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# Towards a semantic map for definite adjectives in Baltic<sup>1</sup>

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**AXEL HOLVOET**

University of Warsaw

**BIRUTĖ SPRAUNIENĖ**

Vilnius University

The paper deals with semantic developments in the Lithuanian and Latvian definite adjectival forms. The basic function of definite adjectival forms in Baltic is to mark the definiteness of the noun phrase. However, the adjectival marking of definiteness creates an interesting situation in which the noun phrase has several slots for the marking of (in)definiteness. In certain cases, different values for definiteness may appear in different slots: the adjective may be in the definite form whereas the noun phrase as a whole may be viewed as indefinite and can occur with formal markers of indefiniteness such as indefinite pronouns. These cases afford certain insights into the periphery of definiteness and the mechanisms of extension of definiteness markers into the domain of indefiniteness. The factors involved in this spill-over of definiteness markers are (i) genericity, realised in the form of so-called definite generics, whose definite markers are often retained when descending from the level of kind-reference to that of individual reference (this is referred to here as rigid or fossilised generic definiteness), and (ii) nominalisation of the adjective, which enables the retention of definite marking when a noun phrase shifts from definite plural description to singular or plural indefinite description. An important factor in the spread of definite adjectives beyond the domain of definiteness of the noun phrase seems to be their ability to evoke *ad hoc* taxonomies. The instances of extended definiteness marking discussed in this paper have parallels in article languages that have only one slot for (in)definiteness marking. The presence of two slots for definiteness marking in Baltic brings to light the layered nature of the definiteness of many noun phrases, which leads to what is here called ‘definiteness conflicts’ and indeterminacy between the semantic zones of definiteness and indefiniteness.

**Keywords:** definiteness, definite adjectives, genericity

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## 1. Introduction

Definite adjectives are adjectives that, through the accretion of a definiteness marker to the adjective, have become one of the possible loci, or in some instances the only possible locus, of the marking of the definiteness of the noun phrase. The term is most frequently applied to the Baltic and Slavonic languages, which have carried through a common innovation (one of the common features often adduced as testifying to the existence of a common Balto-Slavonic ancestor language) in creating a definite declension of adjectives arising from the accretion of an anaphoric pronoun (retained in Lithuanian as the 3rd person pronoun *jis, ji* ‘he, she’) to the basic form of the adjective. The term ‘definite adjective’ is also applied sometimes to the so-called weak declension of the Germanic adjective, which has a different origin but is in some points functionally similar to the definite forms of the Balto-Slavonic adjectives. As to the Balto-Slavonic definiteness marker, most likely it originally was a phrasal clitic occurring in Wackernagel position, which eventually survived only as a part of adjectival forms but was lost in other cases (for further details cf. below). Though the interplay between the use of the definite adjectival form and the definiteness of the noun phrase is complex, we can easily find, in the modern Baltic languages, instances where (determiners being absent) the definite or indefinite form of the adjective is the sole marker of the definiteness of the noun phrase:

- |     |              |            |                   |                          |       |
|-----|--------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| (1) | <i>Duo-k</i> | <i>man</i> | <i>raudon-q</i>   | <i>skarel-ę</i>          | Lith. |
|     | give-IMP     | 1SG.DAT    | red-ACC.SG.INDEF  | scarf-ACC.SG             |       |
| (2) | <i>Dod</i>   | <i>man</i> | <i>sarkan-u</i>   | <i>lakatiņ-u.</i>        | Latv. |
|     | give.IMP     | 1SG.DAT    | red-ACC.SG.INDEF  | scarf-ACC.SG             |       |
|     |              |            |                   | ‘Give me a red scarf.’   |       |
| (3) | <i>Duo-k</i> | <i>man</i> | <i>raudon-qjā</i> | <i>skarel-ę.</i>         | Lith. |
|     | give-IMP     | 1SG.DAT    | red-ACC.SG.F.DEF  | scarf-ACC.SG             |       |
| (4) | <i>Dod</i>   | <i>man</i> | <i>sarkan-o</i>   | <i>lakatiņ-u.</i>        | Latv. |
|     | give-IMP     | 1SG.DAT    | red-ACC.SG.DEF    | scarf-ACC.SG             |       |
|     |              |            |                   | ‘Give me the red scarf.’ |       |

We will see, however, that the use of the definite adjectival forms in Lithuanian and Latvian shows interesting developments, partly extend-

ing beyond the domain of the definiteness of the noun phrase. These developments will be the main point on which we will concentrate in the present article, not only because of their intrinsic interest, but also because they constitute a not unimportant aspect of the typology of definiteness marking. We will also occasionally refer to the Slavonic and Germanic facts, but in these languages oppositions in definiteness manifesting themselves solely in the form of the adjective are only residually preserved, so that the Baltic languages, where these oppositions have remained productive, are now the most interesting domain for observations on the behaviour of, and particular developments in, adjectival markers of definiteness.

There is no difference of principle between the different types of definiteness marking, depending on the locus of marking. Of course, further developments beyond the marking of definiteness will yield different results. Greenberg (1978) has shown how a definiteness marker accreting to the noun may become a gender marker; a definiteness marker retaining some relative autonomy may develop into a nominal classifier; and a definiteness marker accreting to the adjective shows developments of its own. In many Slavonic languages the accretion of definiteness markers to the adjective has just given rise to a special adjectival declension, without any additional functional load; in Russian, it has received new functions in that the definite forms were generalised in adnominal position (*krasivaja devuška* ‘a pretty girl’) whereas the original indefinite forms are retained as predicative forms (*devuška krasiva* ‘the girl is pretty’) (for an overview of the situation in Slavonic cf. Hansen 2004, see also Larsen 2005, 2006 and 2007 on Old Russian). As long as the definiteness markers retain their original function, their use will display no major differences, at least as far as the core domain of definiteness is concerned. At the periphery, however, adjectival definiteness markers will show some interesting functions that will not be found for other loci of definiteness marking.

## 2. The notion of definiteness and its borders

Definiteness is usually defined in terms of the identifiability of the intended referent (cf. Chafe 1976; Hansen and Heltoft 2011; Hawkins 1978, 1991; Haspelmath 1999; Lyons 1999): in case of a definite NP,

the speaker and the hearer are both assumed to be able to identify the intended referent, whereas in the case of an indefinite NP, the referent is identifiable only for the speaker (such an NP is called ‘indefinite specific’) or neither for the speaker nor for the hearer (the NP is then referred to as ‘indefinite non-specific’).

This definition could provide a basis for defining prototypical grammatical definiteness. It is characterised by the assumption of ‘uniqueness’ or ‘inclusiveness’. These concepts have been developed by Hawkins (1978, 1991), whose ideas can be summed up as follows: “a noun phrase is definite (i) if its referent is locatable in a pragmatic set of entities shared by the speaker and the hearer, that is if it is pragmatically anchored, and (ii) if the referent is unique (or, more precisely, inclusive) within this set” (Haspelmath 1999, 23). Viewed in this way, proper definiteness would not encompass cases where markers of definiteness are used generically<sup>2</sup>, as in *the lion*, or *the average citizen*. Generic uses of NPs would appear to be a domain of neutralisation of the definiteness opposition, the use of definite and indefinite markers being regulated, in individual languages, in a more or less arbitrary way, cf. English *Cats are carnivores* as against French *Les chats sont des carnivores*. There is, however, no randomness in the use of articles in generic contexts, and in those instances where both articles can be used, as in English *The cat is cunning* and *A cat is cunning*, there seem to be differences in meaning, cf. Gerstner & Krifka (1993) on ‘definite’ and ‘indefinite’ generics. At least in those instances where there is an opposition, definite generics seem to express ‘kind reference’ (Krifka *et al.*, 1995), and though this differs from the individual reference associated with prototypical definiteness, it is also a subtype of definite reference. We will refer to this subdomain of definiteness as ‘generic definiteness’.

