delahunty (2012)*

Delahunty (2012) analyzes *the thing is that S* sentences (TSS), which can be subsumed under *the NP is* constructions.<sup>[9]</sup> He analyzes this type of sentence in detail, and we can generalize his analysis over *the NP is* constructions in general. First, the construction is a specificational one with a singular, non-referential, definite subject. The specificational construction consists of a subject representing a variable, a copula which adds nothing to the truth condition of the sentence, and a complement representing a value of the subject variable. The subject being definite, it licenses the presupposition that an identifiable referent exists, viz., the proposition represented by the clause, which is uniquely and exhaustively relevant in the context.<sup>[10]</sup> And because the clause is both predicate and argument of the subject, it is doubly focused, that is, formally, predicate-focused, and pragmatically, argument-focused.

##### 4.2. *Shibasaki (2014)*

Shibasaki (2014) explores *the NP is* constructions, especially *the point is*, a subtype of the construction, revealing the history and the distribution of the construction. The relevant meaning of the noun "point" is described in *OED* as follows.

- (7) *the point*: the precise matter in discussion or to be discussed; the essential or important thing.

The construction has two types: the main clause type (i.e. *the point is that ...*) and the discourse markers (DM) type (i.e. *the point is, ...*).

- (8) a. Paul admitted. "But that's not the point. *The point is that* there's magic in his name."  
(2009, FIC, *Maxxed Out*; COHA)  
b. Well, sure, but, you know, *the point is*, though, this is, this is actually what health care reform is ultimately supposed to bring...  
(2009, SPOK, *ABC This Week*; COHA)

In what follows, I will introduce some of Shibasaki's findings which are relevant to my argument. In the first place, the nominal *point* in the construction can be used with prenominal modifiers other than *the* such as *my, important, main, this*.<sup>[11]</sup> In the construction, *the* is used most frequently, followed by the first person pronominal possessive *my* in frequency.

The usage of *the point is* can be considered to let the speaker draw the hearer's attention to the following statement to express *the speaker's stance towards what is being communicated*. This is supported by the fact that the speaker's subjective stance is sometimes syntactically realized as *my point is*, which is ranked second in frequency.

Non-first person's possessives can be employed, though what seems to be the hearer's (*your*) or third party's (*his, her, Burke's* etc.) opinion at first glance proves to be the projection of the speaker's stance towards the hearer's or the third person's point of view. In the following examples, the speaker's point of view can be inserted (here, it is actualized as *I think*, a comment clause), since the speaker, resorting to the third person's point of view, is showing his own subjective stance.

- (9) a. "...but *I think Burke's point is that* stylistics is now a rich enough field for study that a single semester it is not enough for most students."  
(2004, ACAD, *Style*; COCA)
- b. "It's linked to real changes in these economies. But *I think your point is that* whether it's the IMF or my institution, the World Bank that we somehow contribute to moral hazard..."  
(1997, SPOK, *ABC This Week*; COCA)

## 5. The Role of the Definite Article in the Construction *The NP Is*

In this section, I argue that the construction *the NP is* owes its expressiveness to the definite article of the matrix subject and the speaker assigns high topicality or relevance to the proposition after the copula. To begin with, as Delahunty points out, the matrix subject is non-referential, implying that it is not employed in a hearer-oriented way since the referent is not identifiable at all. That is to say, the speaker uses the definite article for his own purpose of expression.

The definite article of the matrix subject article, according to Shibasaki, can be replaced by other pronominal modifiers such as *my, important, essential*, etc. As is stated, *my* is a form that realizes the speaker's stance towards the proposition after the copula; the speaker assigns high topicality, or relevance to the proposition in a subjective way. I additionally argue that other candidates like *important, essential* also reflect the speaker's subjectivity. Who decides that the matrix subject is *important* or *essential*, i.e. highly topical or relevant? It is the speaker who decides it. This reflects the speaker's subjectivity and expressiveness.

At this point, I will give several examples which demonstrate that this use of the definite article is none of Hawkins's subtypes.

