The Indefinite Article as an Exponent for Partition

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Abstract   The essay deals with the phenomenon of the indefinite article occurring with mass nouns of the type *I brauch a geld* (literal translation: 'I need a money'), inducing a partition reading for a vague amount. After a survey of its distribution in the Southern German dialects Bavarian and Alemannic, based on a large-scale empirical investigation, the essay focuses on the fine-grained distinction between subsets and subkinds whereby the latter occur with the indefinite article in all variants. A fine-grained functional structure is suggested where the respective functional heads are immediately adjacent, giving rise to the possibility of extending the indefinite article to subsets.

Keywords   Indefinite article. Mass noun. Partition. Subkinds. Kinds. Alemannic. Bavarian.

1   Introduction

Partitivity, i.e., division in its broadest sense, ranging from simple subset/superset relations of substances ('a bit of wine') to part-whole relations ('the roof of the house') is not only a multi-faceted conceptual phenomenon, but also shows a huge variety in its morphosyntactic manifestations: both across languages and within one language. Whereas some languages stick to a rather uniform marking of these relations, e.g., 'of'-insertion in English, others show a variety of means, using different cases (genitive, partitive, elative), different prepositions or agreement phenomena; see for a recent overview the contributions in Sleeman and Giusti (2021).

Against this background, I will discuss a morpho-syntactic manifestation of partitivity by inserting the indefinite article *ein-* (IA) before a mass noun, yielding a kind of partitive meaning in the sense that a contextually salient (vague) amount of money is intended:[1]

(1)   *Host   a   geld   dabei?*
       have-you   IA   money   with(you)
       'Do you have (any) money with you?'

This phenomenon, IA+mass in the following, is attested in various Southern German dialects (Bavarian, Alemannic) and its distribution as well as its closer examination concerning the different environments in which it occurs as well as a possible syntactic analysis, is the main topic of this essay. One important issue will be to distinguish it from other constructions that involve either a mass noun or an indefinite article. For example, how do mass nouns behave when they are used in generic statements? What is the role of the verbal predicate and what happens if it is varied in aspect (episodic vs. habitual)? Are there neighbouring constructions that might look very similar but have a different interpretation and thus also syntax? For example, a closely related construction, namely what is often discussed in the context of 'indefinite determiner doubling', as in *a so a (gueter) Wein* (= a such a (good) wine 'such a good wine') has to be treated in different terms, see already Strobel and Weiß (2017). Thus, I will illustrate in the following

how the differing readings and interpretations of the indefinite article in the context of mass nouns can be evoked when gathering data in a large-scale dialect project, working with written questionnaires. The main problem with written questionnaires is to control for the context, i.e., how to avoid that speakers can nevertheless have in mind another, non-intended meaning. Some cases where this obviously had happened, will be discussed in Section 4, together with some suggestions as to how this can be avoided in future work. The rest of the essay is structured as follows: Section 2 gives some background on the SynAlm project, concentrating on the methods used in this project. Section 3 describes the phenomenon in more detail, whereby some first results are used to illustrate the range of variation found. Section 4 then is devoted to the neighbouring constructions, and as already mentioned, some of the puzzling results give rise to suggestions how to better control for the context. In Section 5, I will suggest an analysis of the data within an exo-skeletal approach, Borer (2005), with a fine-grained sequence of functional projections which is able to capture the different interpretations as well as the different lexicalisations in the respective dialects by locating the variation in the lexicon.

2 The SynAlm Project

2.1 Background

The project **Syn**tax des **Al**emannischen ran from 2011-2016 at the University of Konstanz and was funded by the DFG.[2] It was informally connected to other Germanic dialect syntax projects that ran during nearly the same time, namely SyHD[3] (Syntax of Hessian dialects) and SADS[4] (Syntaktischer Atlas der deutschen Schweiz). It was also part of the EdiSyn[5] network. All these projects were interested in a detailed description of various syntactic phenomena, among them the morpho-syntax of infinitivals, possession, relative clauses, prepositional adverbs, adjectival inflection, and the use of determiners, including the partitive construction mentioned above. For some constructions, including the use and form of partitive pro-forms, the very same test-sentences were tested in SyHD, SADS and SynAlm projects alike. Other phenomena that are more Alemannic-specific, e.g., certain particles in infinitival constructions, see, e.g., Brandner and Salzmann (2012),

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got of course more room in SynAlm. SynAlm was preceded by a smaller dialect syntax project which was part of the SFB 471 at the University of Konstanz.[6] This in turn was preceded by several pilot studies.

One of the most important insights from these smaller studies was that it is very well possible to get robust results by directly aiming at the native speaker's competence by offering whole 'batteries' of carefully controlled variations on one construction. Versions of a construction for which it is highly likely that they are ungrammatical were included in these batteries nevertheless, in order to obtain explicit negative evidence. Especially in the area of dialectal research, it is very important to follow the guideline that the absence of positive evidence does not necessarily imply negative evidence.

Based on our own as well as on the experiences from other dialect syntax projects, we used from the start the so-called "layered method" (Cornips, Poletto 2005). The data on a specific topic were gained in several rounds such that later questionnaires could react on the results of a former one. This means that the relevant construction was usually first presented in the form of a translation task, i.e., the sentence was given in the standard language and the task for the informants was to translate it into his/her dialect. In a later round then, the various versions given to us were presented to all informants in the form of a judgment task.

2.2 The Questionnaires

Seven questionnaires (*Fragebogen* 'questionnaires', FB in the following) were designed and each one had one main morpho-syntactic topic. This topic was investigated in great detail with mostly judgment tasks. In order to make the questionnaire not 'too boring' for the informants, these tasks were interrupted by translation tasks for the topic of one of the next questionnaires. The results and the careful analysis of these translation data gave us a first overview of the deviations from the standard.[7] These versions were then offered, systematically varied as mentioned above, to all speakers in a later round as a judgment task. The first FB contained thus many translation tasks

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6   A short description can be found under `https://ling.sprachwiss.uni-konstanz.de/pages/proj/sfb471/proj-kurz/A-17.html`.

7   The translated sentences were directly transferred into Excel while keeping all the orthographic devices the informants used to come as close as possible to the 'real' dialect version. From these we created a normalised form to build the basis for categorisation. Categorisation means that every example got 'annotations', e.g., in the case of the IA+mass, it was annotated in different columns whether the informant had inserted an IA or not (no; yes), which form it took (e.g., the vowel), and further properties. These then are the basis for the maps, see below.

for different constructions. Concerning determiners, FB3 contained some translation tasks and FB5 had as a main topic the form and distribution of determiners with the focus on generic readings. Most of the data in this essay stem from these two FBs.

In SynAlm, we used in most cases a 5-point Likert scale with 1 = best (dark green) and 5 = worst (dark red) on the maps below. As dialect speakers sometimes hesitate to rate a 'strong dialectal' version as perfectly fine – due to the still negative attitude towards the dialect –, we additionally used a 3-point scale with the values 1 = I use it myself; 2 = I hear it from others/it is known to me; 3 = I never heard it. Thus, with the 2-judgment, speakers were not committed to their own usage – but a high amount of 2-judgments indicates that the construction in question is vivid. There were also simple binary Yes/No judgment tasks, but in later rounds, we refrained from these, as the 5-point scales deliver much more useful results that can be interpreted from different angles, e.g., by taking into account strong vs. weak rejection. Besides these judgment and translation tasks, there were also choice tasks. E.g., in a sentence with a mass noun, the speakers simply had to mark whether they would insert a definite article, an indefinite one or no article at all. In all the judgment tasks, the speakers had the possibility to give an 'own version', in case none of the offered versions suited them. In case yet another version occurred in these 'own versions', it was offered again to all speakers in a judgment task in a later round. Ideally, all constructions should have gone through these production/rating procedures – however this could not be achieved for all of them, due to limitations of time and resources. Nevertheless, for a considerable amount of constructions, we gained data according to this procedure. The rather drastic differences between the results of different tasks can be seen below in Section 3.

2.3   The Informants

As said above, SynAlm had limited resources, especially if one considers the area covered, see the maps below. Thus, compromises had to be made concerning recruiting and selecting the informants. SynAlm could not reach the density of locations as SADS or SyHD. Specifically, it could not be ensured that there are always several speakers per location. Furthermore, as is to be expected for such a long-term project, the number of informants decreased during time. Expecting this situation when sending out a new questionnaire, several exemplars were sent to one already recruited informant such that s/he could pass them over to new informants in their location (snowball system). Due to this, the decrease was not so dramatic (from 1000 speakers from the first round to 516 in the seventh) and the area covered could be kept constant until the last round. But this

procedure comes of course with the cost that there are partially different speakers for different questionnaires. But a substantial number of informants filled out all the questionnaires. Still, when interpreting the maps and also the numerical results, it should be kept in mind that small deviances could also be an effect of this situation.