Whereas the definiteness of generic NPs with definite markers is not really problematic, we will be discussing more problematic instances

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<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by Lyons, generic NPs do not have specific forms of expression in any language: “genericity is typically expressed by noun phrase types which also have a non-generic use, which is arguably more basic” (Lyons 1999, 179, cf. Dahl 2010, 50). Nevertheless, the spread of definiteness markers into generic contexts seems to be semantically motivated: in generic NPs reference is made to kinds or types of individuals which are part of the communication participants’ general knowledge and therefore identifiable. Lyons also notes that “generic NPs are treated as definite” (Lyons 1999, 156).

in this article. *The cat* is a generic concept, but some languages also use expressions of this type to refer to a weakly individualised representative of a species. Biblical Hebrew abounds in examples of this:

- (5) *wayyāšallah*                    *'et-hā-'ōrēb*  
 and.IPF.3SG.M.send    ACC-DEF-raven  
 'and he sent forth a raven' (Genesis 8.7)  
 (i. e., a representative of the species 'the raven')

As any common noun, 'raven' refers, by itself, to a class. When we descend from the generic level to that of individual reference, the generic definiteness of the expression 'the raven' becomes, in most languages, irrelevant and, if the individual representative of the species cannot be identified, the NP will be indefinite. In Biblical Hebrew and other Semitic languages, however, the generic definiteness of the expression 'the raven', or at least its definite marking, may, under specific circumstances that are probably connected with weak individuation, be retained even if reference is made to an individual. Is a NP like that in (5) definite? Here the choice is obviously between extending our notion of definiteness or recognising that the Hebrew article has other uses besides that of a definiteness marker. In the present article we will be confronted with NPs that have several slots for the marking of definiteness, with different values for definiteness in different slots. This reveals what we could call a definiteness conflict, i. e., a conflict between generic definiteness as defined above and the indefiniteness of the noun phrase at the level of individual reference. We will be concerned with the different forms this definiteness conflict can assume, and with different paths of the extension of definite markers beyond the domain of prototypical definiteness. We will, in this way, attempt a contribution to the semantic map of definiteness. Where exactly, on this map, we should draw the border between definiteness and indefiniteness, is a question to which we cannot give a definitive answer.

### 3. Outside Baltic

In most Slavonic languages the distinctions once associated with the opposition between definite and indefinite adjectival forms have been done away with or reanalysed. The development of indefinite forms

into predicative forms in Russian has already been mentioned. Other Slavonic languages, like Polish, have generalised the definite forms, retaining only a few residual forms of the indefinite declension. Serbo-Croatian has partly retained the old distinctions though reducing their scope (only for masculine singular NPs is there a formal opposition for all speakers) and apparently also modifying the principles of their use: according to Aljović (2003), the Serbo-Croatian definite forms have become markers of specificity rather than definiteness. This development is not restricted to adjectival marking of definiteness: definite articles have been observed to evolve into markers of specificity, also called ‘specific articles’ (Himmelman 1998, cf. also Greenberg 1978, Hawkins 2004). Languages reported to have this kind of article comprise Abkhaz and Dagbani (Gur) (Lehmann 1995, 39), as well as some Bantu languages (Bemba, Zulu, Xhosa) (Greenberg 1978, 63).

The strong and weak forms of Germanic adjectives contribute relatively little to the typology of adjectival marking of definiteness. The strong and weak forms of the German adjective cannot be said to have a clear semantic value, as their use is conditioned by the choice of the determiner. This conditioning has been described as government (Zwicky 1986, cf. also Corbett 2006, 85-86) and, tentatively, agreement (Kibort 2008). There is thus, through the choice of a definite or indefinite determiners, an indirect connection with the definiteness or indefiniteness of the noun phrase, but there is much arbitrariness as well.

In Mainland Scandinavian (e. g., Danish) the association of the weak forms with definiteness seems to be closer than in German. If a determiner is present, it governs the form of the adjectival modifier, as argued by Haberland & Heltoft (2008, 26), but if it is absent, the weak form correlates with definiteness. It is always used in inherently definite NPs such as proper names (6) and vocatives (7):

- |     |                          |                         |        |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------|
| (6) | <i>gaml-e</i><br>old-DEF | <i>Stanislava</i><br>PN | Danish |
|     | ‘old Stanislava’         |                         |        |
| (7) | <i>kær-e</i><br>dear-DEF | <i>gæst!</i><br>guest   | Danish |
|     | ‘dear guest’.            |                         |        |

The Danish examples (6–7) have parallels in the Baltic languages, cf.

- (8) *sen-oji*                      *Stanislava*                      Lith.  
 old-NOM.SG.F.DEF PN.NOM.SG  
 ‘old Stanislava’
- (9) *gerbiam-oji*                      *publik-a!*                      Lith.  
 respected-VOC(=NOM).SG.F.DEF audience-VOC(=NOM).SG  
 ‘dear audience’

However, as these are cases of inherent definiteness, the obligatory use of the weak forms can, in a way, be compared to their use with determiners: there is no opposition of adjectival forms expressing an opposition in definiteness. At an earlier stage in the history of Germanic, however, prior to the rise of definite articles, the function of definite adjectives in Germanic languages might have been similar to that which we observe in Balto-Slavonic. According to Haberland and Heltoft (2008), in Old High German and Old Saxon the definiteness of a NP could still be marked by the weak adjectival declension alone, as can be seen in the following example from Muspilli (9th century AD):

- (10) *ni ist in kihuctin himilsk-in got-e*  
 NEG be.PRS.3 in thought heavenly-WK.DAT God-DAT  
 ‘It is not in the thought of the heavenly God.’  
 (cited from Haberland and Heltoft 2008, 37)

#### 4. The evolution of definiteness markers in Baltic

The Baltic languages have retained a much more archaic stage in the development of definite adjectives when compared to Slavonic; in particular Lithuanian appears archaic even in comparison with the oldest recorded stages of Slavonic, viz. Old Church Slavonic. Certain Old Lithuanian forms retain traces of the original mobility of the pronoun *jis/ji*. Bezenberger (1877, 156) points to Old Lithuanian constructions like (11), in which the allative marker *-pi*, originally a postposition, occurs on the adjective and on the pronoun *jis* separately:

- (11) *t-op*                      *tikr-op*                      *i-op*  
 DEM-ALLAT.SG.M true-ALLAT.SG.M DEF-ALLAT.SG.M  
*Diew-op*  
 God-ALLAT.SG.M



(from the *Margaritha Theologica*, 1600)  
 ‘to the true God’

Moreover, in participial forms the enclitic definiteness marker could also be hosted by verbal prefixes, which retained several traces of their original independence in Old Lithuanian:

- (12) *Id wel giáray dáričia*  
 in.order.that again well do.COND.1SG  
*nu-iám-puťuosíámuy*<sup>3</sup>  
 down-DEF-fall.PPA.DAT.SG.M  
 ‘in order that I should do good again to the fallen one.’  
 (*Knyga Nobažnystės*, cited from Bezenberger 1877, 225)

Old Lithuanian also has instances of the enclitic marker of definiteness being added not only to adjectives but also to case forms of nouns, notably on locatives used as adnominal modifiers, as in *dangujė-jis* ‘heavenly, who is in heaven’, based on the locative *danguje* ‘in heaven’:

- (13) *Tewas jusu dangueis*  
 father.NOM.SG 2PL.GEN heavenly.NOM.SG.M  
 (Chylinski Bible, Matthew 6.14)

Whereas Levin (1979) argues that the definite forms of the adjective can still be described as a syntactic phenomenon at the Old Lithuanian stage, the process of fusion of the former pronoun with adjectival (and by now only adjectival) endings in both Lithuanian and Latvian is sufficiently advanced for us to claim that they now belong to morphology, and that we are entitled to operate with two sets of endings. In both Lithuanian and Latvian the definite forms are still used, though to a different extent, to mark the definiteness of the noun phrase.

Latvian represents a more advanced stage in the development of adjectival definite forms. Old Latvian shows no traces of the original mobility of the definiteness marker, of which numerous relics can be found in Old Lithuanian. In Latvian the process of fusion has also advanced beyond what we observe in Lithuanian: whereas in the Lithuanian genitive singular masculine form *maž-o-jo* (from *mažas*

<sup>3</sup> Instead of *nu-iám-puťuosíámuy*.

‘small; indefinite form *maž-o*) the definiteness marker can still clearly be singled out, in the corresponding Latvian form *maz-ā* (indefinite form *maza*) the original segmentation has been completely obscured.