- (10) a. -CB# This is my fifth visit to Iraq since ISIS swept across the country last year. And I came here wanting to find out whether the extremists are any closer to defeat. The Iraqi national army is still in disarray, as it has been since many of its soldiers downed their weapons and ran away from ISIS in June. So, when Iraq tries to beat back ISIS, it's relying on Shiite Muslim militias, like the Badr Brigades. We encountered them in Diyala Province, where they just won decisive victory over ISIS. *The problem is that* the Badr Brigades are implicated in the torture and murder of thousands of Sunni Muslims. Just a few days before our visit, they were accused of killing more than 70 unarmed Sunni men in that same area. That effectively means that one of America's best allies in the fight against ISIS here in Iraq is a notoriously violent militia group. This week, we also crossed into Syria, where they have very different set of problems. Unlike in Iraq, ISIS has actually gained ground.  
(2015, SPOK, *Interview with Texas Congressman Michael McCaul*; COCA)
- b. ...infuse, and create music. DIGITAL MUSIC PRIMER STREAMING VERSUS DOWNLOADING # Streaming audio means that a remote server sends your computer small amounts of audio data (a data stream) that are held in a buffer until there is enough to begin playing. If there is no interruption, the music will play to the end of the stream. As each chunk of the audio is played, the data is discarded. # Downloading music means that the audio files from an Internet location are copied (downloaded) onto a local storage area on your computer. *The advantage is that* once you have a local copy, you can store it, play as often as you wish, duplicate the file, and distribute it to others based on applicable copyright rules. A LITTLE ABOUT AUDIO FILES # Music, audiobooks, famous speeches, sounds, and sound effects can all be found in a digital audio format. Digital audio is available in a variety of file

formats, including RealAudio, WAV (waveform), MIDI, and MP3. # MPEG (Moving Pictures Experts Group...  
(2006, ACAD, *Teacher Librarian*; COCA)

- c. ...characterization that this came out of left field, Fabius's position is consistent with France's stance on Iran's nuclear program for the past decade. Franco-Iranian relations have had ups and downs, but since France sided with Saddam Hussein in the war between Iraq and Iran, a low-point, relations had slowly improved, says Thierry Coville, an Iran expert at the Institute of International and Strategic Relations in Paris. That changed when Hollande's predecessor, right-leaning Nicolas Sarkozy, came into office and moved to the right alongside George W. Bush on Iran. "*The surprise is that the Socialist party has continued along the same line,*" Dr. Coville says. Despite all of the speculation surrounding France's moves over the weekend, Mr. Joshi, the analyst in the UK, says it's important to point out that it's not clear what happened in Geneva and what exactly was rejected or why. Blaming France works in Iran's favor, and as such, leaders there have vociferously condemned Fabius. "But too much is unknown," Joshi says. (See...  
(2006, NEWS, *Science Monitor*; COCA)
- d. ...considering the meager astronomical and mathematical resources available at the time. This was long before the invention of most of the mathematical tools we take for granted today. It was a time that preceded the common use of the decimal point, when long division was considered a college course. The accuracy of Clavius's calculations has earned him historical fame. He found the correct date for Easter and also that 97 days had to be added to the calendar every 400 years to absorb the fraction of a day left after the 365 days of the year. *The wonder is that he was able to measure the year's length so accurately.* To this day no one knows how he accomplished this. It took 800 pages to explain and justify his results. It is comforting to know that the next time an extra full day will have to be added will be the year 4317. In order to bring the calendar into sync with the seasons, Clavius had to omit 10 whole days and nights. Thursday, Oct. 4, 1582, was followed by Friday, Oct...  
(1999, MAG, *The Jesuit Who Stole Ten Days*; COCA)

In example (10a), *the problem* is an entity mentioned for the first time in discourse and does not exist beforehand in the immediate situation of the interview. There is no entity which is related associatively with *the problem*. And in a typical interview scene, it is not expected that the interviewer and the interviewee have both visited Syria and are able to identify uniquely the same problem shared distinctively between them.

Also in example (10b), *the advantage* is an entity mentioned for the first time in discourse and does not exist beforehand in the immediate situation where the writer and the reader are. There is no entity which is related associatively with *the advantage*. The context for (10b) is a typical explanation about digital music in which the reader is thought of as a beginner; in this context, it is not expected that the reader is able to identify the same advantage of downloading as the writer, who is an expert.

