

Article

Use of the Article

To explain various asymmetries with regard to the (non-)use of definite article in Quenya as compared to English, we will exploit the distinction of semantic and pragmatic uniqueness as originally introduced by Löbner¹ and some generalizations made by Ortman² and Schwarz³ over weak-strong article splits encountered in many languages.

Nominal Concept Types

In his theory Löbner proposes a lexical distinction of noun types in how they classify the universe:

- [-R] nouns point to a member of a class: *rock, architect, chair*;
- [+R] nouns require a [-R] noun to bound them to the scene: *wheel, sister, head*;
- [-U] nouns might have several instances within the same scene: *tree, brother, minister*;
- [+U] nouns pick out a unique member within the scene: *Peter, weather, father*.

Lexical units have their default combination [\pm U][\pm R], but virtually each of them can undergo a type shift into any other combination:

- [-U] \rightarrow [+U]: *a rock \rightarrow the rock*;
- [+U] \rightarrow [-U]: *the mother of a child \rightarrow a late mother*;
- [-R] \rightarrow [+R]: *a book \rightarrow my book*;
- [+R] \rightarrow [-R]: *the king of Spain \rightarrow a king*.

Nouns which interpretation coincides with their lexical combination are then called *nouns* of this type, and which interpretation diverges from that combination are then called *concepts* of this type. The four possible types are then called:

	[-U]	[+U]
[-R]	sortal	individual
[+R]	relational	functional

The terminology distinguishes the noun's *underlying type* (eg. *functional noun*, FN) from its *actual use* (eg. *functional concept*, FC).

Semantic vs Pragmatic Uniqueness

It is crucial then to distinguish between individual and functional *nouns* on one hand which are lexically unique, and *concepts* which uniqueness results from the context (linguistic or extra-linguistic). In his work Ortmann claims that this distinction results in the fundamental split of the article use: concepts are marked in a more explicit way. It's especially easy to observe such tendency in languages which show two types of definite articles — weak and strong — like German.

The matter is not only complicated by the fact that articles tend to invade into other categories⁴, but also by fuzzy cases which could be analyzed either as semantic or pragmatic. The latter especially results in the article variation in closely related languages.

Strong Article in Quenya

The first major difference we can point between Quenya and English is the (non-)use of the article with unique nouns, where it is logically redundant:

type	Quenya	English
SN	antanen hatal	I cast a spear
RN	yulda heruo	drink of a lord
IN	anar caluva	the sun shall shine
FN	lambe Eldaiva	the language of the Eldar

However, it occurs with unique concepts to mark the incongruence:

type	Quenya	English
IC	á sac' i fendë	close the door
FC	i yávë mónalyo	the fruit of thy womb

Many languages diverge here from the Ortmann's statement where Quenya adheres to it: they use the weak (semantic) article in the *immediate use* IC like in the sentence above. Schwarz shows that the weak article is used without anaphoricity. The immediate use IC is pragmatic but non-anaphoric. Löbner's and Ortmann's uniqueness scale avoids to include immediate use IC altogether.

The Threshold of Semantic and Pragmatic Uniqueness

Some corner cases which don't clearly belong either to semantic or pragmatic uniqueness are:

- Bridging: "John bought *a book* today. **The author** is French".
- Autophoric nouns: "He bought **the car** *that was shown on TV*".
- Non-lexical FC: "**The highest** *mountain*".

Non-Lexical Functional Concepts

Non-lexical FC is a concept where semantic uniqueness comes about by **syntactic** structure and semantic **composition** rather than by the lexical meaning of the head noun. In particular, these are nouns combined **with ordinal numbers**, and **with superlative** forms of attributive adjectives. In these cases uniqueness is achieved by the lexical meaning of the *modifier*.

