

# Are there “weak definites” in bare classifier languages?

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**SALT 33**

č

May 12-14, 2023

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# Introduction

- One important question in the study of definiteness is to understand how it is encoded differently in natural languages.
- We focus on two bare classifier languages: Cantonese and Bangla
- Two ways to encode definiteness:
  - **Bare classifier (bare CL)** constructions: predominant definiteness marker  
CL-N in Cantonese (Cheng and Sybesma 1999)  
N-CL in Bangla (Bhattacharya 1999; Dayal 2012)
  - **Bare nouns (bare N)**: used in certain uniqueness contexts  
(Simpson, Soh, and Nomoto 2011)
- Major questions to probe into today, w.r.t. bare CLs vs. bare Ns:
  1. What new perspectives does it bring to the typology of definiteness?
  2. How does it inform us about the competition of referring expressions?

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# Background: uniqueness vs. anaphoricity in German

- Schwarz (2009, 2013): German and Fering have two distinct forms of definite articles, manifesting two important dimensions of definiteness
- **Uniqueness-based: weak** articles

(1) Der Empfang wurde {vom/ #von dem} Bürgermeister eröffnet.  
 The reception was **by-the<sub>weak</sub>**/ **by the<sub>strong</sub>** mayor opened  
 'The reception was opened by the mayor.' (Schwarz 2009:40)

- **Anaphoricity/Familiarity-based: strong** articles

(2) Hans hat [einen Schriftsteller] und [einen Politiker] interviewt. Er hat  
 Hans has a writer and a politician interviewed He has  
 {#vom/ von dem} Politiker keine interessanten Antworten  
**from-the<sub>weak</sub>**/ **from the<sub>strong</sub>** politician no interesting answers  
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# Background: The typology of definiteness

- The unique-anaphoric dichotomy has been extended to a wide range of languages, where bare nouns (bare Ns) are claimed to be *unique definites*; whereas another form is claimed to be *anaphoric definites*

Language	Type	Unique definites	Anaphoric definites
German	Non-CL-lang.	weak articles	strong articles
Fering	Non-CL-lang.	weak articles	strong articles
Akan	Non-CL-lang.	bare N	determiner <i>no</i>
Bangla	CL-lang.	bare N	bare CL
Mandarin	CL-lang.	bare N	demonstratives

Table 1: A non-exhaustive list of languages claimed to have the unique-anaphoric dichotomy

- Akan: Arkoh and Matthewson (2013) (but see Bombi 2018; Owusu 2022)
- Bangla: Biswas (2014) (cf. Simpson and Biswas 2016 for nuances)
- Mandarin: Jenks (2018) (but see Dayal and Jiang 2022; Simpson and Wu 2022)

# Overview of the talk

- We argue that Cantonese and Bangla do **not** fit into the current typology based on the “unique-anaphoric” dichotomy.
- Rather, the difference between definite bare Ns and bare CLs corresponds to a contrast between *(quasi-)names* and *definite descriptions*.
  - Quasi-names are name-like expressions that carry descriptive content, like (the capitalized) *Mom* (Pelczar and Rainsbury 1998)
- A new typology that integrates quasi-names is needed:

Language	Type	Definite description		Quasi-names
		unique	anaphoric	
Cantonese	CL-lang.		bare CL	bare N
Bangla	CL-lang.		bare CL	bare N

Table 2: The typology of definiteness with quasi-names (preliminary)

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## What this talk is **NOT** about:

- **Weak definites:** We use this term to refer to uniqueness-based definites, rather than Carlson's sense of weak definites (Carlson 1977, Carlson and Sussman 2005), e.g. *Lola is reading the newspaper*.
- **Kind reading:** We only focus on the referential definite reading, and set aside kind/generic readings for future research.

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# An apparent unique-anaphoric dichotomy

- There is an apparent unique-anaphoric definite distinction found in Cantonese and Bangla.
- In **anaphoric** situations where strong articles are used in German, only Bare CLs can be used, as in (3).