Example (10c) does not have any entity of surprise before *the surprise* mentioned for the first time in discourse. No surprise is apparent beforehand in the immediate situation shared between the speaker and the hearer. There is no entity which has an associative relationship with *the surprise*. And in most cases, surprise is regarded as something which is new and unexpected to the target. If it is already known to the target, it will be of no use. Therefore, *the surprise* in this example is thought not to be the common knowledge to the hearer.

Along similar lines, example (10d) does not have any entity before *the wonder* mentioned for the first time in discourse. No wonder is apparent beforehand in the immediate situation between the writer and the reader. There is no entity related associatively with *the wonder*. Finally, *the wonder*, which has a similar meaning to *the surprise* in (10c), will not work until it is new and unexpected to the target. Hence, *the wonder* is presented by the writer as totally new information to the reader.

It is also worth noting that, in many cases, the matrix clause including the definite article can be replaced by an adverbialized expression which has a parallel meaning to it.

- (11) a. *The fact is*, I cannot drive.  
 b. *Fact is*, I cannot drive.  
 c. *The thing is*, I am tired.  
 d. *Thing is*, I am tired.

Moreover, *the NP is* constructions in the (a) examples in (12) - (17) can be paraphrased by the truly adverbial expressions in the corresponding (b) examples.

- (12) a. *The horror is*, I can't opt out.  
 b. *To my horror*, I can't opt out.
- (13) a. *Trouble is*, they mustn't be seen carrying an illegal dragon.  
 b. *Troublesomely*, they mustn't be seen carrying an illegal dragon.
- (14) a. *The problem is that* the Badr Brigades are implicated in the torture and murder of thousands of Sunni Muslims.  
 b. *Problematically*, the Badr Brigades are implicated in the torture and murder of thousands of Sunni Muslims.
- (15) a. *The advantage is that* once you have a local copy, you can store it, play as often as you wish, duplicate the file, and distribute it to others based on applicable copyright rules.  
 b. *Advantageously*, once you have a local copy, you can store it, play as often as you wish, duplicate the file, and distribute it to others based on applicable copyright rules.
- (16) a. "*The surprise is that* the Socialist party has continued along the same line," Dr. Coville says.  
 b. "*To my surprise / Surprisingly*, the Socialist party has continued along the same line," Dr. Coville says.
- (17) a. *The wonder is that* he was able to measure the year's length so accurately.  
 b. *For a wonder*, he was able to measure the year's length so accurately.

The adverbial expressions in (12) - (17) clearly show the speaker's stances towards the propositions after them. These paraphrase relations give further evidence for the expressiveness of the definite article in this use.

## 6. Conclusion and Further Issues

In this paper, I have argued that the definite article has not only a referential function, or hearer-oriented use, but also an expressive function, or speaker-oriented use. The definite article as observed in *the NP is* constructions serves to show the high topicality or relevance of a newly introduced proposition after the copula; i.e. the speaker's subjectivity.

There remain further issues to explore, the most important of which is the following question. What is the relationship between *the* as an identifiability marker and *the* as an expressiveness marker?

My tentative speculation on this question is that subjectification may be involved in the shift from *the* as an identifiability marker to *the* as an expressiveness marker. In any case, I leave this and other issues to future research.

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## Notes

[1] Hawkins argues that definiteness is explained better based on pragmatic sets than on semantic sets. That is, we have to take discourse environment into consideration. He then proposes the notion of the pragmatic set (P-set). The P-set is an interpretational domain shared between the interlocutors in which the definite referent(s) uniquely exist. The P-set is accommodated in discourse so that referent(s) can be interpreted as unique in it. Note that the P-set is a hearer-oriented notion that holds and is shared between the speaker and *the hearer*.

[2] The definite article with a referential function is translated as *sono* in Japanese in most cases. In contrast, the definite article with an expressive function is not so translated. This might well imply the functional difference between the two.

[3] The following is a simple example that indicates the speaker's expressiveness.

(i): Soccer is *the sport*.

In this example, the speaker regards soccer as the sport of sports. However, soccer may be replaced by other sports depending on speakers. That means that what sport to choose is completely dependent on the speaker's subjective stance. Here, the speaker shows his subjective stance towards soccer.