2.4 The Results

The results of SynAlm can be found in a database[8] together with the questionnaires (only in German). In the database itself, the examples are translated into English and the numerical results as well as (dynamically created) maps for each question can be found. This is executed via an XML database with a Graphical User Interface (GUI), developed by ourselves. The maps there are rather preliminary and serve more to get a first impression. The SynAlm maps will all be published in the near future at the "Forschungszentrum Deutscher Sprachatlas" and the first volume (*Nominal Syntax*) is already published.[9] The maps are taken from there **[maps 1-4]**.

After this short description of SynAlm and how the data were gained, let us turn now to the phenomenon under discussion, namely the IA+mass in Alemannic.

3 The Phenomenon and Its Occurrence in Alemannic

3.1 The Distribution of the IA+Mass in Alemannic – a First Look

It is well documented in the literature that in Bavarian dialects, the indefinite article *ein-* can occur together with a mass noun, as illustrated in (1) above. Usually taken as a genuine Bavarian property, it could be shown already in the project "Atlas zur deutschen Alltagssprache" that the construction occurs in the neighbouring Alemannic dialects as well.[10] In the project Syntax of Alemannic (SynAlm), this construction was tested with a translation task and with a judgment task. In order to get a first impression about the distribution, consider the first two maps **[maps 1-2]**.

A quite similar distribution was found when the mass noun was construed with a weak quantifier of the type *ein wenig ein Wasser* ('a bit of water') **[map 3]**.[11]

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8 On https://ilg-server.ling.uni-stuttgart.de/synalm/html/

9 Under https://regionalsprache.de/synalm.aspx

10 See the map under http://www.atlas-alltagssprache.de/runde-3/f08d/.

11 There was no translation task for the corresponding sentence **[map 3]**.
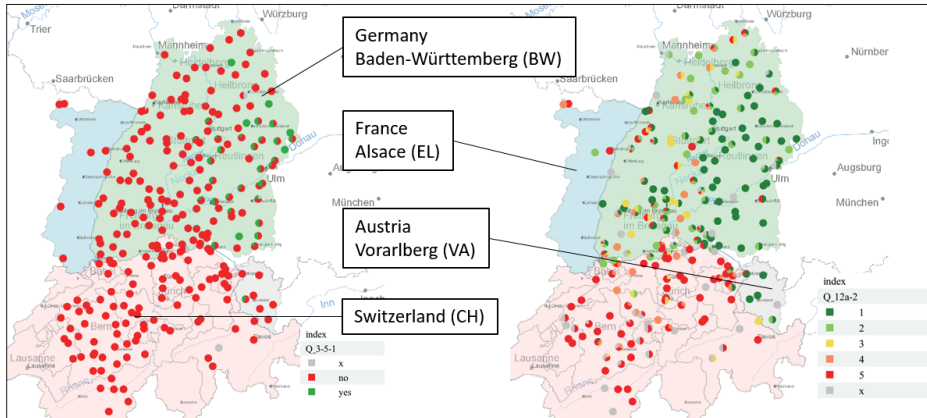
Maps 1-2   IA+mass in translation task; IA+mass in judgment task

Sentence for Map 1 and Map 2:

Habt ihr   noch (ein) Mehl im   Haus?
Have you.**PL** still (a)   flour in.the house
'Have you still some flour at home?'
Map 1 Results from FB3, Q 3-5-1, n = 757
Map 2 Results from FB5, Q 12a-2, n = 517
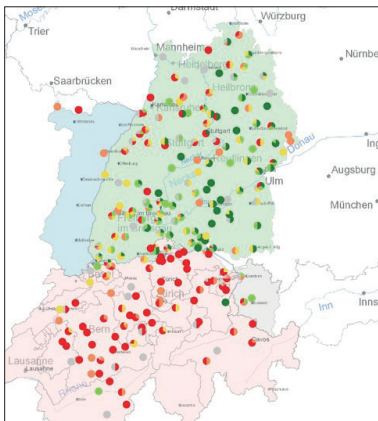
Map 3   IA with mass noun, preceded by a weak quantifier (*ein wenig*) in judgment task

Sentence for Map 3:

Hätten Sie mir ein wenig ein Wasser für den Hund?
Had   you me a   bit   a water for the dog?
'Could I have some water for the dog?'
Map 3 Results from FB4, Q 4-1, n = 591

Considering first the difference between Map 1 and Map 2, it shows how important it is to use different types of tasks when dealing with dialectal data. If only one task had been used, one would either conclude that the IA+mass construction is generally accepted in the Alemannic variants spoken in Germany (green background, BW-Alemannic henceforth) but essentially completely rejected in Switzerland (red background, CH-Alemannic) **[map 2]**.[12] But Map 1 with the translation task would suggest that there is only one small area, immediately adjacent to Bavaria, where this construction occurs. In the latter case, the natural conclusion would be that it is an effect of 'language contact', that means speakers living near to the border of Bavaria – where this construction is prevalent – simply 'took it over', as these speakers are plausibly more often confronted with Bavarian speakers. Note that the few green dots in CH on Map 2, are all very close to the German border, indicating again that the construction in question is highly susceptible of 'taking over'. I will take up this issue in Section 5, see also fn. 7.

This kind of seemingly contradictory results can be taken nearly as a textbook example of the "Decathlon model" in action, see Featherston (2005). According to this model, a native speaker of a given language has various options in his/her internalised grammar – with the effect that acceptance rates are always much higher, reflecting the different grammars.[13] In a production task in contrast, there can be only 'one winner'. I.e., the speaker must actively discriminate between the two or even more various possibilities. This choice is often influenced by outer-linguistic factors like prestige, closer to the written standard, or even 'in-group-effects'. For the usefulness of this approach to variation and how the differing results from different tasks can be exploited also for theoretical questions concerning the modelling of syntactic variation, see Rehn and Brandner (2022).[14]

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12   The blue background covers Alsace, a region in France where Alemannic is (still) spoken. Since the number of informants is very small, this region will be left out in the following discussion. The same holds for the region Vorarlberg in Austria. However, note that these speakers did not actively produce IA+mass, but the acceptance rate is very high.

13   Whether this situation is due to some inherent underspecification in the grammar of natural languages per se or to multilingualism in a broad sense, i.e., knowledge about or confrontation with the various dialectal variants, must be left open here. Note that speakers can in principle rate two or more distinct versions as equally good, which would involve then true optionality. And indeed, there were some speakers who rated all three versions of a generic statement with a mass noun (i.e., indefinite/definite/zero article) with 1, i.e., the best rating. But to draw serious conclusions from this observation, a much more detailed statistical analysis is required.

14   See also Brandner 2020 and the references cited therein for a discussion of the impact of the political borders on dialectal phenomena. There, the attempt is made to correlate different types of variation with different types of areal patterns. Clear cases of the relevance of the political border mostly affect lexical phenomena (e.g., different
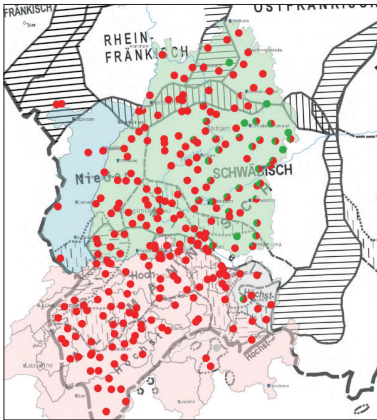
Map 4
Results of the translation task with sub-division of Alemannic as background

Zooming further in, one might suspect at first sight that the distribution follows the traditional sub-division of Alemannic into Swabian (Schwäbisch on the map), High Alemannic (Switzerland and the most South Western part of BW) and Low Alemannic in the more northern part of BW. But if we put the results of the translation task **[map 1]** on a map with this historical division, one can see that only the eastern part of Swabian is affected. On the other hand, the rejection rate of the construction should be much higher in the High Alemannic region in BW – if the distribution would follow the traditional subdivision. Thus, in the following, I will draw the line between CH-Alemannic and BW-Alemannic instead of the traditional sub-division.

Now if we look at Map 3, the construction with the weak quantifier *a weng* (= 'a bit'), the lighter green dots (meaning 2 on the Likert scale) and the yellow ones (3 on the Likert scale) show up more frequently in BW-Alemannic than in Map 2 with the unquantified mass noun. Nevertheless, rejection (dark red) is sparse in contrast to CH-Alemannic. But a closer look at CH reveals less rejection of this particular construction.[15] Thus, this slight change in construal (additional quantifier) seems to have an effect.[16]

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verbs or nouns for the same concept); syntactic phenomena like the order in a 3-verb cluster on the other hand correlate much more with the traditional sub-division(s). The lexicon, as that part of the grammar that is highly accessible to 'conscious decisions', cf. the discussion around the Decathlon model, is thus the place where on the one hand contact phenomena are to be expected – but on the other where they may cross-cut the traditional divisions.

15   In fact, 3-judgments (yellow dots) is 9% with this construction, but only 4% with the IA+mass without the quantifier.