- (3) a. Gaaming camjat gindou [jat-go-haauzoeng] tung [jat-go-lousi].  
 Ka-Ming yesterday saw one-CL-principal and one-CL-teacher.  
 {go-haauzoeng/ #haauzoeng} hou houjan. [C(antonese)]  
 CL-principal principal very kind  
 'Ka-Ming met a principal and a teacher yesterday. The principal was very kind.'
- b. Robi-r ek-jon headmatar ebong ek-jon shikhhok-er shathe  
 Robi-GEN one-CL principal and one-CL teacher-GEN with  
 dekha holo. {headmatar-Ti/ #headmatar} duschintay chilén.  
 see happen. principal-CL/ principal worried AUX  
 'Robi met a principal and a teacher. The principal looked worried.' [B(angla)]

# An apparent unique-anaphoric dichotomy

- On the other hand, in **uniqueness** situations where weak articles are used in German, only Bare nouns are used, as in (4).

(4) **Situation uniqueness-teacher: ✗ Bare CL vs. ✓ Bare N**

*Context: You have been teaching at a school for five years. A new colleague has joined, and you are responsible for guiding them. This morning, when you and a new colleague arrive at the school, you say to them:*

a. {#go-haazeong/ haauzoeng} wui bei fan sigaanbiu nei  
 CL-principal/ principal will give CL timetable 2SG  
 ‘The principal will give you the timetable.’ [C]

b. {#headmaster-Ti/ headmaster} toma-ke nishchoi timetable-Ta  
 principal-CL/ principal you-DAT timetable-CL of.course  
 diyech-en?  
 give-PERF-3  
 ‘The principal must have given you the timetable?’ [B]











# Not unique vs. anaphoric

- A *systematic* difference in the choice of definite forms is found in Cantonese and Bangla.
- However, this does **not** correspond to the unique-anaphoric dichotomy.

Types of definites	German/Fering Def. articles	Cantonese/Bangla	
		Bare CL	Bare N
Anaphoric (=3)	strong	✓	✗
Unique-situation-teacher (=4)	weak	✗	✓
Unique-situation-officer (=5)	weak	✓	✗
Unique-global-earth-moon (=6)	weak	✗	✓
Unique-global-alien-moon (=7)	weak	✓	✗

Table 5: The range of definites expressed by bare CLs and bare Ns (pt.3)

→ The unique-anaphoric dichotomy of definites does *not* hold universally

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# Functional relation

- Licensing conditions of bare Ns: a functional relation holds between the discourse participants and the referent.
  - Bare Ns are allowed in (4) (situation-uniqueness-teacher) but *not* in (5) (situation-uniqueness-officer):
- (8)  $f(s \oplus a) \longrightarrow x$ , where  $s$  and  $a$  are the **speaker** and **addressee** respectively and  $x$  is the principal of the school.
- In (4) (situation-uniqueness-teacher), the speaker is the teacher of the school and the referent is the principal of the same school. A functional relation is established : *the referent is speaker/addressee's principal*.
  - In contrast, this relation doesn't hold between the speaker and the referent in (5) (situation-uniqueness-officer): the referent is *not the speaker/addressee's principal*.

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## Role of addressee

- Importantly, this functional relation must hold for **both the speaker and the addressee**.
- Bare Ns are infelicitous when such relation only holds for the speaker, but is **absent** for the addressee

(9) *Context: You go to an art school and recently the teacher has announced that there will be an examination. You want to discuss this with a friend who goes to the same school as you. You say:*

a. Nei zi-m-zi {go-lousi/ #lousi} gamjat gong-zo me? ...  
 2SG know-not-know CL-teacher/ teacher today say-PFV what  
 'Do you know what the teacher said today? (S/he said the exam will cover everything!)' [C]

b. {sir-Ta/ #sir} ajke ki boleche janish? ...  
 teacher-CL/ teacher today what said know  
 'Do you know what the teacher said today? (S/he said the exam will cover everything!)' [B]

# 'Our' vs. 'Their'

- We extend the notion of functional relations to cases like (6) (global-uniqueness-earth-moon) and (7) (global-uniqueness-alien-moon).
- This relation can be made overt with the use of a possessive. Thus, in (4) (situation-uniqueness-teacher) and (6) (global-uniqueness-earth-moon) the referent can be substituted with **'our principal'** and **'our moon'** respectively and in (5) (global-uniqueness-alien-moon) and (7) (situation-uniqueness-officer) the referent can be substituted with **'their principal'** and **'their moon'** respectively.