## 5. Definiteness markers and the definiteness of the NP in Lithuanian and Latvian

A major difference between the use of definite forms in Lithuanian and Latvian is that in Latvian the form of the adjective is assimilated to the definiteness of the noun phrase, so that in a definite noun phrase the adjective is always definite. This can be seen, e. g., in NPS containing demonstrative pronouns—their occurrence always imposes the use of a definite adjective in modern Latvian:

- (14) *Es noliedzu vis-u, ko par mani*  
 1SG deny.PST.1SG everything-ACC REL.ACC about.me  
*saka šie ļaunprātīg-ie*  
 say.PRS.3 DEM.NOM.PL.M evil-minded-NOM.PL.M.DEF  
*cilvēk-i.*  
 person-NOM.PL  
 ‘I deny everything these evil-minded people say of me.’  
 (Kārlis Zariņš)

Possessive pronouns and determiner genitives usually induce the use of definite adjectives as well:

- (15) *Mart-as salij-uš-ais mētel-is*  
 PN-GEN.SG get.soaked-PPA-NOM.SG.M.DEF coat-NOM.SG  
*tiešām karājās pie sienas.*  
 actually hang.PST.3 on.wall  
 ‘Marta’s rain-soaked coat was actually hanging on the wall.’  
 (Kārlis Zariņš)

In Lithuanian, the use of the definite form is ruled by the principle of economy: definite forms are not, in general, used when other markers of definiteness, such as demonstrative pronouns, occur:

- (16) *Tok-s švies-us vaikin-as*  
 such-NOM.SG.M light-NOM.SG.M.INDEF boy-NOM.SG

- iššoko iš mašinos <...> Jums*  
 jump.out.PST.3 from car 2PL.DAT  
*brol-is gal t-as*  
 brother-NOM.SG maybe DEM-NOM.SG.M  
*šviesus vaikin-as, ar ką?*  
 light-haired-NOM.SG.M.INDEF boy-NOM.SG or what  
 ‘A light-haired boy jumped out of the truck <...> Was that  
 light-haired boy your brother?’ (Icchokas Meras)
- (17) [...] *ar j-i spėjo pasaky-ti Git-ei*  
           if 3-NOM.SG.F manage.PST.3 say-INF PN-DAT.SG  
*apie t-ą nauj-ą*  
 about DEM-ACC.SG new-ACC.SG.INDEF  
*vokišk-ą kulkosvaid-į kur-į*  
 German-ACC.SG.INDEF machine.gun-ACC.SG REL-ACC.SG.M  
*j-ie užkasė up-ės krant-e*  
 3-NOM.PL.M bury.PST.3 river-GEN.SG bank-LOC.SG  
 ‘[He now thought he should ask Riva] if she had managed  
 to tell Gita about that new German machine gun they had  
 buried near the banks of the river...’ (Icchokas Meras)

We see in the examples above that non-definite adjectives are used in NPS containing demonstratives with anaphoric (ex. 16) and cataphoric (ex. 17) reference. The use of definite adjectives would be possible in these examples (*tas šviesus-is vaikinas* ‘that light-haired-DEF boy’), but in many cases it seems redundant and is generally avoided. In ellipsed-head constructions, however (or, as Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 410ff. call them, fused modifier-head constructions), the use of definite adjectives is more frequent.

- (18) *O t-ie brang-ieji kiek*  
       and DEM-NOM.PL.M expensive-NOM.PL.M.DEF how.much  
*kainavo?*  
       cost.PST.3?  
       ‘And how much did the expensive one [sc. the expensive  
       ice-cream] cost?’ (Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian)

The use of definite adjectives in NPS containing possessive genitives is likewise only optional:

- (19) *Bronislava tada užgulė lopš-į*  
 PN then cover.PST.3 cradle-ACC.SG  
*savo plači-u kūn-u.*  
 REFL.GEN broad-INS.SG.M.INDEF body-INS.SG  
 ‘Bronislava covered the cradle then with her large body.’  
 (Icchokas Meras)
- (20) *Aš tuoj nusiprausiau, čiupau*  
 1SG.NOM at.once wash.PST.1SG grab.PST.1SG  
*savo ger-uosius melsv-uosius marškini-us.*  
 REFL.GEN good-ACC.PL.M.DEF blue-ACC.PL.M.DEF shirt-ACC.PL  
 ‘I washed up immediately, grabbed my good blue shirt.’  
 (Icchokas Meras)

The most characteristic uses of Lithuanian definite adjectives can thus be found in instances where the form of the adjective is the only marker of the definiteness of the noun phrase. Though in this article we will be discussing a number of less prototypical uses of Lithuanian definite adjectives, we want to stress that they are well attested in what is probably the core use of definiteness markers, viz. anaphoric definiteness:

- (21) *Jis mums paliko malūn-ą, por-ą*  
 3SG.M.NOM 1PL.DAT leave.PST.3 mill-ACC.SG couple-ACC.SG  
*arkliuk-ų, jaun-ą našl-ę ir*  
 horse-GEN.PL young-ACC.SG.F.INDEF widow-ACC.SG and  
*kūdik-į. <...> jaun-oji našl-ė*  
 baby-ACC.SG young-NOM.SG.F.DEF widow-NOM.SG  
*ištekejō <...>*  
 marry.PST3  
 ‘He left a water-driven mill, a couple of horses, a young widow, and a baby. <...> The young widow remarried <...>’ (Icchokas Meras)

In anaphoric use, however, Lithuanian definite adjectives are optional. An investigation of NPs with adjectival modifiers in texts (Spraukienė 2011) shows that in more than a half of the examples the adjective is used in the indefinite form even if the NP is semantically definite. In many cases the definite adjective would even be strongly dispreferred, as in (22), where we have an instance of what Hawkins calls ‘associative anaphora’:

- (22) *J-is paėmė brauning-q už vamzdžio,*  
 3-NOM.SG.M take.PST.3 browning-ACC.SG by.barrel  
*užsimojo ir trenkė buk-a*  
 pull.out.PST.3 and hit.PST.3 blunt-INS.SG.F.INDEF  
 (?? *buk-qja*) *ranken-a į mano nykštį.*  
 (blunt-INS.SG.F.DEF) handle-INS.SG against.my.thumb  
 ‘He took the gun by the barrel, lifted it high and banged the  
 blunt handle against my thumb’ (Icchokas Meras)

In (22) the definite form of the adjective would suggest that the gun has at least two handles, one of them blunt, which is obviously not the case. We see, then, that in Lithuanian the use of the definite adjectival form with semantically definite NPS is dependent on the property denoted by the adjective (see also Spraunienė 2008 and 2011). In order to appear in the definite form the adjective has to be **presupposed**, that is, mentioned in previous discourse or retrievable from the context or general knowledge shared by speaker and listener/reader. In some cases, the adjective has to be **identificational**, i. e., it must denote a property which helps to identify the intended referent by setting it apart from other similar entities. The adjectives in (20) are identificational, suggesting that in the set of shirts belonging to the speaker there is only one that has the relevant properties and therefore matches the given description. The adjective *buka* ‘blunt’ in (22) is not identificational, which blocks the use of the definite form.

The requirement that the adjective should perform some additional function or convey some additional meaning apart from just marking definiteness in order to be used in the definite form is a peculiarity of the Lithuanian language. This is why the term ‘non-definite’ is used instead of ‘indefinite’ in Spraunienė (2011): by itself it does not impose an indefinite reading of the noun phrase, as would be the case in Latvian.

## 6. Spread of definite forms beyond the domain of definite NPS: nominalisations

Definite forms of adjectives may occur without a nominal head in definite descriptions of the type Lith. *išrinkt-ieji* (chosen-PPP-NOM.PL.M.DEF) ‘the chosen ones’. Thence they spread to indefinite noun phrases where

the nominalised adjective functions as an indefinite description. For Lithuanian this is illustrated in (23).

- (23) ... *sutartį ratifikavo ne kokie nors*  
 agreement ratify NEG INDEF.NOM.PL.M  
*išrink-t-ieji, o taut-a balsavo*  
 chosen-PPP-NOM.PL.M.DEF but people-NOM.SG vote.PST.3  
*referendum-u.*  
 referendum-INS.SG  
 ‘[Ireland took a completely different course—] the agreement  
 was not ratified by a group of chosen ones, but the people  
 voted in a referendum.’  
 www.balsas.lt/.../rubrika:naujienos-projektai-akistata

This usage was already well established in Old Lithuanian, cf.