16   One could object now that these small differences result from the bias with the different numbers of informants discussed above. However, note that FB5 **[Map 2]** is later

In sum, the following picture emerges:
- active production of IA+mass is confined to a small area near the Bavarian border
- acceptance is high essentially throughout BW-Alemannic – but not in CH-Alemannic
- acceptance decreases with a quantifier in BW-Alemannic – but increases slightly in CH

Given these findings, the following questions emerge:
- is there a parametric syntactic difference between these variants? Has the DP a more complex structure in Bavarian and BW-Alemannic in contrast to CH-Alemannic?
- is there a lexical difference in the sense that the IA has a different semantic specification in the two variants respectively?
- what is the effect of the weak quantifier? Assuming that the semantic effect of adding it (i.e., severing a small portion out of a mass) is the same in both variants, what could it tell us about the syntax?

These maps and their brief discussion were meant to give a first impression on how important it is to use different tasks for elicitation in order to get a realistic picture. It will turn out below that there are some unexpected occurrences of the IA in CH, given the results above – however, they occur in slightly different contexts. I take these data to show how important it is to analyse very carefully the relevant morpho-syntactic and semanto-pragmatic variables, see Section 4. But before that, the phenomenon of IA+mass will be discussed in more general terms.

3.2   The IA+Mass as Replacement of Genitive Marking?

Standard German (and as can be seen from the maps above also Swiss German) prefers zero-marking of the mass noun, i.e., the mass nouns occur neither with genitive marking, which used to be the case in Middle High German (2b) (see Strobel, Glaser 2021) for a detailed description, nor with a preposition (with sometimes an amalgamated article, i.e., the partitive article), as it is familiar from the Romance languages, (2c):

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and has fewer informants than FB4 [map 3] and nevertheless a higher acceptance. As the general tendency is that the number of informants decreased – as it is the case between FB4 and FB5 – it seems highly implausible in this case that – even if there was a certain exchange – suddenly much more 'Bavarian-like' speakers were involved. Later, we will see that this result does not come as a surprise when considering more data.

(2) a. *Hast* *du* *Geld* *dabei?*   Standard German
    have you money there.with
    'Do you have money with you?'

   b. *…ich* *noch* *ein-er* *salbe-n* *hân…* MHG
    …I still a-GEN ointment-GEN have
    '… I still have some ointment' (cited after Paul 1919, 348)

   c. Tu as de l' argent?   French
    'Do you have money with you?'

The same pattern can be found when a mass noun combines with a weak quantifier where again Bavarian and some parts of Alemannic insert an IA before the mass noun, see **[map 3]**:

(3) a. *ein* *wenig* *Ø* *Öl*   Standard German
    a bit oil

   b. *(ich han)* *ein* *wening* *öl-s* MHG
    (I have) a bit oil-GEN
    'I have a bit of oil' (from DWB:BD 29,1)[17]

   c. *un* *peu* *d'huile*   French
    a bit of oil
    'a bit of oil'

Finally, a similar pattern arises with so-called container nouns resp. measure phrases:

(4) a. *ein* *Glas/Liter* *Milch*   Standard German
    a glass/liter milk

   b. *ein* *phunt* *vleisch-es/ein fuoder guoten wine-s* MHG
    a pound meat-GEN/a loadtrack good wine-GEN
    (cited after Paul 1919, 294)

   c. *un* *kilo de* *pommes*   French
    a kilo of apples

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17 DWB = Deutsches Wörterbuch Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm. `http://dwb.uni-tri-er.de/de/`

In the cases illustrated in (2) and (3), we have seen above that Bavarian and parts of Alemannic use the IA instead of the genitive marking whereas Standard German has no marking at all. As such, these dialects pattern more with French in the sense that there is a lexicalised syntactic position for partitivity. However, in the cases in (4) with container nouns/measure phrases, the Southern German dialects seem to pattern again with Standard German, i.e., with zero-marking instead of an IA before the mass noun.[18] Thus, a pure replacement analysis of genitive marking with the IA will obviously not capture the whole range of data, since the genitive was used regularly with container nouns/measure phrases in older stages of German. Nevertheless, putting container/measure nouns aside for the moment, we can roughly distinguish between two varieties of Modern German: one that has replaced the former genitive by zero-marking and one that uses the IA in its stead. And this raises the following question: how come that a lexical item, standardly assumed to have derived from a numeral, is able to stand for partitivity, where usually only a vague quantity is at issue? While some have claimed that the insertion of the IA in Bavarian is more or less a formal requirement, meaning that there are no article-less nouns in this dialect, e.g., Eroms (1989), others, e.g., Glaser (1993; 1996; 2008) and subsequent work, Donhauser (1995) and Kolmer (1999), discuss the semantic contribution of the IA. The characterisation of its contribution ranges from 'individuation' via 'countability' to mere 'partitive/partition'. I will follow the latter approaches and assume that the IA indeed makes a semantic contribution in these contexts. The question is whether one can find a common semantic core which allows this lexical item to lexicalise such differing concepts and thereby capturing of course also its more common use, i.e., as the existential quantifier with count nouns. I will argue in Section 5, based on the distribution of the IA in Alemannic, that this common semantic core is a rather abstract notion of 'contrast', meaning that if there is an IA, it presupposes that there exists something of a similar kind from which the denoted entity is divided, either as a subset or as a subkind. This is much in the spirit of the non-uniqueness analysis suggested for the IA in Le Bruyn (2010) and also Zamparelli (2008). However, I will suggest a syntactic structure that is able to capture the fine-grained distinctions between the different environments where the IA occurs.

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18   See Grestenberger 2015 for a detailed discussion of the syntax and semantics of container noun constructions in Austrian Bavarian. In her data, no example with an IA occurs; the same is true in Kolmer 1999. Unfortunately, there are no data with container nouns/measure phrases from SynAlm because the focus was more on generic/non-generic readings. However, as a native speaker of Alemannic, I can confirm that the IA is not possible in the context of container nouns/measure phrases. I also did not come across any examples of such a construction in dialect grammars, consulted until now.

The next steps are therefore to investigate the distribution and semantic contribution of the IA in further environments. Specifically, are there other unusual or uncommon (in contrast to Standard German) occurrences of the IA, e.g., does it also occur with predicatively used nouns in these dialects and also importantly: Where is it not allowed? Although there was no special topic 'partitivity' in the questionnaires built in SynAlm, the distribution of the indefinite and definite article – contrasted with zero-marking – was an important issue. One aim was to examine more closely the phenomenon known as 'determiner doubling', as this is an often discussed phenomenon for southern German dialects, see Section 3.3. The other issue was to find out which morpho-syntactic means are used to mark generic readings of nominal expressions. As mentioned in Section 2.1, the idea in SynAlm was also to gain explicit negative evidence, thus versions which were highly unlikely to exist, were nevertheless offered to the informants. As will be shown below, this strategy leads to some interesting and also puzzling effects.

3.3 Doubling of the Indefinite Article

A very close construction to the one illustrated above, attested both in Bavarian and Alemannic, is the one in (5a), which is often discussed in the literature under the term '(indefinite) determiner doubling', see e.g., Kallulli and Rothmayr (2008) and Richner-Steiner (2011) for Swiss German, and Strobel and Weiß (2017) for a more recent account of Bavarian. Compare (5a), where we find an IA with a count as well as with a mass noun, with (5b) which is the construction already presented **[map 3]**:

(5) a. *a so a netter bua* / *a so   a guater wein*   Bavarian/(Alemannic)
    a so a nice   boy / a such a good   wine
    'such a nice boy'   / 'such a good wine'

    b. *a weng a   wasser*   Bavarian/(Alemannic)
        a   bit   a   water
        'a bit of water'

Due to the surface similarity between them, these two constructions are often treated in a parallel fashion, e.g., in Kallulli and Rothmayr (2008). However, Strobel and Weiß (2017) have argued in great detail that (5a) must be strictly set apart from the pure quantification/partitive structure in (5b), since it has different morpho-syntactic properties e.g., in terms of obligatoriness and of inflection of the articles, which I will not present here for reasons of space, but see fn. 14 for

some remarks. Note in addition that the combination with *so* seems to be the only case where an IA occurs obligatorily with a mass noun even in Standard German, typically in exclamatives:

(6)	a.	*So*	**(ein)*	*Wein!*	Standard German
		such	a	wine	

	b.	So	*(*ein*)	Glück!	
		such	a	luck	

With such an exclamation, one refers to a situationally given entity (wine, luck) together with a linguistically not expressed evaluative attitude. In Brandner (2010), where certain types of exclamatives are discussed, it is argued that the IA in these cases implicates the presence of something with which it can be contrasted, and that this is the basis for its prototypical usage in exclamatives.[19] The interpretation is thus not that of a portion/amount, i.e., partitive, as it is the case in (5b), but rather that of different sorts/types/degrees. If the adjective is present, the contrasting effect is based on the lexical contribution of the adjective itself – if there is 'good wine', it implies that there is also, e.g., 'bad wine'. Even in its bare form, cf. (6), the construction with *so* still implies that there are different kinds of wine – and the one at hand is remarkable or special, depending on the situation. In the case of 'luck', we can think about 'degrees of luck' or again 'bad luck', 'good luck' etc. This contrasting effect can be captured with the notion of the so-called 'subkind reading', see Carlson (1977) and also Cohen (2001). Subkinds stand in a taxonomic relation to their 'superior' kind. E.g., 'wine' denotes a kind, the established subkinds are, e.g., 'red wine', 'white wine', 'table wine'. But a further possibility is something like 'an extraordinary wine (in my view)' – 'in contrast to others', as in (6a). Thus, we do not need necessarily the notion of degree in the sense of a scale. Subkind merely means that there is at least one property that distinguishes one type of wine from another one. The proposal here is now that either the addition of an adjective and/or the construal with *so*, creates *ad hoc* subkinds. The important point is that subkinds in contrast to 'proper kinds' are conceived of as individuals – and this has consequences for the (im)possibility of the indefinite determiner, specifically, subkinds always come with

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19   Usually, this is captured with the notion of degrees, cf. for example Rett 2011. This of course is also due to the fact that *so* is the typical degree particle. But note that Anderson and Morzycki (2015) have argued that degrees can be conceived of as a special kind of kinds, namely kinds of states. What is important in the context here is that degrees by their very nature always include a notion of 'contrastiveness', be it on a scale or on a more abstract level – a given value can only be defined in contrast to other neighbouring values.

an indefinite determiner – even in Standard German, cf. (6). I will come back to this issue in more detail in Section 4.1. What is important for now is that despite the surface similarity of (5a) and (5b), we are dealing here with two different interpretations of the IA+mass.

Concerning the doubling in (5a), I follow the argumentation in Richner-Steiner (2011, 129 ff.) that what looks like an indefinite article as the *a* in (5a) is indeed part of the particle *so* which shows up as *əso* in these dialects, see also Strobel and Weiß (2017). This form is the result of a phonetic reduction of the (originally) emphatic version *al-so*. What looks like doubling is thus more a re- or better misanalysis of this complex form as including the indefinite article. This is possible because the IA in Alemannic consists of a schwa in the feminine/neuter nominative and accusative case.[20] The masculine form is *an*, nevertheless, the element before *so* shows up again as a schwa – at least in BW-Alemannic.[21] In CH-Alemannic, where doubling is attested as well, the paradigm of the IA is (in some parts) more complex than the one described above. In these dialects, the neuter form is *əs*.[22] There are no explicit negative data, since we did not offer a sentence of the [... *es so es* adj + neuter noun] in a judgment task. But some speakers of this variant gave us their version of such a construction in a related task and the forms given were of the type [*e so es* adj + neuter noun] throughout. Thus, there is also no inflection of the higher 'article'.

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20 Although schwa is represented with the grapheme <a> in the text.

21 This is also true for feminine nouns in the dative where we find a more distinguished morpheme:

(i) | *vun* | *a* | *so* | *era* | *sach* |
     |-------|-----|------|-------|--------|
     | from | a | such | a-FEM.DAT | thing |

This example was tested (5-point scale with 1-2 ratings as acceptance) with basically all possible combinations of (non-)inflection up to no higher IA at all, i.e., merely *so*. In fact, the latter version got the best rates (75%), the one given in (i) was the second best (26%). The version with both of them inflected got 8%. The version with only the higher one inflected and the lower IA uninflected (*vun ara so a sach*) however got surprisingly a rather good rating (17%). This last version was found in an old dialect grammar (Staedele 1927) on which we built the test sentences. I cannot offer a real explanation for this pattern. However, note that the particle/IA(?) is immediately adjacent to a case assigner, i.e., the preposition *von*, and given the adjacency requirement of case assigner and case assignee (assuming that the *so*-particle is in a degree phrase within the NP, see, e.g., already Corver 1990), it could be this surface adjacency that makes this ordering sound correct. And recall that the form of the IA in non-dative environments is simply schwa, which means that the particle and the IA are phonetically identical, the particle-schwa is then taken as the base for adding the inflectional suffix for the dative exponent. If such a reasoning is on the right track, it would argue in favor of an affix-migration-like analysis, see, e.g., Diertani 2011, i.e., a process operating on the surface string. This process would then be operative in Bavarian to a much higher extent – in addition with copying. I will leave this open for future research.

22 Thanks to a reviewer for pointing out the possible relevance of this difference in the paradigms.

For Bavarian on the other hand, inflecting forms of the higher IA are attested, see, e.g., Strobel and Weiß (2017). However, as indicated in their examples throughout, the inflection on the higher IA seems to be optional, i.e., a bare one is always a possibility. This indicates that the inflected doubling forms seem to be rather an effect of 'parallelism in morphology' on the surface. A final argument for this rather surfacish analysis of this 'doubling' is again areal distribution. As presented in Brandner (2021), the regions where doubling is attested coincide nearly exactly with those that use the *əso*-form also in a syntactic environment where it is a simple degree particle *so hoch* (= 'so high').

The 'doubling' in (5b) is arguably due to the fact that the higher IA is indeed part of the quantifier, namely as a frozen uninflected indefinite article, like in English 'a lot of', see Strobel and Weiß (2017). The lower article in this case is thus indeed the IA+mass as in (1). This leads one to expect that 'doubling' of this kind is only possible in those varieties that use the IA just the way it is used in (1). As shown earlier **[Map 3]**, this is by and large indeed true, if one considers the areal distribution – although a deviance could be detected in terms of acceptance. I will offer a possible solution for this fact in Section 5, after having introduced the syntactic structure that I will assume. But before that, further data will be presented in order to get a broader picture of the usages of the IA in Alemannic.

4　More Data

In (7), all the sentences are listed that we gave for translation in FB3. We chose examples where a deviation from Standard German could be expected when it comes to the use of the IA. Thus, we included bare nouns in predicational function and mass nouns in varying contexts (episodic, generic, accompanied by a weak quantifier). Some more data from different tasks and constructions will be integrated as the discussion of these examples proceeds.

The examples are given in (7), FB3_3:

(7)　a.　*Ich brauch noch Kaffee für morgen früh*　　bare mass noun
　　　　I　need　still　coffee　for　tomorrow　early
　　　　'I still need some coffee for tomorrow morning.'

　　b.　Mein Sohn ist Mechaniker　　　　　predicational NP
　　　　my　son　is　mechanic
　　　　'My son is a mechanic.'

c. *Wasser   kocht   bei   100 Grad.*   generic (subject)
   water   boils   at   100 degrees
   'Water boils at 100 degrees.'

d. *Hättest   du   mir   ein   wenig   Zucker?*   with weak quantifier
   have   you   for.me   a   bit   sugar
   'Would you have some sugar for me?'

e. *Habt   ihr   noch   Mehl   im   Haus?*   bare mass noun
   have   you.PL   still   flour   in.the house
   'Do you have some flour at home?'

The numerical results for the sentences in (7) are summarised in Table 1 for the translation tasks (FB3) and the acceptance tasks (FB5):

Table 1   Production and acceptance rates of the construction in (7)

construction type	translation with IA (production rate) n = 757	acceptance of IA (1 & 2 ratings) n = 517
(7a) bare mass noun (*need*)	BW: 23% CH: 5%	---
(7b) predicational noun	BW: 5% CH: <1%	BW: 17% CH: 10%
(7c) generic (subject)	BW: <1% CH: <1%	BW: 20% CH: <1%
(7d) with weak quantifier	BW: 8% CH: <1%	BW: 44% CH: 4%
(7e) bare mass noun (*have*)	BW: 11% CH: <1%	BW: 68% CH: 6%

As can be seen – and as already could have been read off from the results for (7d,e) presented in Section 3.3 – the production and the acceptance rates differ quite drastically. The overall picture nevertheless strengthens the observations, already found in Glaser (2008), that the IA in CH-Alemannic and in BW-Alemannic obviously differ in their grammatical status, such that the IA in CH essentially does not show up in the respective constructions. However, there are also some 'outliers': first the comparatively high production rate in CH for (7a) and second the high acceptance of the IA+mass in the generic statement (7c) in BW, again in a sharp contrast to the production rates. Another astonishing result is the difference in acceptance between (7d) and (7e), which we also already saw above when considering the maps. In the following, I will discuss each of these data points and will in some cases also offer some possible explanations that may lead to further investigations.