- (10) a. ngodei ge jyutloeng (vs. keoidei ge jyutloeng)  
 1SG MOD moon 3SG MOD moon  
 'our moon' (vs. their moon) [C]
- b. ama-der chNaad (vs. o-der chNaad)  
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# Adding up

- The functional relations in the cases where bare Ns are licensed can be schematized as follows:

$$\begin{array}{lll}
 f_1 & s \oplus a & \longrightarrow x \quad ; x \text{ is the principal in (4)} \\
 f_2 & s \oplus a & \longrightarrow y \quad ; y \text{ is the moon in (6)} \\
 \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
 \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
 \cdot & \cdot & \cdot \\
 \cdot & \cdot & \cdot
 \end{array}$$

- It is this concept of functional relations that we will integrate into our proposal in §5.

## Next steps...

- We have seen that the licensing of bare Ns is not solely dependent on uniqueness and it requires a functional relation to hold between the discourse participants and the referent.
- We propose that bare Ns are *not* unique/“weak” definites, but rather, they are *quasi-names* (*contra*. Biswas 2014 for Bangla; following Cheng and Sybesma 1999 and Jenks 2018 for Cantonese)
- Similar to the English use of *Mom* (Pelczar and Rainsbury 1998, Muñoz 2019), which also involves a functional relation (i.e. kinship)
- In the next section, we provide evidence to support this argument.

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# Bare Ns ≠ definite descriptions

- Bare Ns behave like **referential names**, rather than *standard definite descriptions*, in two respects:
- (a) Scopal behavior
  - Unique bare Ns cannot take **narrow scope** in quantificational contexts.
- (b) Noun choice restriction
  - Unique bare Ns are in parallel to name-marking devices in noun selection.

# Scopal behavior: #1 Counterfactual

- **First**, unlike bare CLs, bare Ns resist a *counterfactual* reading and can only refer to the elected principal in the actual world as in (11).

(11) Counterfactual: Bare CL: ✓ vs. Bare N: ✗

*Context: The principal in your school is elected by teachers. Billy lost the election last year. This year, he was found to have committed a murder.*

*You say: "If we had voted for Billy, ..."*

- a. ... jigaa {go-haauzoeng/ #haauzoeng} zau hai saatjanhungsau. [C]  
 now CL-principal principal then be murderer  
 ‘... now the principal would have been a murderer.’ (#bare N: actual prin.)
- b. ... {headmaster-Ta/ #headmaster} ek-jon khuni hoten [B]  
 principal-CL principal one-CL murderer AUX  
 ‘... the principal would have been a murderer.’ (#bare N: actual prin.)

# Scopal behavior: #2 $\forall$ over situations

- In (12), with quantification over restaurant/office-going situations: the reference of the bare CL may co-vary with the situations and correspond to different bosses; the bare N maintains wide scope.

(12) Co-variation: Bare CL: ✓ vs. Bare N: ✗

a. Ngo muici heoi caacaanteng, {go-lousai/ lousai} dou wui tung  
 1SG every.time go restaurant CL-boss boss ALL will with  
 ngo kinggai.  
 1SG chat

'Every time I go to restaurants, the boss chats with me.' [C]  
 (Bare CL: potentially different bosses vs. Bare N: only one unique boss)

b. ami jokhoni kono office-e jai, {boroshaheb-Ti/ boroshaheb}  
 I whenever any office-LOC go, boss-CL/ boss  
 ama-r shathe kotha bolen  
 I-GEN with word say

'Whenever I go to any office, the boss speaks with me.' [B]  
 (Bare CL: potentially different bosses vs. Bare N: unique boss/speaker's boss)

# Scopal behavior: wide scope

Scope behavior of definites		
Narrow scope under	Bare CLs	Bare Ns
Counterfactual	✓	*
$\forall$ (co-varying)	✓	*

Table 6: Unique bare Ns cannot take *narrow scope* in quantificational contexts

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## (b) The noun choice restrictions

- The noun choice of unique bare Ns is highly restricted.
- Usually they are nouns denoting a unique entity in a conventionalized context (e.g. 'principal' in a school, 'doctor' in a clinic, 'church' in a community).
- Other nouns like 'student'/'book' reject this use even with a context facilitating uniqueness (=13).

