Definite Lexical NPs

When do we choose a definite, lexical NP over another type of referring expression?

1. When the referent isn’t salient enough for a pronoun

   (1) a. John went to Bob’s party, and parked next to a beautiful Acura Integra.
   
   b. He went inside and talked to Bob for more than an hour.
   
   c. Bob told him that he recently got engaged.
   
   d. ?? He also said that he bought \textit{it} yesterday.
   
   d.’ He also said that he bought \textit{the Acura} yesterday.
Definite, Lexical NPs

2. When the referent is salient enough, but a pronoun might be misinterpreted

(2) There’s a pile of inflammable trash next to your car. You’ll have to get rid of it.

(3) There’s a pile of inflammable trash next to your car. You’ll have to get rid of the trash.

3. When proximity to speaker is not emphasized (as with *this* and *that*)

4. Other reasons to be discussed...
Inferrables

(4) I almost bought an Acura today, but the engine seemed noisy.

(5) # I almost bought an Acura today, but the stapler was empty.

(6) ? I almost bought an Acura today, but the television seemed blurry.
(7) a. I picked up the textbook and a cockroach fell out.
   b. I picked up the textbook and a page fell out.

(8) a. # I picked up the textbook and the cockroach fell out.
   b. I picked up the textbook and the title page fell out.

(9) a. I picked up the textbook and a page fell out, but the page was from a different book.
   b. # I picked up the textbook and the title page fell out, but the page was from a different book.
Inferring a Result State

(10) Mix the flour, butter, and water.

a. Kneed the dough until smooth and shiny.

b. Spread the paste over the blueberries.

c. Stir the batter until all lumps are gone.
What’s in a Description?

Constraint: hearer should be able to recognize the purpose of the information that is included.

- Necessary or otherwise useful information for identifying the referent and distinguishing it from others

  (11) The screwdriver
  (12) The red-handled screwdriver
  (13) A red-handled screwdriver and a blue-handled screwdriver.... The red-handled screwdriver
  (14) ? The red-handled screwdriver with the small chip on the bottom and a loose handle

- Such additional information assumed to serve speaker intentions other than enabling the hearer to identify the referent
(15) New York needs more policemen.

(16) The city with the nation’s largest crime rate needs more policemen.

(17) ? The city with the largest number of linguistics students needs more policemen.

(18) The city with the largest number of linguistics students welcomes the President of the Linguistics Society of America.
(19) Tiger Woods received $100,000.

(20) The winner of the Masters’ received $100,000.

(21) The winner of the Masters’ received $100,000, but only $25,000 was for winning the tournament.
[from a Crossfire episode about lifting the AIDS ban on immigrants]

(22) Mr. M, at the same time that we are trying to contain this fatal disease, why would you introduce into the U.S. new sources of infection?

(23) Mr. M, at the same time that we are trying to contain AIDS, why would you introduce into the U.S. people with AIDS?