- (24) *iei neczistasis dassiliteiens*  
 if unclean-NOM.SG.M.DEF touch-PPA.NOM.SG.M  
*Maitą schų daiktų wiena*  
 dead.body.ACC.SG DEM.GEN.PL thing.GEN.PL one.ACC.SG  
*dassilitetų*  
 touch.COND.3  
 ‘If [one that is] unclean by a dead body touch any of these..’  
 (Bretke Bible, Haggai 2.14, cited from Bezenberger 1877,  
 235)

The same can be observed in Latvian, cf.

- (25) *Kā tā var dzīvot! Vienkārš-i*  
 how so can.PRS.3 live-INF simple-NOM.PL.M.INDEF  
*cilvēk-i, nevis kaut kād-i tur*  
 people-NOM.PL not INDEF-NOM.PL there  
*izredzē-t-ie!*  
 chosen-PPP-NOM.PL.M.DEF  
 ‘How is it possible to live such a life! [And just think that  
 they are] ordinary people, not any chosen ones!’  
 (Alberts Bels)

It should be noted that both here and in Lithuanian example (23) the noun phrase is indefinite non-specific, so that this is not an instance

of spread of the definite form to specific reference (which is reported from Serbo-Croatian, as mentioned above). How exactly this shift takes place is not quite clear. The most plausible explanation seems to be that such nominalised adjectives are used at some stage as plural definite descriptions, e. g., *išrinktieji, izredzētie* ‘the chosen ones, those who have been chosen’. Hence there could have been a transition to the function of indefinite description, e. g., *išrinktasis, izredzētais* ‘one of the chosen ones, a chosen one’. It is conceivable that this transition passes through a generic stage; other cases of spread of definite adjectives to indefinite NPS, which undoubtedly passed through a generic stage, will be discussed in the next section. In this case, however, the assumption of a generic stage does not seem to be necessary. We will return to this point further on.

## 7. The spread of generic definiteness

Many names of subspecies, both in the terminology of the natural sciences and elsewhere, take the form of definite descriptions operating on generic concepts: *the red fox, the brown bear* etc. In Lithuanian and Latvian, this is reflected in the use of the definite form of the adjective:

- |                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| (26) <i>rud-oji lapė</i>   | Lith. |
| (27) <i>sarkan-ā lapsa</i> | Latv. |
| ‘the red-DEF fox’          |       |

It could be argued that in such expressions *lapė, lapsa* are taxonomic nouns, i. e., that their meaning is ‘a kind of fox’ etc. Taxonomic NPS are a subtype of what Gerstner and Krifka (1993) call  $\mathcal{D}$ - (= definite) generics, whose genericity is situated at the level of the noun phrase rather than of the sentence. That is, they will not necessarily be used in generic statements (where their genericity would be accounted for, in formal semantics, by some kind of generic operator binding a variable, cf. Gerstner & Krifka 1993, 972), but have inherent kind reference regardless of the sentential contexts in which they occur. The definite adjective converts a taxonomic noun into another taxonomic expression. As all taxonomical expressions, they of course allow a non-generic reading, that is, they may refer to representatives of a kind rather than to the kind itself. Usually their definiteness is lost in such cases, as the noun is definite only at kind level. Cf.

(28) *I saw a red fox yesterday in Toronto.* (Int)

This rule allows exceptions, however. As Gerstner and Krifka (1993, 970) observe, a property may be ascribed to a kind because “a representative object which realises that kind has this property”, as in

(29) *In Kenya they filmed the lion.*

This, however, is restricted to very specific conditions. A Lithuanian example showing this situation is (30):

(30) *Net juod-qjį strazd-q pavyko*  
 even black-ACC.SG.M.DEF thrush-ACC.SG succeed.PST.3  
*užfiksuo-ti prie mokykl-os paradini-ų*  
 photograph-INF near school-GEN.SG main-GEN.PL  
*laipt-ų, vijokl-yje.*  
 stairs-GEN.PL vine-LOC.SG  
 ‘We even succeeded in making a shot of the blackbird [lit. ‘black thrush’] near the main stairs of the school, in the vines.’ [www.sjm.lt/info/15\\_Mokyklos\\_laikrastis/Jaunimietis%20Nr5.doc](http://www.sjm.lt/info/15_Mokyklos_laikrastis/Jaunimietis%20Nr5.doc)

In modern Lithuanian and Latvian, however, the retention of definite marking extends considerably beyond the scope of what is allowed in a language like English, and the definiteness of adjectives in such terminological collocations is becoming rigid, i. e., it is, as it were, fossilised and spreads to all kinds of indefinite contexts.

(31) *Tačiau vien-a juod-ųjū strazd-ų*  
 however one-NOM.SG.F black-GEN.PL.DEF thrush-GEN.PL  
*porel-ė pasirodė es-anti*  
 couple-NOM.SG prove.PST.3 be-PPA.NOM.SG.F  
*išrading-esn-ė.*  
 resourceful-COMP-NOM.SG.F  
 ‘However, one couple of blackbirds [lit. black thrushes] proved to be more resourceful.’  
[www.grynas.lt/.../juodieji-strazdai-britanijoje-lizda-s](http://www.grynas.lt/.../juodieji-strazdai-britanijoje-lizda-s)

(32) *Už kiek lit-ų pirk-si-te nauj-q*  
 for how.much Litas-GEN.PL buy-FUT-2PL new-ACC.SG.INDEF



*mobil-ujį telefon-q?*  
 mobile-ACC.SG.DEF phone-ACC.SG  
 ‘For how much money are you prepared to buy a new mobile phone?’ <http://apklausos.one.lt/apklausa/uz-kiek-litu-pirksite-nauja-mobiluji-telefona-283>

Exactly the same may be observed in Latvian. We give one example with a well-established name of a bird kind generally referred to in the form of a D-generic expression (33), and one with the more recent terminological collocation *mobile phone* (34):

- (33) *Mūsu dārzā aukst-o laik-u*  
 1pl.GEN garden-LOC.SG cold-ACC.SG.DEF time-ACC.SG  
*pavadīja divi pelēk-ie strazd-i,*  
 spend.PST.3 two grey-NOM.PL.M.DEF thrush-NOM.PL  
*vien-s meln-ais strazd-s,*  
 one-NOM.SG black-NOM.SG.M.DEF thrush-NOM.SG  
*ziemas žubīt-es, zīlīt-es un bija*  
 brambling-NOM.PL tit-NOM.PL and be.PST.3  
*redzam-a vien-a zilzīlīt-e.*  
 visible-NOM.SG.F one-NOM.SG.F blue.tit-NOM.SG  
 ‘In our garden two fieldfares [lit. grey thrushes], one black-bird [lit. black thrush], some bramblings and some great tits spent the cold season, and one blue tit could be seen as well.’ <http://zoologi.daba.lv/putni/jelgavas/sartgalvitis3.htm>
- (34) *Latvij-as iedzīvotāj-i Ziemassvētk-os dāvan-ā*  
 Latvia-GEN.SG resident-NOM.PL Christmas-LOC present-LOC  
*vēlē-tos saņem-t mobil-o*  
 wish-COND receive-INF mobile-ACC.SG.DEF  
*telefon-u ... (Int)*  
 telephone-ACC.SG  
 ‘The residents of Latvia would like to receive mobile telephones as a Christmas present.’ [www.lvportals.lv/index.php](http://www.lvportals.lv/index.php)

We will refer to this type as ‘taxonomic indefinite’. This means that the NP is indefinite, and the adjective refers to the species to which the individual belongs and therefore retains its definite marking.

No data are available as to the time at which this extension of fossilised generic definiteness took place in Lithuanian. In Latvian this

development seems to be quite recent. In an article originally written in 1986, Rasma Grīse, a pupil of Endzelin and a staunch advocate of the pre-war literary standard he was instrumental in establishing, inveighs against what she calls the ‘plague of definite adjectives’ (Grīse 1999). First, she deplores the spread of definite adjectives from collocations where they are, in her view, natural and justified, such as *zaļā varde* ‘edible frog, *Rana esculenta*’ (lit. ‘the green frog’), or *melnais plūškoks* ‘the black elder, *Sambucus nigra*’, to terminological or semi-terminological collocations where there is no justification for its use, such as *bioķīmiskie procesi* ‘biochemical processes’. We may assume that in approving collocations like *melnais plūškoks* ‘the black elder, *Sambucus nigra*’ the author is here referring to their (D-)generic use.