(13) *Context: There is only one student in the room, and the rest are teachers.*

a. {Go-hoksaang/ #hoksaang} zodai-zo.  
 CL-student student sit.down-PFV  
 'The student sat down.' [C]

b. {chhatro-Ta/ #chhatro} boshlo  
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# Nouns : Permitted

Allowing nouns			
Type	Gloss	Cantonese	Bangla
Human	'principal'	<i>haauzoeng</i>	<i>headmaster</i>
	'boss'	<i>lousai</i>	<i>boroshaheb</i>
	'landlord'	<i>baauzougung/po</i>	<i>jomindar/barir-korta</i>
	'director'	<i>doujin</i>	<i>nirdeshok</i>
	'cashier'	<i>soungan</i>	<i>tohobildar</i>
Inanimate	'church'	<i>gaautong</i>	<i>girja</i>
	'school'	<i>hokhaau</i>	<i>iskul</i>
	'post office'	<i>jauguk</i>	<i>post apish</i>
	'hospital'	<i>jijyun</i>	<i>hashpatal</i>

Table 7: A non-exhaustive list of nouns that typically *allow* the unique bare N use

# Nouns: Prohibited

Disallowing nouns			
Type	Gloss	Cantonese	Bangla
Human	'student'	<i>hoksaang</i>	<i>chhatro</i>
	'colleague'	<i>tungsi</i>	<i>shohokormi</i>
	'girl'	<i>neoizai</i>	<i>meye</i>
	'worker'	<i>bakleng</i>	<i>sromik</i>
	'old person'	<i>loujan</i>	<i>buro</i>
Non-human	'goldfish'	<i>gamjyu</i>	<i>chinamach</i>
	'bunny'	<i>touzai</i>	<i>khorgosh</i>
Inanimate	'river'	<i>ho</i>	<i>nodi</i>
	'pen'	<i>bat</i>	<i>kolom</i>

Table 8: A non-exhaustive list of nouns that typically *disallow* the unique bare N use

# Name-marking devices in Cantonese and Bangla

- Cantonese has a prefix **aa-** that marks polysyllabic person names (Sio and Tang 2020), often with a close relation to the speaker
- Bangla has a honorific suffix **-moshai**, often for persons of higher authority
- These affixes combine with proper names, and can be analyzed as proprial articles (Muñoz 2019).

(14) a. {Gaaming/ aa-Gaaming} lai-zo.  
 Ka-Ming AA-Ka-Ming come-PFV  
 'Ka Ming came.' [C]

b. {Robi/ Robi-moshai} esh-ech-en.  
 Robi Robi-HONF come-PERF-3  
 'Robi has come.' [B]

- They make names referential and names cannot be used as predicates any longer after these devices are attached.

# Name-marking devices in Cantonese and Bangla

- Cantonese has a prefix **aa-** that marks polysyllabic person names (Sio and Tang 2020), often with a close relation to the speaker
- Bangla has a honorific suffix **-moshai**, often for persons of higher authority
- These affixes combine with proper names, and can be analyzed as proprial articles (Muñoz 2019).

(14) a. {Gaaming/ **aa**-Gaaming} lai-zo.  
 Ka-Ming AA-Ka-Ming come-PFV  
 'Ka Ming came.' [C]

b. {Robi/ Robi-**moshai**} esh-ech-en.  
 Robi Robi-HONF come-PERF-3  
 'Robi has come.' [B]

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# Parallel with definite bare Ns

- Besides proper names, the affixes combine with a **subset** of common nouns to yield a name-like reading (=15).