[4] Accessibility theory is put forward by Ariel (1991, 2001). The theory "describes how human language, specifically, the referential system, is responsive to facts about human memory, where memory nodes are not equally activated at any given time (Ariel 2001)". To put it simply, it describes how easily or whether a certain entity is activated in the interlocutors' minds. This, too, is hearer-oriented for "context retrievals of pieces of information from memory are guided by *signaling to the addressee* the degree of accessibility with which the mental representation to be held (Ariel 1991)." In accessibility, the number of activation statuses are infinite and gradient. So, a given entity might be more accessible or less accessible. The degree of accessibility is set based on the following three parameters: (i) informativity, (ii) rigidity, and (iii) attenuation. See Ariel (1991) for details.

[5] In this notion, there are two mental frames (or spaces) to be concerned: the base frame and the target frame. The base frame is typically the real world as it is. The target frame, on the other hand, is a background against which a given referent is accessed. Interpreting a referent, a mental path is created between the two frames, and then the referent in the base frame is interpreted in connection with the counterpart in the target frame.

[6] Epstein gives a simple yet interesting example of discourse prominence. The following example is uttered at the beginning of conversation.

(i): A: Did you hear about *the fight*?  
B: What fight?  
A: Between Bob and Grandpa...

Epstein states "the definite article is preferred over the indefinite article when speakers attempt to introduce new topics in face-to-face conversation by means of constructions that are clearly designed for this very purpose...(Epstein (2002a: 354))." As is clear, *the fight* is not identifiable for the hearer at all.

[7] I argue that the expressive function has a common characteristic to the referential function. Both of the two are interpreted against some interpretational domains. However, there is a significant difference between the two in the way of domain construction. The interpretational domain of the former is constructed in a subjective and speaker-oriented way regardless of the hearer's mental state. On the other hand, the interpretational domain of the latter is constructed in an objective and hearer-oriented way; the speaker has to be responsive to the hearer's mental state, according to which the domain is constructed and shared between the speaker and the hearer.

[8] Example (6c) is a subtype whose *that*-subordinator is omitted. Example (6d) is a subtype whose *that*-subordinator and definite article are omitted. In both subtypes, a punctuation (in writing, a comma) is inserted between the matrix clause and the complement clause. Miki and Suzuki (2011) observes that it is natural that the *that*-subordinator is dropped. They further mention that, in a more informal situation, even the definite article is omitted, generating a case like (6d). Omuro (2005) points out that these reduced forms, though not all, are constructed by analogy with their parallel adverbial expressions



such as *in fact*, *to one's horror*, and *troublesomely*. He also argues that the natural order of the grammaticalization of this construction is from the omission of the *that*-subordinator to the further omission of the definite article. However, this grammaticalization analysis is argued against by Shibasaki (2014).

[9] Delahunty gives the following examples as TSs.

(i): Well, *the thing is that* it's not my phone you're calling from.

(ii): *The thing is that* I've had much more practice with chopsticks than pens, so no, I'm not handwriting.

As other types of *the NP is* constructions, the definite article and the *that*-subordinator of TSs can be omitted. He argues that the function of TSs is topic development, specifically subtopical shift. See Delahunty (2012) for details.

[10] According to Delahunty, as the subject is count and singular, its singularity and definiteness indicate that there is only one thing relevant at the point in discourse where the construction occurs, viz., its complement clause. I wonder who, then, decides that it is the only thing relevant at the time in discourse. It is, I think, the speaker who makes that decision, which implies the speaker's subjectivity. Since he states that the definiteness of the subject creates a kind of presupposition, he seems to depend on what is called "pragmatic accommodation". Pragmatic accommodation is a strategy of the speaker with which he forces the hearer to accept a presupposition which does not hold but is created by him in an ad-hoc way at the time of his utterance. I think the concept of pragmatic accommodation is invented to explain many examples of the definite article which cannot be described in a hearer-oriented way. However, once the expressiveness of the definite article is recognized, pragmatic accommodation might be subsumed under it.

[11] In the DM type, *point* can be used without modifiers (i.e. *∅ point is, ...*).

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