Though there is clearly no neat line of division between the two categories Grīse is referring to, it seems reasonable to assume that the difference is related to the lexical restrictions that have been noted to apply to D-generics (Gerstner & Krifka 1993, 968): the kind must be well-established, and must be part of background knowledge. This background knowledge may be subject to highly individual differences. In the case of, say, *zinātniskais referāts* ‘scholarly presentation’ (one of the examples cited by Grīse) a D-generic interpretation is not very likely (though *the scholarly presentation* would not be unexpected in a treatise on academic writing). The tendency in Latvian seems to be to make classifying adjectives definite regardless whether they reflect a well-established taxonomy or not. In this way, the definite form becomes one of the formal properties of classifying adjectives in addition to the syntactic properties discussed for Lithuanian by Rutkowski & Progovac (2006). If we are correct in assuming that Grīse would approve of the use of collocations like *zaļā varde* ‘edible frog, *Rana esculenta*’ only when used generically (cf. below), this would mean that she accepts a D-generic ‘the edible frog’ while rejecting a D-generic ‘the scholarly article’.

Grīse also insists that in terminological collocations the definite marking of the adjective should be context-dependent, i. e., determined by the definiteness of the noun phrase<sup>4</sup>. This principle is clearly violated

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<sup>4</sup> Grīse does not state explicitly whether she regards the rigid use of the definite adjective (i. e., its retention in indefinite noun phrases) as incorrect in all cases or whether she would accept it in cases like *zaļā varde* ‘an edible frog’ (lit. ‘a green frog’), or *melnais*

in (35), where we have an instance of rigid or fossilised definiteness (the example is taken from Grisle 1999, 83):

- (35) *Nolasī-t-i*                      *tik-s*                      *trīsdesmit*  
 read-PPP-NOM.PL.M    AUX-FUT.3    thirty  
*zinātnisk-ie*                              *referāt-i*.  
 scholarly-NOM.PL.M.DEF    presentation-NOM.PL  
 ‘Thirty scholarly presentations will be held.’

Grisle points out that this rigid use of definite adjectives was quite unknown to the language described by Endzelin and in the terminological practice of the interwar period. We have no reason to doubt her observations, even though we need not necessarily share her view of this phenomenon as a symptom of language decay rather than of natural processes of language evolution.

Whereas for Latvian we are fortunate in having the testimony of Rasma Grisle, for Lithuanian we cannot date the extension of definite adjectives from D-generic to classifying function with any degree of accuracy, but we may surmise that it is not very old there either.

We will refer to this type, which is now well established both in Lithuanian and in Latvian, with the term ‘rigid taxonomic definiteness’. It is also found in Serbo-Croatian:

- (36) *U Srbiji*    *građan-i*                      *u proseku*    *imaju*  
 in Serbia citizen-NOM.PL    on.average    have.PRS.3PL  
*bar*    *jedan*                      *mobiln-i*                      *telefon*.  
 at.least one.ACC.SG.M.    mobile-ACC.SG.M.DEF    telephone.ACC.SG  
 ‘In Serbia citizens have, on average, at least one mobile  
 phone.’ [http://www.kurir-info.rs/gradani-srbije-u-proseku-  
 imaju-jedan-mobilni-telefon-clanak-71838](http://www.kurir-info.rs/gradani-srbije-u-proseku-imaju-jedan-mobilni-telefon-clanak-71838)

## 8. Specifically Latvian developments: *ad hoc* taxonomies

We will now discuss two further extensions of definite adjectives into the domain of indefinite NPS. They are peculiar to Latvian.

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*plūškoks* ‘a black elder, *Sambucus nigra*’, where she regards the definite form as justified at least in properly generic function.

The first occurs with the indefinite pronoun *nekāds* ‘no, no kind of’:

- (37) *Nekād-as liel-ās summ-as jau*  
 no-NOM.PL.F big-NOM.PL.F.DEF SUM-NOM.PL PCLE  
*te ne-apgrozās,*  
 here NEG-turn.OVER.REFL.PRS.3  
*bet, nospēlējot vienu koncertu nedēļā, pilnībā varu pārtikt.*  
 ‘No great sums are turned over here, but if I play one concert  
 a week, I can make a perfectly good living.’  
[http://izklaide.delfi.lv/slavenibas/muziki/rikardions-  
 muzikas-del-pametis-kartupelu-biznesu.d?id=42069520](http://izklaide.delfi.lv/slavenibas/muziki/rikardions-muzikas-del-pametis-kartupelu-biznesu.d?id=42069520)

The definite form is also used with *kāds* ‘any kind of’, but only within the scope of direct or indirect negation:

- (38) *Te tad nu noritēja dzīvas valodas starp jauniešiem, tikai ne par priekšlasījuma tematu.*  
*Ne arī viņi bija kādi uzmanīg-ie*  
 nor also 3.NOM.PL.M be.PST.3 any attentive-NOM.PL.M.DEF  
*klausītāj-i.*  
 listener-NOM.PL  
 ‘Lively talk was exchanged among the young, but it was not on the subject of the lecture, nor were they any kind of attentive listeners.’ (Augusts Deglavs)

What is important to note is that the definite form of the adjective with *nekāds* is often used in predicative position:

- (39) *Savas skol-as gait-as*  
 POSS.REFL-ACC.PL school-GEN.SG walk-ACC.PL  
*Vensku Edvard-s sāka 1867. g. Tās*  
 PN-NOM.SG begin.PST.3 in 1867 3.NOM.PL.F  
*nav nekādas glud-ās.*  
 be.PRS.3.NEG not.any-NOM.PL.F smooth-NOM.PL.F.DEF  
 ‘Vensku Edvards began his school years in 1867. They were not easy ones.’ (Teodors Zeiferts)
- (40) *Šogad ne-plānojam meklēt reklāmdevēj-us,*  
 this.year NEG-plan.PRS.1PL look.for advertiser-ACC.PL  
*jo auditorija ne-varē-tu bū-t*  
 because audience.NOM.SG NEG-can-COND be-INF

*nekāda*                      *liel-ā*.  
 not.any-NOM.SG.F    large-NOM.SG.F.DEF  
 ‘This year we’re not planning to look for advertisers, because  
 the audience would not be a large one.’  
<http://www.ir.lv/2012/2/3/kots-pec-paris-menesiem-sola-jaunu-kanalu-latviesiem-arzemes>

Finally, we must note that definite forms of adjectives occur in predicative position in negated copular sentences also without *nekāds*:

- (41) *Bet Siseņ-a laupijum-s ne-bija maz-ais.*  
 but PN-GEN booty-NOM.SG NEG-be.PST.3 small-NOM.SG.M.DEF  
 ‘But Sisenis’ booty was not a small one.’ (Jānis Poruks)

Without negation this use of definite forms is not possible, as shown by the contrasting use of definite and indefinite forms in the following example:

- (42) *Darb-s te nav viegl-ais, bet interesant-s gan.*  
 work-NOM.SG here be.PRS.3.NEG easy-NOM.SG.M.DEF but  
 interesting-NOM.SG.M.INDEF certainly  
 ‘Work here is not easy, but interesting it certainly is.’  
 (Pāvils Rozītis)

Moreover, the indefinite form is the normal usage in any case if *nekāds* is not added, and the more common version of (42) would be (43):

- (43) *Darb-s te nav viegl-s, bet interesant-s gan.*  
 work-NOM.SG here be.PRS.3.NEG easy-NOM.SG.M.INDEF  
 but interesting-NOM.SG.M.INDEF certainly  
 ‘Work here is not easy, but interesting it certainly is.’  
 (Pāvils Rozītis)

Quite rarely, as it seems, such definite forms without *nekāds* also occur in adnominal position:

- (44) *Iemācīt iesācējus par lietpratīg-iem zvejniek-iem*  
 instruct beginner into skilled-DAT.PL.M.INDEF fisher-DAT.PL

*ne-bija*            *viegl-ais*            *darb-s.*  
 NEG-be.PST.3    easy-NOM.SG.M.DEF    work-NOM.SG  
 ‘It was not an easy task to make those beginners into skilled fishermen.’ (Vilis Lācis, cited from Bergmane *et al.* 1957, 444)

This use of definite forms with a pronoun with clearly indefinite meaning is striking; its occurrence under negation only is also worth noticing. This use is moreover restricted to this one pronoun: with *neviens* ‘not one, not a single’, for example, the indefinite form is used (though it contains a negation as well):

- (45) ... *mēs*    *tik tiešām* *cenšamies*    *ne-atstāt*  
 1PL.NOM really    try.PRS.1PL NEG-leave.INF  
*nepamani-t-u*            *nevienu*    *svarīg-u*  
 NEG-notice-PPP-ACC.SG    NO    important-ACC.SG.INDEF  
*notikum-u.*  
 event-ACC.SG  
 ‘We really do what we can not to let any important event go by unnoticed.’ [www.kurzemnieks.lv/index.php?](http://www.kurzemnieks.lv/index.php?)