4.1 The Relevance of the Verbal Predicate: Kinds and Subkinds Again

Turning first to (7a), with the difference in production compared to (7e), unfortunately it is one of those sentences that was not presented for a judgment task in further questionnaires. The reason we did not include this sentence was the assumption that we are dealing in both cases with mass nouns in the partitive reading and thus we expected no relevant difference to the sentence in (7e). A possible account for this difference can be sought in the type of the predicate. Note that 'need' is an intensional verb and following Moltmann (2013), based on Carlson (1977), if the argument of an intensional verb is a mass noun, then the kind reading is prevalent. That would mean that the IA in (7a) does not necessarily lexicalise a partitive reading, but that a kind reading is possible as well. In order to strengthen such a conjecture, it must be shown whether there is a certain percentage of Alemannic speakers that use the IA+mass in kind-denoting environments. And this seems to be indeed the case. In a further 5-point judgment task, we contrasted mass nouns and count nouns in so called "characterizing statements", see, e.g., Cohen (2001) and Krifka (2003), where – informally speaking – the IA serves to pick out one specimen, standing for the whole kind, and the property assigned to it is then generalised. As such it is very close to the proper kind-reading, which is expressed in German usually with a bare plural or the definite determiner (data from FB5-3b, resp. 3c):[23]

(8) a. *Man weiss doch, dass …* ('It is common knowledge that…')
    eine/die/0 Kartoffel(n) viel Stärke enthält/ enthalten.
    a/the/0 potato(es) much starch contain(s)
    'a potato/potatoes contain(s) a lot of starch'

  b. *ein/der/0 Wein aus Trauben gemacht wird.*
    a/the/0 wine from grapes made is
    'a wine/the wine is made out of grapes'

The version in (8a) with the count noun ('potato') and an IA is the standard case for these characterizing statements, and thus, as expected, receives a rather high rating (1–2 ratings in BW 48% and in

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23 There is not a complete overlap. For example, *A dodo is extinct* is not possible. Krifka (2003, 180) cites the English example *the gentleman opens the door for ladies* as ungrammatical. In German, I think this sentence is acceptable. However, this shows merely how flexible the interpretation of definite and indefinite articles is – across languages and dialects.

CH even 55%).[24] But interestingly, for the example in (8b), which is a characterizing statement with a mass noun ('wine'), the 1–2 ratings reached 18% in CH and 23% in BW, i.e., much higher in CH but lower in BW than with an IA+mass in a partition reading, cf. (7a,e). Note that in such a characterizing context, a partitive reading is highly implausible, given that all types of wine are made out of grapes. Thus, the acceptance of the IA in this environment (for those speakers at least) must find another explanation. We can approach this problem if we consider subkinds again, discussed already briefly in Section 3, cf. the examples in (5) and (6). Recall that subkinds are defined in contrast to another subkind, i.e., the two entities must share a certain amount of properties – but crucially differ in at least one. Additionally, there must be a taxonomically higher kind, by which these two are dominated. Now contrast 'wine' with, e.g., 'beer' with respect to what they are made of. The constructed follow-up to (8b) in (9) is perfectly acceptable if there is a heavy stress on the nouns:

(9)   It is common knowledge that…
        [WINE is made out of grapes] but BEER is made out of grains.

One can indeed construe two subkinds, such that both belong to the taxonomically higher kind 'alcoholic beverages'.[25] 'Pure' kinds on the other hand do not contrast distinguishable subkinds/sorts but can stand for themselves. Under this perspective, there is a genuine variability as to whether a mass noun is conceived as a 'pure' kind or as a subkind. The suggestion is thus that those speakers who accept the IA+mass in these environments construe the mass noun not as a kind – but as a subkind. And as was discussed above in Section 3.3, the IA – either with mass or with count nouns, cf. (8), can lexicalise this semantic concept. Thus, the astonishing high amount of the IA+mass in (8b) even in CH but the lower acceptance in BW – if contrasted with the partition reading, cf. (7e) – could be accounted for if we assume that a certain amount of speakers from both variants have built ad hoc subkinds and the occurrence of the IA in these examples must be set apart from the partition reading. But then, coming

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24   That the ratings are not higher has probably to do with the fact that this version was presented directly contrasted with one with the definite article, resp. a bare plural, which both seem to be preferred. Note that only 6% rejected the version with the IA completely (5 on the scale).

25   Note that even 'alcoholic beverages' could be turned into a subkind of 'beverages' in general with one being with alcohol and the other not, i.e., we have again a distinguishing/contrasting property. A reviewer asks whether the sentence itself could also be interpreted such that there are other types of wine, e.g., made from fruit. This is indeed true, cf. *Apfelwein* ('apple wine'), where the subkind reading is realised via the compounding, cf. also 'red wine', 'white wine'. Thus, the formation of subkinds is not restricted to the syntax but takes also place directly in the lexicon.

back to the discussion around (7a), i.e., the mass noun 'coffee' under the intensional verb, we are faced with another problem. Recall that I suggested that we are dealing here with a kind reading. But if the IA is indeed the lexicalisation of subkinds, we must assume that the speakers here have different kinds of coffee in mind – which seems rather implausible in this context. However, note that we added 'for tomorrow morning' as context. This means that the coffee is probably needed for breakfast. Now 'breakfast' can be taken in one reading as an object mass noun like, e.g., 'furniture', 'clothing', 'equipment' etc., i.e., consisting of different items but belonging to one concept. Typically, these nouns behave syntactically like mass nouns, which would be in line with the analysis given in Moltmann (2013) that we get a kind reading here. The items belonging to 'breakfast' would be among others 'bread', 'honey', 'butter', and of course 'coffee'. A plausible scenario thus would be that 'coffee' is interpreted in the context given in (7a) not directly as a kind, but as one constitutive part of this object mass noun. As such, it again would fall under the notion of subkind, since there is a taxonomically higher notion ('breakfast') and there are contrasting entities at the same level.[26] The IA would thus then be again the lexicalisation of a subkind reading. Those speakers who did not use the IA would then have had the pure kind interpretation in mind, which is expected under an intensional verb, see above. Based on these admittedly speculative considerations, it would be interesting to design a questionnaire where these factors are controlled for more systematically, i.e., contexts where the subkind reading is forced by contrasting the two nominals, as in (9) – and on the other hand contexts where such a reading is highly implausible. In sum, the unexpected ratings for (7a), especially in contrast to (7e), give rise to further considerations concerning the notion of subkinds that open new fields for investigation.

4.2 Mass Nouns in Generic Statements

Let us investigate now the results from (7c), the sentence with a mass noun in a generic statement. The puzzling fact is that the IA was produced in the translation below 1% in both areas – however, the acceptance rate in BW is exceptionally high (20%). First of all, note that this is a sentence which hardly invites to construe a subkind reading – as in a non-technical understanding, all fluids that can boil are essentially

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26   See, e.g., Sutton, Filip 2018 for a detailed semantic discussion of the building of subkinds with object mass nouns. The relevant difference is that these subkinds overlap extensionally (e.g., coffee is not only part of breakfast, but can also be drunk after lunch) – in contrast to the more familiar subkinds of the 'red wine/white wine' type of mass nouns.

water. As such, the CH-rating is what is expected. As it seems highly implausible that only the BW-speakers construe the subkind reading in this case,[27] and if we compare it with the results for (8b), the characterizing statement ('wine is made out of grapes'), the reason for this high acceptance must be found in another factor. As mentioned above, we offered many more examples in generic contexts with the respective noun with either definite/indefinite/zero article – which I will not all present here. Many of these were built on the examples discussed in the literature on generics. For example, with a verbal predicate like 'extinct', the rates for IAs (whether with mass nouns or count nouns) are below 1% – as expected. In a choice task with a sentence where the mass noun is the object comparable in its content to the one in (7c), the acceptance in BW is only 3.6%.[28] Thus, one could hypothesise at first sight that the difference can be traced back to a subject/object distinction. But in another example with the mass noun again in subject position (*Geld allein macht nicht glücklich* 'Money alone doesn't make (one) happy'), only 2% opted for the IA. In general then, the IA+mass in generic contexts receives very low acceptance and it never reached the acceptance rates found with the sentence in (7e). Thus, I conclude that in explicit generic statements with a kind reading of the mass noun, the IA shows up only marginally. The reason for the relatively high acceptance for (7c) in BW thus must be left open here. However, note that the generic statement in (7c) is built with a verb that is in its basic meaning an activity verb ('cook') and the generic reading comes via the construction and not via the lexical meaning of the verb, cf. a verb like 'extinct'. That this difference may have an impact will be discussed in the next section where exactly this factor was controlled for and where the results are equally not as clear-cut as expected on the basis of (7e). This shows that the lexical content of the predicate as well as the context must not be underestimated, cf. also the discussion around the intensional verb 'need' with its deviating results. Thus, for future research in this area, it is indispensable to offer examples containing much more variation, specifically concerning the verbal predicate. However, it is not enough to simply vary the lexical predicate, since one lexical predicate can get different interpretations depending on the further syntactic surrounding, specifically the actual aspectual/temporal specification. This is the topic of the next section.

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27 Which is of course a possibility, recall that, e.g., oil boils at a different degree. However, that this does not happen in CH – in contrast to the 'breakfast' example, makes this highly implausible.