Complex FC in Quenya

Quenya superlative adjectives do **not** take the article⁵, and neither do the determining adjectives like *last*, *next*, *only*:

- *métima hrestallo círa* [MC/221] “leave the last shore”

To the same list of adjectives belongs *same*, yet Tolkien gives an example *i imya* “the same”. [PE23/134]

While no canonical example of ordinal number with a noun exists, they belong to the same category, and it is expected to observe a lack of the article with them too.

Bridging

Bridging or ‘definite associative anaphora’ (DAA) describes a noun, typically a functional noun, which is uniquely defined by its relation to a previously mentioned noun:

- I looked into *the room*. **The ceiling** was very high
- *My new car* needed repairing, **the motor** was broken
- I've just been to *a wedding*. **The bride** wore blue.

Based on the world knowledge, the hearer knows that at a wedding, there should be one and only one bride, a room has only one ceiling and a car needs a motor. DAAs combine properties of pragmatic uniqueness (by virtue of anaphoricity) and semantic uniqueness (by virtue of involving a FN). It is therefore natural for there to be considerable variation in the use of articles.

DAA in Quenya

Tolkien himself explains the use of the article with DAA on at least one occasion, — *i falmalinnar*:

“ The waves are implied in *ilye tier*: [...] Those routes had naturally been over the waves. [PE23/134]

There's no other canonical example of DAA in the current corpus of Quenya, but two sentences are close approximations to such:

- *alcar mi Tarmenel na Erun ar mi cemen rainë i hínin* [VT44/32]. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men". 'The children' is definite in the reference to Eru.
- *an cé mo quernë cendelë númenna, i hyarma tentanë Melcorello* [VT49/6-8]. "For if one turned the face westward, the left hand pointed away from Melkor". 'The left hand' is definite in the reference to *one*.

The first example *Eru* → *the children* is a 'relational anaphora', and the second example *one* → *the left hand* is 'part-whole' DAA. Even though Schwarz and Ortmann discuss how part-whole and maker-product DAAs differ in their semantic-pragmatic dichotomy in some languages, the examples above show that in Quenya **any** DAA is marked by the article.

Autophoric Nouns

Autophoric nouns establish their unique reference by a restrictive relative clause. Context-dependency affects the weak-strong article choice, but it seems Quenya in general requires an article uniformly (even when the relative clause is reduced) unless superceded by another determiner:

- *Átaremna i ea han Ea* [VT43/12] "our Father who art in Heaven"
- *manar i-ennor i me-kenner* [MQ: PE22/124] "who are the persons that we saw?"

In a bit confused way, to this list can also belong this line from *Namárie*:

- *Vardo tellumar yassen tintilar i eleni* "beneath the vaults of Varda wherein the stars tremble"

This is how Tolkien explains the use of *i eleni*:

“ Thus in Galadriel’s lament it is said *tintilar i eleni*: that is, those stars that adorned or shone through the transparent roofs of the Domes of Varda, which were not all the visible stars, nor in fact the actual stars of the firmament of the outer world. [PE23/133]

Or, in other words, *stars* → *that tremble in the vaults of Varda*: even though the noun itself is not syntactically autophoric, it is implicitly.

Quenya as a Split I System

The simplified scale of uniqueness suggested by Löbner and Ortmann:

deictic SN < anaphoric SN < autophoric SN < DAA < non-lexical IC, FC < IN, FN < proper names

where the cut-off position for the article use varies from language to language:

- English: *deictic SN < **[anaphoric SN < autophoric SN < DAA < non-lexical IC, FC < IN, FN]** < proper names*
 - Quenya: *deictic SN < **[anaphoric SN < autophoric SN < DAA]** < non-lexical IC, FC < IN, FN < proper names*
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Footnotes

1: Journal of Semantics 4: 279-326, 1985

2: Frames and Concept Types: 293-321, 2014

3: [Two Types of Definites in Natural Language](#), Florian Schwarz, 2009

4: as in Greek, where the article is used even with names

5: PE17/91

Revision #4

Created 2026-05-24 12:40:20 UTC by Arnon

Updated 2026-05-25 20:49:07 UTC by Arnon