The explanation we want to suggest here is that the reason for this use of definite forms is partly syntactic, though a semantic effect is involved as well. We want to suggest that it originates in predicative position. In adnominal position, the opposition of indefinite and definite forms performs a clearly defined function, that of marking the definiteness of the noun phrase. When an adjective is used in a predicational copular construction of the type *The job is easy*, we would not normally expect it to display oppositions in definiteness. The fact that the use of definite forms under discussion here is particularly characteristic of the predicative position is stated explicitly in the Academy Grammar (Bergmane *et al.* 1957, 438 for uses with *nekāds*, 1957, 444 for uses without *nekāds*).

In predicative position the opposition between indefinite and definite adjectives may, of course, be retained in certain types of copular constructions, especially in the equative type, which could be illustrated with sentences like *Mary’s jumper is the red one* (on the taxonomy of copular constructions cf. Higgins 1979, Mikkelsen 2005 and many other publications). In what follows, we will be concerned exclusively with predicational copular constructions like *John’s job is easy* or *John’s job*

is an easy one. In such constructions the definite form of the adjective presumably performs some function, but it is obviously not that of marking definiteness.

English is able to oppose *His life was not easy* and *His life was not an easy one*, and German similarly opposes *Sein Leben war nicht leicht* and *Sein Leben war kein leichtes*. The German parallel, in particular, is not without significance in assessing the rise of the Latvian constructions, as it might have exercised a certain influence on them. The difference is between a predicative adjective and an adjective as modifier of a predicative noun phrase with ellipsed head (or, in the case of English, a head substituted by *one*). Between them there is no difference that could be stated in truth-conditional terms, but there could be said to exist a slight difference in marking strategy. Whereas the construction with the bare predicate adjective simply ascribes a feature to a subject, the ellipsed-head construction creates an *ad hoc* taxonomy, e. g., of easy and hard lives as readily recognisable types.

The Latvian construction is, in a way, equivalent to the English and German construction but differs from it. In the English and German constructions, the adjective is not nominalised, the noun is just ellipsed or substituted. In German both the construction with an ellipsed head and that with a nominalised adjective would be possible, but the German counterpart of Latvian sentence (46) would be (47), with ellipsed noun but retention of agreement in gender, rather than (48), where the adjective is nominalised and acquires its own (neuter) gender.

- |                                              |         |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|
| (46) <i>Šis darbs nav (nekāds) vieglais.</i> | Latvian |
| ‘This job is not an easy one.’               |         |
| (47) <i>Diese Arbeit ist keine leichte.</i>  | German  |
| ‘This job is not an easy one.’               |         |
| (48) <i>Diese Arbeit ist kein Leichtes.</i>  | German  |
| ‘This job is not an easy thing.’             |         |

Latvian, however, does not distinguish, as far as the form of the adjective is concerned, between these two constructions which can be clearly set apart in German. In other words, in the Latvian predicative construction with *nekāds* (and optionally in negated copular constructions in general), the definite form of the adjective has obviously spread from the nominalised function to constructions with fused modifier-

heads. This spread is associated with the particular type of semantic effect we have just characterised as creating an *ad hoc* taxonomy, and it only occurs in specific circumstances, with *nekāds* and, more generally, with negation. The *ad hoc* taxonomies we are referring to are probably related functionally to certain uses of demonstrative pronouns which Himmelmann (1996) describes with the term ‘recognitional use’. Himmelmann invokes this notion to explain certain types of the use of demonstratives:

(49) *I’m not one of those boring eaters.*

(50) *Linda Sharps is not one of those boring, unlikeable bloggers though.*

These uses presuppose that the addressee has a mental picture of what a boring eater or blogger might look like, and recognises the category when it is mentioned. *Mutatis mutandis* (we are referring to indefinite NPs here) we could also invoke this notion here. It is just possible that a construction like *This task is not an easy one* means exactly the same as *This task is not easy* (there are, of course, no truth-conditional differences), but to the extent that there is a difference, it seems reasonable to suppose that the fused modifier-head construction is also, in a way, recognitional in the sense of establishing an *ad hoc* taxonomy. If the purpose of the nominal predicate is just to ascribe a feature without introducing any taxonomy, this can be done most effectively by just using an adjective (*This x is red*). If the noun denoting the bearer of the feature is also introduced in the nominal predicate (*This x is a red x*), then this is presumable because *red x* denotes a recognisable class of objects; the same goes for predicatively used fused head-modifier constructions.

For the Latvian constructions discussed here there is an interesting Lithuanian parallel. The Lithuanian equivalent of (46) would be

(51) *Šis darbas ne iš lengv-ųjų.* Lith.  
 this work NEG of easy-GEN.PL.DEF  
 ‘This task is not an easy one’ (lit. ‘one of the easy ones’)

This Lithuanian construction differs from the Latvian one in that it is partitive (‘one of the easy ones’ rather than ‘an easy one’), but it also has a fused modifier-head construction, and the definite adjective evokes, in this case as well, an *ad hoc* taxonomy.



It should be noted that the use of the definite form in this type is not determined purely syntactically. It is not used in every ellipsed-head construction, cf. the following example, where the indefinite form occurs in an fused head-modifier construction in object position:

- (52) *Gribu*            *balt-u*                    *kaķ-īt-i*,                    Latv.  
 want.PRS.1SG white-ACC.SG.INDEF cat-DIM-ACC.SG  
*nevis*   *meln-u*.  
 not    black-ACC.SG.INDEF  
 ‘I want a white kitten, not a black one.’ [http://www.dzirkstele.lv/portals/lietotaju\\_raksti/komentari.html?xml\\_id=32953](http://www.dzirkstele.lv/portals/lietotaju_raksti/komentari.html?xml_id=32953)

The introduction of the definite form in fused modifier-head constructions must therefore have occurred in one specific position, viz. in predicative noun phrases (whence it spread to other positions), and it must have served a particular strategy<sup>5</sup>. If an explanation along these lines is correct, then the definite form with *nekāds* is not directly connected with semantic definiteness but with a syntactic operation serving a certain semantic effect. What still stands in need of an explanation, of course, is the restriction to negative clauses. Its cause is probably not syntactic; what calls for an explanation is why the fused head-modifier construction introducing an *ad hoc* taxonomy was used as a marking strategy for negative copular constructions. We will not attempt to explain this here; suffice it to say that the Lithuanian parallel illustrated in (51) is also limited to negative sentences.

For this Latvian use of definite adjectives in negated predicative NPs there is an interesting Scandinavian parallel, discussed in detail by Dahl (2010, 155–157). It is that of the so-called ‘absolute positives’ attested in a large number of Scandinavian varieties, including Standard Swedish. The construction involves the use of an adjective with a weak (definite) ending followed by a definite-marked noun, typically in predicative position, where there is no apparent motivation for the use of a definite form of the noun, e. g.:

<sup>5</sup> According to Aljović (2002, 35–6) the long form of the adjective is used in all cases of ellipsed-head constructions in Serbo-Croatian. The explanation here suggested for Latvian would therefore not apply to Serbo-Croatian, but this does not mean that it cannot be correct. We do not know, after all, in which position the use of the long forms in ellipsed-head constructions arose in Serbo-Croatian.