28 The sentence given was the one in (i) and is translated into English best as 'Gold belongs to the precious metals':

(i) *Zu den Edelmetallen   zählt   man das/ein/0 Gold*
    to   the   precious metals counts one   the/a/0   gold

4.3   Varying the Verbal Predicate

As mentioned in Section 2, the SynAlm-project aimed at an exhaustive overview of the forms/constructions to express generic readings. We thus constructed examples where we varied systematically the predicate-type (stage-level vs. individual-level) with the morphosyntactic make-up of the respective DP together with the aspectual specification. This led to a large amount of examples with the IA in various semanto-pragmatic environments, which can now be exploited to get a better picture of how the IA behaves in partitives as well. We cross-classified the predicates with the readings of the predicate such that with each reading of the predicate, the DP was offered with an IA, a definite article, or a null version, cf. the Standard German examples in (3) and (4). As we were interested mainly in generic readings, not only mass nouns were tested but also (plurals of) count nouns and abstract nouns ('hope', 'fear' etc.). In addition, we varied also the grammatical function of the respective DP, i.e., whether it acts as the subject or object. A further aspect which is important to consider is that typical activity verbs like 'eat' and 'drink' can get an individual-level/non-episodic reading by adding an adverb like 'usually' for a habitual aspect.

We constructed thus the following examples, for ease of exposition, simply given here in English:

(10)   Situation: in a beer garden …
    a. Usually, I drink beer or wine   (stage-level; habitual)
    b. But today, I will drink water   (stage-level; episodic)
    c. Otherwise, I like beer or wine better   (individual-level; generic)

We offered these three sentences with definite/indefinite/zero determiner and the speakers were asked to rate them on a 5-point scale. The outcome is as follows: (% of 1 & 2 ratings):

Table 2   Varying interpretations of the verbal predicate 'drink'

	definite article	indefinite article	zero
stage-level; habitual	BW: 3 CH: 4	BW: 72 CH: 38	BW: 78 CH: 93
stage-level; episodic	BW: 5 CH: 4	BW: 89 CH: 42	BW: 80 CH: 92
individual-level; generic	BW: 42 CH: 33	BW: 66 CH: 24	BW: 79 CH: 84

Compared to the cases discussed until now, the picture in this case is a bit more complicated. On the one hand, zero-marking is nearly in all cases the preferred version, beside the 89% in BW for the episodic reading. Having a closer look at the results for the IA, it is

again obvious that in BW, the usage of the IA is in general higher but the numbers for CH are astonishing, given what we have seen so far. This might be due to the context given, since in a restaurant-setting, the portion-reading, i.e., the ordering of a drink means always portion ('glass of...'), is the most natural one and this is a usage where we find the indefinite article even in Standard German. Note furthermore that it is also a counting environment, i.e., if two people order the same drink, it is no problem to order *zwei Bier* (literal translation: 'two beer'), i.e., use a numeral with a mass noun. Thus, the contextual setting was in the end rather unfortunate – although it gave a good opportunity to contrast the habitual reading of an activity verb with an inherent individual level predicate. But nevertheless, note again the contrast between CH and BW for the indefinite article. Thus, even with this bias, a clear distinction between CH and BW can be detected when it comes to the acceptance of the IA+mass construction.

In order to vary the tasks, we took the noun 'fish', which can be interpreted either as an ordinary count noun, but in a food context, it can get a mass reading (cf. 'there is fish in the soup'). So, we asked our speakers for the sentence in (11) which interpretation they prefer if the IA is present:

(11)   I would like to have a fish for lunch

The interpretations (a-c) for both versions are given below, together with the results for the version with the IA:[29]

a)	It must be a whole/complete fish	BW: 35%	BW: 35%
b)	it contains fish, e.g., fish soup	BW: 7%	CH: 3%
c)	both interpretations are possible	BW: 54%	CH: 22%

As expected, CH speakers prefer the individual reading in case an IA shows up whereas this interpretation is mandatory only for 35% in BW, cf. the interpretation in a). Concerning b), note that the 7% in BW corresponds approximately to the 8% that produced the IA+mass in the translation task, cf. (1). Interestingly, there seems to be a certain variability for c) in CH, but the value for this option in BW is much higher. The problem of this task, resp. the way we executed it, is the possibility in c). Given this optionality, we could not control

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29   As expected, for the version without the IA, i.e., the bare nominal, about 80% voted for both interpretations, i.e., in this food context the nominal itself is seemingly underspecified.

which interpretation is indeed preferred, as the other two interpretations were presented as the 'only possible' one. Thus, a better design of such interpretational questions is necessary. Still, there is again a sharp difference between BW and CH for a), indicating that the IA has a different usage in the two variants. In sum, the general picture from the maps in Section 3 is confirmed, namely that in CH, the IA+mass is used much more reluctantly. How this difference between the two variants can be captured, is the topic of the next section.

5 Theoretical Discussion

Table 3 gives a rough overview of the constructions discussed. Instead of giving the percentages, I use a three-way distinction with + = high acceptance; - = virtually no acceptance; ~ = substantially above rejection.

Table 3 Summary of the findings

Construction	BW	CH
IA+mass (have some flour)	+	-
IA+mass (intensional)	+	~
IA+mass weak quant (doubling)	+	-/~
predicational noun	~	~
generic statement (water boils)	-/~	-
habitual (activity verb), restaurant setting	+	~
episodic (activity verb), restaurant setting	+	~
generic (ind.-level predicate), restaurant setting	+	~
stuff reading (fish)	+	-/~

Ignoring the restaurant setting case, due to its inherent bias with the portion, resp. ordering reading, it is obvious that there is a sharp difference between CH and BW. The cases where we find a certain amount of IA+mass in CH are all cases where further factors come into play: the intensional verb with the object mass noun ('coffee/breakfast' example), where I suggested that a subkind reading is a possibility, which then even would require an IA also in CH. But as discussed there, the suggestion that the IA in these cases is the exponent of a subkind reading should not be taken as a proposed analysis but rather as a hint to which possible interpretations might arise and that they should be controlled for in future work. What I did not address until now is the predicational construction, which is interesting in itself and surely deserves more investigation but can be set

apart in the context of partitivity.[30] Another reason to put it aside are the results for these examples: the IA is virtually not present in the translation tasks but the acceptance rates (17% in BW and 10% in CH) cannot be neglected. Interestingly, the difference between BW and CH is less pronounced than in the other tasks. Additionally, although I will not display the maps for reasons of space, the distribution of this acceptance is highly scattered across the whole area, such that it must be assumed that there is a high amount of individual variation. But since the focus here is on partitivity with mass nouns, I will put it aside and leave it for future work. Another area where IA+mass is accepted in CH to a certain amount is the doubling construction. Richner-Steiner (2011) discusses in great detail doubling of the indefinite article in Swiss German, although in the context of intensifiers, i.e., particles like 'very' together with an adjective.[31] She shows that especially younger speakers accept doubling to a remarkable extent. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a relevant areal distribution of doubling. Interestingly, it occurs in CH even with the particle *sehr* (= 'very'), which is reported to be strictly excluded in Bavarian, cf. Kallulli and Rothmayr (2008). Finally, there is a high amount of variation between speakers. Thus, it seems that doubling in CH is not a deep-rooted dialectal feature. According to our data, doubling in CH-Alemannic was better accepted – or at least less rejected than the comparable partitive construction without a quantifier [map 3]. Thus, a possible explanation would be that this lesser rejection is due to the fact that doubling of the indefinite article (although in a slightly different context, i.e., intensifiers) seems to be a rather frequent pattern in modern CH-Alemannic. Given what was said about doubling as a rather 'surfacish' phenomenon, see Section 3.3, it might very well be the case that the effect arises through a 'pattern transfer', due to the surface resemblance between the two. Taking these considerations together, it is in my view justified to assume a micro-parametric difference between the two variants with respect to the IA+mass construction in its partitive reading.

The next step is then to model this difference within a suitable framework. I will do this in an exo-skeletal framework as first worked out in detail in Borer (2005) and much subsequent work. Specifically, I assume that lexical items enter the syntax as a-categorial roots, see, e.g., Embick and Noyer (2007). In case of a nominal, this root merges with the categoriser 'little n'. Furthermore, I assume that these roots do not

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30   But see Le Bruyn 2010 (Part III), who argues that IA+predicational noun can also be captured with the notion of non-uniqueness, resp. the REL operator (or R-operator, as in Carlson 1977), see also Schulpen 2016 for a detailed discussion.