- (53) *Han är jo redan stora karn.* Swedish  
 he be.PRS PCLE already big.WK man. DEF  
 (lit.) ‘He is already the big man.’ (cited from Dahl 2010, 155)

A negated variety is also attested, as in the following example from Bokmål Norwegian:

- (54) *Jeg veide bare 1440 gram og var ikke store gutten.*  
 I weigh.PST only 1440 gram and be.PST NEG  
 big.WK boy.DEF  
 ‘I weighed only 1440 grams and wasn’t a [lit. the] big boy.’  
 (About the narrator’s premature birth) (cited from Dahl 2010, 156).

Such uses of definite adjectival forms occur mostly in predicative position, just like the Latvian definite forms discussed in this section. This is not a coincidence because, the predicate noun in a predicational copular construction being normally always indefinite, definiteness markers become available, in this position, for special effects. This special effect seems to be the same in this case as in that of the Latvian definite forms in predicative position, viz., the possibility of invoking an *ad hoc* taxonomy. Despite these general similarities there is, however, no exact correspondence between the Latvian and Scandinavian constructions. The Latvian construction involves adjectives occurring in fused modifier-head structures, and they can be accompanied by the indefinite marker *nekāds*. This suggests that the Latvian construction presupposes an earlier stage with a predicatively used indefinite fused modifier-head construction. There is no evidence that anything similar occurred in the Scandinavian constructions. Though the final outcome is similar—the use of a definite adjectival form in predicative position with the aim of establishing an *ad hoc* taxonomy—the paths of development are probably different. Probably we could say that extension of definiteness markers serving the purpose of establishing *ad hoc* taxonomies may occur in different contexts and at different stages of development; the Latvian type discussed here is, by its very nature, restricted to languages with adjectival marking of definiteness.

## 9. Specifically Latvian developments: good-example function

The next peculiarly Latvian use of the definite form is what we could call strengthening use, i. e., it emphasises that the noun it accompanies is a particularly good example of the category this noun denotes; the typical English equivalents would be *real*, *sheer* etc. This use is restricted to a small group of adjectives including *baigs* ‘terrible’, *galīgs* ‘complete’, *gatavs* ‘ready’, *īsts* ‘true’, *tīrs* ‘pure’.

- (55) *Kungs jau gan mums, ļaudīm, tikpat*  
 squire PCLE PCLE 1PL.DAT people-DAT.PL as.good  
*kā tēv-s. Bet lielmāt-e — gatav-ais*  
 as father-NOM but lady-NOM.SG sheer-NOM.SG.M.DEF  
*veln-s!*  
 devil-NOM.SG

‘The squire is almost like a father to us folks, but her ladyship is a sheer devil.’ (Augusts Deglavs)

- (56) *Bet, kas viņai interesē, tā*  
 but what 3-DAT.SG.F interest.PRS.3 DEM.NOM.SG.F  
*Pēter-īm ir tīr-ā nejēdzīb-a.*  
 Peter-DAT be.PRS.3 sheer-NOM.SG.F.DEF nonsense-NOM.SG  
 ‘But that what interests her is sheer nonsense to Peter.’  
 (Augusts Deglavs)

This use of the definite form has no counterpart in Lithuanian. In those cases where an exact etymological counterpart is used in the same sense, it is in the indefinite form. This is shown by the following example, containing the adjective Lith. *gatavas*, an exact etymological equivalent of Latvian *gatavs*, both being parallel borrowings from Old Russian *gotovъ* ‘ready’:

- (57) *Gātav-as gluš-as tas*  
 ready-NOM.SG.M.INDEF blockhead-NOM.SG DEM.NOM.SG.M  
*jo brol-is.*  
 3.GEN.SG.M brother-NOM.SG

‘He’s a true blockhead, that brother of his.’ (LKŽ, from Salamiestis)

This use is but a particular case of what we have characterised above as the use of definite adjectives introducing an *ad hoc* taxonomy. The difference is that whereas in the preceding case the category the addressee is supposed to recognise when mentioned is only a subtype of the category denoted by the noun (e. g., *a boring blogger* etc.), in this case it is the whole category denoted by the noun that is supposed to be readily recognisable by the addressee; this category is not narrowed by the adjective, which loses its original lexical meaning and thereby also loses the typical subtype-creating function of the adjectival modifier. The only function the adjective retains is that of emphasising that the discourse referent is a good example of the category denoted by the noun. We will call this type the ‘good-example type’.

Just like the above-mentioned taxonomical type, this type of use of the definite forms is compatible with indefiniteness of the noun phrase. Both types involve taxonomies, but the status of these taxonomies is different. As mentioned above, until quite recently generally sanctioned and terminologically established taxonomies were not reflected in the use of the definite form in Latvian if the noun phrase was not used generically. The use of definite adjectives to introduce *ad hoc* taxonomies appealing to the addressee’s private experience is much older, as shown from the above examples from Deglavs’ *Rīga* (1910–11). There is therefore no direct connection between those two types of taxonomical use.

## 10. Mapping the meanings of definite adjectives

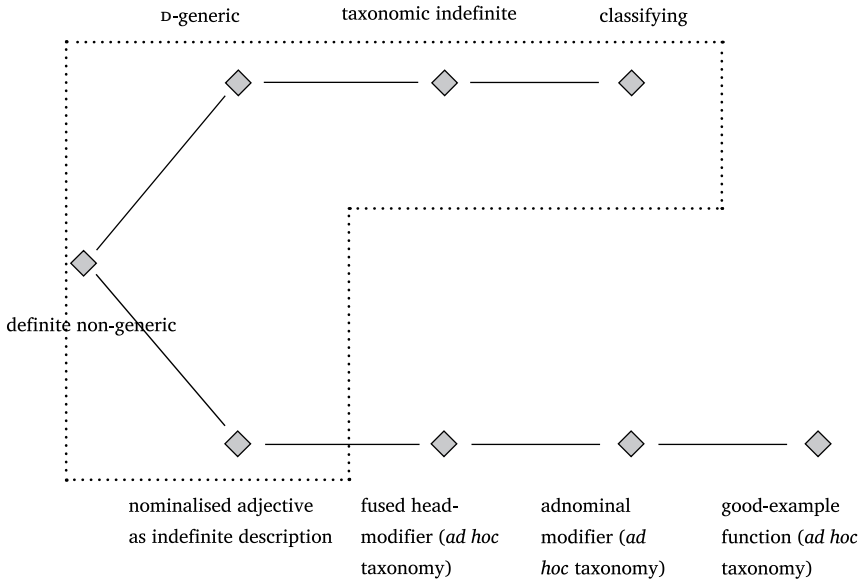
In his study of definiteness in the Scandinavian vernaculars, Dahl notes that a typical way for definiteness markers to spread to indefinite contexts passes through generic use. This observation certainly receives a partial confirmation in the Baltic material, where the fossilised generic definiteness is an example to the point. The question should certainly be posed whether all instances of such a spread did not pass through a generic stage in Baltic. This applies in particular to nominalised adjectives. Does the transition of Lith. *išrinktieji*, Latvian *izredzētie* from ‘the chosen ones’ to ‘chosen ones’ presuppose a generic stage? Though there is a clear chronological gap between the rise of indefinite nominalised adjectives with definite forms and the spread of post-generic definiteness

discussed in the last sections, the processes involved could be similar, though operating in different conditions. However, the evidence for a generic stage is not compelling here. While some of the nominalised adjectives such as Latvian *aklie* ‘the blind’ could have functioned as generic expressions as a transitional stage to indefinite uses, this can hardly be viewed as a necessary condition here. Some additional factors were needed in both cases in order for the definite marking of the adjective to be retained in the process of transfer to indefinite NPs. In the cases of post-generic definiteness discussed in section 7, this factor was purely semantic: it was the fact of the adjective operating at taxonomic level in spite of the individual reference of the noun. In the case of nominalised adjectives, the retention of definite marking could have been licensed by syntactic factors: the definite ending becomes a kind of substitute for the ellipsed nominal head, that is, it acquires a function similar to that of English *one(s)*.