31   There is also a brief discussion of the construction with the weak quantifier – however, doubling in this context is not discussed.

come with more lexical specification than the mere discrimination between non-linguistic concepts (encyclopedia). This means that there is no mass/count distinction at this step of the derivation. I will come back to this issue below. Above little n, functional heads are added that give instructions for the actual interpretation, e.g., in English and German, if the plural suffix is added to the mass noun 'wine', the sort/type reading is forced. On the other hand, if a 'count noun' like 'fish' comes without further functional material, it gets a stuff reading (grinding effect). In recent years, more fine-grained structures than Borer's Div(ision) phrase have been suggested for this low area of the DP, based on empirical work on other languages and on theoretical considerations. I cannot do justice to this work here, but see for example the contributions in Mathieu, Dali and Zareikar (2018). I will broadly follow the nanosyntactic approach in which for every semantic feature, an extra head is projected in the syntax, see Baunaz et al. (2018), and importantly, neighbouring heads can be spelled out with the same lexical item (syncretism), whereby the notion 'lexical item' also involves affixes. In the case at hand, the relevant lexical item is the indefinite article and the different interpretations that it may contribute, as we have seen above. Another issue is to capture the variation between CH and BW that was detected in the previous sections. I will argue that the functional sequence, relevant for the issues here, looks as follows, given here as a table and ignoring for the moment the proper kind-reading in generic statements as well as the characterizing statements.

Table 4   The functional sequence and its lexicalisations in the various dialects

functional head	number	individual		partition	little n	√lexeme
meaning contribution	counting	existential	subkind	subset vague amount	categoriser	encyclopedic
example	one N	… a potato …	such a N cf. (5), (8b), (7a)?	… a flour … cf. (7e)	no marking! mass per default	encyclopedic
lexicalisation in Bavarian and BW	*oa(n)-/ oi(n)-*	*a(n)-*		*a(n)-*	zero	encyclopedic
lexicalisation in CH	*ei(n,s)-*	*a(n,s)-*		zero	zero	encyclopedic

The values in the row 'functional head' should be taken as X^0 categories, projecting to XP with a specifier if needed, see below. The hierarchical order of these projections starts with 'number' as the highest and '√lexeme' as the lowest one. In the following, I will justify this sequence in some more detail. After that, the lexicalisation patterns will be discussed.[32]

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32   The numerals show a great variety of forms in the dialects under discussion. I have chosen only few as representatives. The relevant point is that they differ substantially

First, it seems undisputed that the IA can be an exponent of partition in the Germanic languages. There are various examples from MHG where we can detect it in environments like those in (7d) and (7e):

(12) a. *dô   was   **ein**   snê   gevallen*   GL 1196,4   MHG
      there   was   a   snow   fallen
      'There was fallen (some) snow.' (cited after Paul, Wiehl, Grosse 1998,[24] 387)

   b. *er   âz   daz   brôt   und   tranc   dâ   zuo   **eines**   **wazzers***
      he   ate   the   bread   and   drank   there   with   IA-GEN   water-GEN
      'He ate the bread and drank with it (some) water.' (Iw, V. 3310 – 3311)

(12b) shows that there was obviously a time when the IA and the genitive could even occur together and (12a) is a textbook example of a partitive, referring to a given subset and this subset is (i) a vague quantity and (ii) the partition is the result of an actual event. I thus take 'partition', the position directly above little n, as representing a spatio-temporally definable subset of the substance denoted by the mass noun, see also Acquaviva (2019) and the literature cited there. We can call it 'situational partitivity' and I will suggest informally that it is licensed only if the relevant DP is in the scope of an event variable which refers to an actual situation. It is this type of event variable that is lacking in generic and characterizing statements. Thus, the order and the meaning contribution of the functional heads within the nominal projection are the same in both cases, the relevant point is the temporal/aspectual marking in the VP/TP area. This draws a first rough line between having bare mass nouns in generic statements (in general without an IA) in contrast to the occurrence of the IA in episodic contexts.

Concerning partitivity in general, I will follow the idea, see originally Barker (1998), that partitivity necessarily involves true subtraction, specifically that there is a residue left, see Zamparelli (2008).[33] This means that the entity named by the nominal expression is set in contrast to the remaining or residual part of the entity. In the case of situational partitivity, the subset in the actual event is contrasted with what is left over in the actual world. With the notion of contrast, we can capture the distinction between subkinds and pure

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from the indefinite article in having a diphthong. Given this clear distinction between numerals and the IA, I will neglect the numeral in the following and leave its integration into the picture, specifically with respect to grammaticalisation, for future research.

33   He implements this idea syntactically by assuming a R(esidue)P, headed by the partitive preposition, e.g., in Romance.

kinds quite easily: proper kinds merely differentiate between different kinds on the lexical/encyclopedic level, subkinds on the other hand imply that there is at least one contrasting subkind, having at least one distinguishing property. Recall that both are dominated by a 'higher kind', cf. the example with 'wine' and its subkinds 'red wine', 'white wine' etc. Thus, it is not only 'difference' but in fact 'contrast', since they also must share some properties. Concerning the more common use of the indefinite article for introducing a new discourse referent (existential reading, usually with a typical count noun, cf. 'a potato' **[tab. 4]**), it comes with a "non-uniqueness" implicature, see Le Bruyn (2010, chapter 5 for extensive discussion). This simply means that it is implied that there exist further instances of 'potatoes' in the world. Taking this again as contrasting one single instance to all the others left in the world, the parallelism to the situational partitivity is obvious. The suggestion thus is that the indefinite article lexicalises the abstract notion of contrast – and depending on the surrounding context – this may have different instantiations:

(13)   The indefinite article lexicalises contrast, whereby contrast can apply to different concepts:

amount	→	situational partitivity (partition)
property/ies	→	subkinds
singling out one instance	→	existential reading

Note that I suggested one functional head 'individual' – but which can have two different interpretations, namely either as existential or as subkind – and recall that the actual interpretation is dependent on further factors in the aspectual/temporal domain. The reason for assuming the basic distinction between partition and individual is that subkinds and subsets (in the sense of situational partitivity) build a minimal pair when it comes to anaphoric reference. Consider (14):

(14)   Q: *Hond   ihr   no   **a**   Mehl   im   Huus?*
              have   you   still   a   flour   in.the   house
              'Do you still have (some) flour in the house?'

        A: **Na,   ich   han   **es**   au   it   /   *Ja   ich   han   **es***
              no,   I   have   it   as.well   not   /   yes,   I   have   it
              intended: 'No, I don't have either.'/ 'Yes, I have some.'

        A':   *Na,   ich   ha   au   **koas**   /   Ja   ich   ha   **welles/0***
              no,   I   have   as.well   neg.indef   /   yes,   I   have   some
              'No, I don't have either.'/'Yes I have some.'

Although the mass noun is accompanied by the IA, it cannot be referred to anaphorically with a pronoun in the answer. Instead, the negative indefinite *kein-* has to be used or a partitive pronoun (*welles*) resp. a zero-form – which is the most common version in Alemannic, see Glaser (1993; 2008). If we compare this with either the 'construed' subkinds, discussed above, or with the regular ones accompanied by the particle *so*, a pronoun becomes possible:[34]

(15) a. *En kaffee sott it z'dünn si*
      a coffee should not too thin be
      – *suscht schmeckt **er** it*
      – otherwise tastes he not
      'Coffee shouldn't be too thin – otherwise it doesn't taste (well).'

    b. *So ein (guter) Wein! – Wo hast du **den** gekauft?*
       so a good wine – where have you it bought
       'Such a good wine – where did you buy it?'

The difference is that the respective subkinds are individuals in the sense that they are properly distinguishable as different entities, due to the necessary contrasting properties. Hence the possibility to refer to them via pronouns. In the partition reading, only a vague amount from the same substance is distinguished, which is then not conceived of as an individual with clear-cut boundaries.[35] The shared property of all three of them is nevertheless the rather abstract notion of 'contrast'. In order to capture now the variation between CH/Standard German on the one hand and BW/Bavarian on the other, I will suggest that there is a small difference in the lexical entry of the IA. Whereas in BW/Bavarian, it lexicalises indeed only 'contrast', including thus partition, in CH/Standard German, 'contrast' is restricted to individuals:

(16) a. IA in BW/Bavarian: [contrast]
    b. IA in CH/Standard German: [contrast, individual]

The question then is how CH/Standard German lexicalise situational partitivity. Surely, this concept exists in these languages as well, and therefore must have a lexicalisation. I will suggest here for the sake

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34 I assume that it is the particle *so* which induces the subkind reading, lexicalised then by the IA. For the sake of concreteness, I suggest that it is located in the specifier position of the individuation head and thus scopes over this part of the functional sequence. The exact syntactic analysis awaits further research, but see Hohaus, Zimmermann 2021 for a proposal in semantic terms with a preliminary syntax.