However, genericity as a conditioning factor of the spread of definiteness markers beyond their proper scope comes in again at the next stage of development, described in section 9. If the account given there is correct, then the syntactic factor (use of a fused modifier-head construction) was responsible for the introduction of definite forms in predicative position in negative copular constructions in Latvian, but here it served a particular strategy, that of creating an *ad-hoc* taxonomy; and this strategy became the only conditioning factor for the use of definite forms when from the predicative position they spread to the adnominal position.

An interesting question is where the indefinite specific uses of the definite adjective arise. They are, as mentioned above, characteristic of Serbo-Croatian but are not found, as a distinct type, in Baltic. If a Lithuanian or Latvian definite adjective can be used in an indefinite specific NP, then in most cases this is because the adjective reflects fossilised generic definiteness, and if this condition is met, the definite form can be used in indefinite non-specific NPs as well. Dahl (2010, 49), referring to Greenberg’s ‘specific articles’, similarly emphasises that the ‘expansion of the range of uses of definite articles’ which he has observed in the Scandinavian dialects ‘goes in a different direction and cannot be described in terms of ‘specificity’ in any sense’. Considering that in Baltic post-generic definiteness spreads with equal ease to

Figure 1. Extended uses of adjectival definiteness marking in Baltic. All types of use marked on the map are attested in Latvian, those also attested in Lithuanian are encircled with a dotted line.



non-specific as to specific indefinite NPs, we probably have no reason to connect the Serbo-Croatian indefinite specific use of definite adjectives with post-generic definiteness. Perhaps, then, the Serbo-Croatian indefinite specific use reflects a certain stage in the loss of the category of definiteness, that is, perhaps the shift of definite adjectival endings to adjectival endings *tout court* (or adnominal adjectival endings, as in Russian) passes, or may pass, through this intermediary stage. Of course, further research may reveal the relevance of genericity as a transitional stage here as well.

Figure 1 shows the semantic shifts that have led to the present-day distribution of definite adjectives in Lithuanian and Latvian. It may serve, at some time in the future, as material for a semantic map of definite adjectives. More elements for such a map might still be yielded by a more thorough analysis of the Slavonic facts. The types of use shown on the map are: D-generic (Lith. *juodasis strazdas* ‘the black thrush’, i. e., the blackbird, cf. ex. 30), taxonomic indefinite (Lith. *juodasis strazdas* ‘a black thrush’, cf. ex. 31, 33), classifying

(Lith. *mobilusis telefonas* ‘the/a mobile phone’, cf. ex. 32, 34), nominalised adjective as indefinite description (Lith. *išrinktasis* ‘a chosen one’, cf. ex. 23, 25), fused head-modifier construction creating an *ad hoc* taxonomy (Latvian *šis darbs nav nekāds vieglais* ‘this job is not an easy one’, cf. ex. 38, 39, 40, 41), adnominal modifier creating an *ad hoc* taxonomy (Latvian *nekāds vieglais darbs* ‘no easy job’, ex. 37, 44), and strengthening use invoking an *ad hoc* taxonomy of better and worse instances (Latvian *tirā nejēdzība* ‘sheer nonsense’, cf. 55, 56). The indefinite specific use attested in Serbo-Croatian and elsewhere is not reflected on the map because its relationship to generic uses is not clear.

## 11. Specific features of adjectival marking of definiteness

Many of the above examples show definiteness markers spilling over into the domain of indefinite noun phrases. A consequence of the marking of definiteness in the form of the adjective is that a noun phrase can be, in different layers of its structure, marked both for definiteness and for indefiniteness. Examples of this would be (23) and (25), which combine definite adjectives with explicit markers of indefiniteness in the form of indefinite pronouns. In this case it could be argued that the definite forms have lost their function of definiteness markers and have become markers of the nominalisation of the adjective. More problematic is the use of definite adjectives reflecting generic definiteness, as in (30)—(33). In this case the noun phrase is, in a way, definite and indefinite at the same time: the noun phrase is indefinite at the level of the individual discourse participant, but this individual participant is singled out from a class defined with the aid of a D-generic expression. The definite form of the adjective is justified because what is actually semantically modified by the adjective is a subclass of entities and not one particular representative of this class. This leads to a kind of definiteness conflict which, though the adjectival marking allows for its overt manifestation in different layers of the noun phrase, is by no means restricted to languages with adjectival marking of definiteness. Biblical Hebrew, which uses definite articles, abounds in examples of generic definiteness spilling over into

the domain of indefinite noun phrases, as noted above. Examples from Swedish dialects are given in Dahl (2010, 56).

- (58) *Hä finns vattne däri hinken.* North Swedish  
 It exist.PRS water.DEF there\_in bucket.DEF  
 ‘There is water (lit. ‘the water’) in the bucket.’

Whereas in such instances it is not easy to say whether the noun phrase is definite or indefinite, the Baltic noun phrases in (30)—(33) could be characterised as indefinite, and their indefiniteness could be overtly expressed by adding an indefinite pronoun. One could be tempted to say that in such instances the definite form of the adjective has become a mere marker of the classifying function of the adjective, and has no significance for the definiteness of the noun phrase. But this is not quite true: the definite adjectives in the instances under discussion originate in D-generic expressions, which are a subtype of definite expressions. It makes sense, therefore, to distinguish expressions of definiteness in different layers of the noun phrase. In a theory linking definiteness with a syntactic projection, the DP, this would entail operating with two DPs to account for the structure of one NP, a solution which, in another context (that of the twofold locus of definiteness marking in Scandinavian) Lyons (1999, 78) calls ‘less than desirable’. Of course, as definite adjectival forms spread beyond the domain of D-generics and become simply a way of marking classifying adjectives, their association with definiteness may ultimately be lost. This is particularly noticeable in Latvian, where, in specific circumstances, the definite forms of just any adjective may be used to establish an *ad hoc* taxonomy.

The spill-over of generic definiteness into the domain of indefiniteness is, at any rate, not restricted to adjectival marking of definiteness. Strictly speaking, even the possibility of expressing definiteness in some deeper layer of the structure of an indefinite noun phrase is not an exclusive property of definite adjectives. Suffice it to point to the French partitive article in *boire de l'eau, manger des poires*, where the generic concepts *l'eau, les poires* are marked for definiteness whereas the noun phrase, viewed as referring to an indefinite quantity singled out from a generic mass, is indefinite. The same mechanism is used, in Baltic, in constructions with nominalised adjectives as in (23), (25): ‘the chosen ones’ is a definite, though not necessarily generic,



reference mass from which an indefinite set of referents ('one/some of the chosen ones') can be singled out. We see, then, that adjectival marking of definiteness is not different in principle from other types of definiteness marking. What is specific to this type of marking is the further developments beyond definiteness: the possibility of marking, in morphology, specific features of adjectives such as their nominalisation, their classificational function etc. In course of time, if the basic function of definiteness marking should be abandoned (and Lithuanian is, as it seems, evolving in this direction), these functions might become the only ones. For the time being, however, the link to definiteness has not been severed. One could view them as peripheral functions of definiteness markers, or even as representing core functions of definiteness markers if we recognise several layers of definiteness in the structure of the noun phrase. In any case, the definite adjectives of Baltic raise interesting problems for the study of definiteness marking.

**Axel Holvoet**

*Warsaw University*

*Faculty of Polish Studies*

*Chair of General Linguistics, East Asian*

*Comparative Linguistics and Baltic Studies*

*Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, PL-00-927 Warsaw*

*axel.holvoet@uw.edu.pl*

**Birutė Sprauniė**

*Vilnius University*

*Philological Faculty*

*Centre of Scandinavian Studies*

*Universiteto g. 3, LT-01513 Vilnius*

*b.sprauniene@gmail.com*

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, ALLAT — allative, AUX — auxiliary, COMP — comparative, COND — conditional, DAT — dative, DEF — definite, DEM — demonstrative, DIM — diminutive, F — feminine, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, IMP — imperative, INDEF — indefinite, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, IPF — imperfect, LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PCLE — particle, PL — plural,

PN — personal name, POSS — possessive, PPA — past active participle, PPP — past passive participle, PRS — present, PST — past, REFL — reflexive, REL — relative, SG — singular, VOC — vocative, WK — weak adjectival form

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