35 Note that as soon as a measure phrase is involved, the expression is interpreted as an individual, as it can be counted, cf. 'three liters of wine'.

of concreteness, following Adger (2013), that a lexical item can move higher up in the functional sequence and lexicalise the relevant semantic feature by itself. Thus, the root, after having combined with little n, and being now categorised as a noun, moves one position higher up and is interpreted now as a (situational) partitive. The cells with 'zero' **[tab. 4]** thus do not contain a 'zero-exponent' – but the lexical noun itself occupies this position. In BW/Bavarian, this movement does not take place, instead the IA is inserted and lexicalises the partition head directly – due on the one hand to its specification as only 'contrast' and on the other, due to its neighbourhood to the individuation head, i.e., this 'spreading' can be taken as an instance of syncretism. In CH/Standard German, the IA can be inserted only from the individual layer on upwards. Thus, the syntax, the functional sequence above little n, is in all the variants the same; the difference in the output, i.e., whether IA+mass is accepted or not, is simply due to the more liberal conception of 'contrast' in BW/Bavarian. Note that this model is well-suited to capture the different outputs concerning translation and acceptance tasks. The only assumption that must be made is that the speakers who accept IA+mass, but do not produce it actively, have both lexical entries in their lexicon and thus judge it as a further possible version – if they are allowed to – as in a judgment task. If a given speaker is more often confronted with it, as it is presumably the case close to the Bavarian border, this version then becomes prevalent such that it is also actively produced. Under this perspective, what is called in traditional dialectology 'transition zones', where speakers seem to have a 'mixed grammar', could then be modelled quite easily: The syntax, i.e., the presence and order of the functional heads, is constant but the lexicalisation may vary. As the neighbouring head (individuation) is realised in all dialects under discussion by the IA, a 'shift' one step further down is licit, according to the assumptions of lexicalisation within the nano-syntactic framework.

Concerning the lower acceptance of a pseudo-partitive with a weak quantifier in contrast to the 'bare' one in BW, I suggest that these weak quantifiers are situated in the specifier of the partition phrase and those speakers who do not use the IA+mass in this context obey something akin to the Doubly filled Comp filter (DFC) in that both positions cannot be lexicalised simultaneously. Concerning the lesser rejection in CH, see the remarks about doubling above. A DFC kind of explanation would then also hold for measure phrases/container nouns and other weak quantifiers that do not co-occur with an IA. Recall that in earlier stages, container nouns were followed by a noun in the genitive but that in this case, the genitive was not 'replaced' by the IA. We can either assume that again something like the DFC is at stake or – as is widely assumed in the grammaticalisation literature, cf. Van Gelderen (2004) – that the phrase that was originally situated in the specifier has been reanalysed as a head and lexicalises

the partition head now directly – leaving no more room for an IA. But since the head is lexicalised nevertheless, the output is grammatical. However, this does not explain the strict impossibility of the IA+mass with measure phrases/container nouns. But since I do not have independent confirmation of this fact, I will leave it for future work.

To make the picture complete, here are only a few remarks concerning 'proper kinds'. I will follow the analysis proposed in Borik and Espinal (2015), who suggest that the kind reading is captured best if one assumes an impoverished functional structure above a traditional NP-projection. In their syntactic structure, there is only one functional head, namely number, which they assume to be lacking in kind readings. Instead, the NP, denoting a property, as is commonly assumed, is dominated directly by D, lexicalised by the definite article in the Romance languages – on which their proposal is built.[36] In the proposal here, the highest projection would then be little n. As indicated **[tab. 4]**, if the derivation stops here, i.e., no more functional structure is added, the nominal gets a mass interpretation by default. And such a structure would then be relevant for mass nouns in generic statements, for which we saw above that they occur predominantly without an IA. But what about the generics with count nouns? In the Germanic languages, the usual way to lexicalise a kind reading is to use a bare plural, i.e., something like 'cats catch mice'. Now plural is one instance of number and thus one would have to assume that the whole structure is projected until number is reached, since plural operates on individuals. 'Cutting out' the functional structure in between would not be an option since then there is no layer for the individual interpretation and thus, the plural operation would 'run empty'. However, Geist and Błaszczak (forthcoming) and Geist (2023) argue, based on Mathieu (2012), that there is a functional head dubbed by them as "mass plural" and which is located below DIV in Borer's framework (individuation here). This head is lexicalised by the usual plural morphology but it brings in a different semantics. The observation is, again especially in food contexts, that a plural like 'carrots' can combine in German with the uninflected form of the quantifier *viel* ('much, many') and then gets a substance/kind reading, i.e., something like there is 'too much carrot in the soup', i.e., something akin to the grinding effect. If the quantifier is inflected, the usual count/individual reading shows up again.[37] Thus,

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36 I have nothing to say here about the definite article that occurs obligatorily in the Romance languages in this reading – a possibility that is also found in Germanic. But note that the definite article belongs to a region that is responsible for 'linking', if one follows Wiltschko's (2014) approach of universal (functional) categories, i.e., it regulates how the nominal expression is integrated into the discourse. As such, it is not directly involved in the construal of the kind reading.

37 See Ruys 2017 for a similar effect in Dutch with the same type of quantifier.

with an expression like *viel-e Karrotten* 'many carrots', reference is made to whole individual carrots. Whatever the role of (non-)inflection is and whatever head in the functional above it realises, such observations show again that only a much finer grained functional structure above the nominal is able to capture the whole range of the possible different readings of lexical nouns. Coming back to the kind reading, the suggestion thus is that the bare plurals in kind readings in German(ic) make use of this "mass plural". The kind reading itself arises through such an impoverished structure of the DP together with the relevant operator in the verbal/clausal projection. The characterizing statements with an indefinite article, cf. (8), which are – recall – very close to kind readings but not identical, have a nominal syntax with a lexicalisation of the head 'individual', but the aspectual/temporal specification of the clause in which they occur is at least non-episodic, i.e., without a specific time reference and thus lead to a generic interpretation.

6   Conclusion

Starting with the well-documented phenomenon that in Bavarian, mass nouns may occur with the indefinite article, this essay reported how this construction was examined in more detail in Alemannic within the project SynAlm. As a first result, the observation that the construction occurs in the neighbouring Alemannic dialects as well, could be confirmed – with a high acceptance in BW but a very reluctant one in CH. A closer examination of neighbouring constructions revealed that the phenomenon has indeed much more facets than a mere two-fold distinction between 'having the IA+mass construction or not' would suggest. It turned out that many more factors have to be considered: concerning the nominal expression itself and the possibility to insert an indefinite article, the notion of the subkind reading – in contrast to the subset (situational partitivity), the proper kind, the characterizing statement, and the existential reading – plays a crucial role, as with this reading, the IA+mass can be subsumed under 'individual' and thus the IA is licensed (or even required) also in those dialects that do not lexicalise situational partitivity with the IA. This situation was modelled with a fine-grained functional sequence above the noun with different lexicalisation options, whereby the common semantic building block 'contrast' was suggested to encompass all usages in all dialects. Some have a richer lexical entry (restricted to individuals) and thus a more restricted distribution. With this kind of modelling, the huge difference found in translation and acceptance tasks can be captured quite easily, as there is only one component within the lexical entry at variance. And given that the very same functional sequence is present in all languages, only a

small step is needed for 'dropping' this component and in turn accept the IA+mass also in the situational partitivity reading.

Concerning the verbal predicate and the aspectual/temporal specification of the clause, it was observed that here as well many more factors may play a role when informants construe the situation on the basis of a given sentence. For the relatively high acceptance of the IA+mass under the intensional verb *brauchen* ('need'), it was speculated that some speakers construed rather subkinds (intended) partition. And since subkinds are lexicalised with the IA, the deviant results could then be captured. Whether these speakers indeed had such a reading in mind, cannot be proven on the basis of the data we have. But such a possibility should be kept in mind and the context be controlled for accordingly in future work on partitives and their exponents.

Still, the data obtained gave rise to the following theoretical considerations. Following recent exo-skeletal approaches to syntax, I suggested a universal fine-grained, semantically motivated, functional structure above the lexical root. Differences between languages are not due to different syntactic structures (e.g., Bavarian has an 'additional' D^0-head for the IA), rather, the variation is to be sought in the differing possibilities to lexicalise these heads. The place of variation is thus entirely restricted to the lexicon. However, languages do not randomly select any lexical items, rather the lexical item in question must stand for a concept that is plausibly connected to the respective functional head. In the case of the IA, I suggested that the relevant basic notion that it stands for is that of 'contrast', being a component in all attested usages discussed here. The difference is that some variants apply this concept very broadly, which means that the partitioning of substance (situational partitivity) is covered by it, i.e., IA+mass is possible, whereas others apply 'contrast' to distinguishing properties, i.e., IA+mass is only possible in subkind readings. Finally, it was discussed how this structure (and its various lexicalisation possibilities) might be able to capture neighbouring constructions like pure kind readings, the combination with weak quantifiers and/or measure phrases. Needless to say that much more work is needed to justify or probably further refine this structure.

Abbreviations and Notations

BW	Baden-Württemberg
CH	Switzerland
DAT	dative
FEM	feminine
GEN	genitive
IA	Indefinite article
MHG	Middle High German
PL	plural

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