(15) a. **aa**-{**haauzoeng**/**\*hoksaang**} zodai-zo.  
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b. {**headmaster**/**\*chhatro**}-**moshai** boshlo  
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- Importantly, this set is a *subset of the unique bare Ns*: if a (human) common noun has unique bare N use, it also permits *aa/-moshai* affixation.
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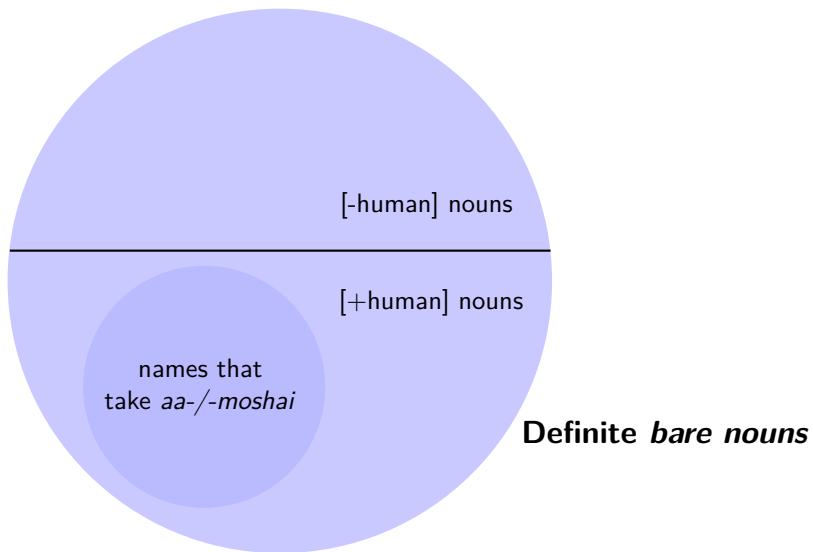
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# Parallel with definite bare Ns



# Interim summary

- Three key properties of definite bare Ns in Cantonese and Bangla:
  - #1 Licensed by a **functional relation** between the speaker/addressee and referent.
  - #2 Behave like **rigid designators** and **cannot** take narrow scope in quantificational contexts.
  - #3 Impose **restrictions on the noun choice**.
- All these properties line up with the quasi-name use of *Mom* in English (Pelczar and Rainsbury 1998; Muñoz 2019)
- We thus propose that while definite bare CLs denote *definite descriptions*, definite bare Ns denote *referential quasi-names*.

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- 7 Concluding remarks

# Towards a quasi-name approach

- We propose that the differences between definite bare CLs and unique bare Ns are manifested at **two** levels, DP and NP, which compositionally *derive* the **definite description** vs. **(quasi-)name** distinction.
- The referentiality of names (both proper and quasi) comes from a different determiner (*proprial articles*), combining the insights from Muñoz (2019) and Agolli (2023) (cf. *predicativism* of names, *i.a.*)

(16)

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Bare CLs:	D <sub>1</sub> : <i>iota</i>	(CL+)Common N	→ Def. descriptions
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- We suggest that there are three types of nouns: (i) common nouns; (ii) proper nouns; and (iii) quasi-proper nouns. They all denote a set of individuals as their extension (i.e. type  $\langle e, t \rangle$ ).

- (17) a. **Common noun**:  $\llbracket N_c \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda x_e. P(w)(x)$   
 b. **Proper noun**:  $\llbracket N_p \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda x_e. x \text{ bears } N_p \text{ at } w$   
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- Note that (common) nouns in classifier languages are usually treated as kind-denoting (Krifka 1995; Chierchia 1998; Yang 2001; Jiang 2020).
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# NP level: Quasi-proper nouns

- We further suggest that some nouns are *ambiguous* between a common noun use and a quasi-proper noun use.
- Quasi-proper nouns, like proper nouns, also denote name-bearing properties; but are minimally different from them in *presupposing* the descriptive content.

(18)  $\llbracket \text{haauzoeng}_c / \text{headmaster}_c \rrbracket^{g,w}$  (common noun)  
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# DP level: $D_1$

- We propose that there are two determiners:  $D_1$ , and  $D_2$
- Definite bare CLs are derived by  $D_1$
- $D_1$  is null in both languages, but it triggers syntactic movement (CL-to-D movement in Cantonese, Simpson 2005; Wu and Bodomo 2009; NP-movement to Spec DP in Bangla, Dayal 2012).

(20)  $[[D_1-\emptyset]]^{g,w} = \lambda P : |P(w)| = 1 .\iota x [P(w)(x)]$

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- Unique bare Ns (quasi-names) and proper names are derived by D<sub>2</sub>.
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$$\begin{aligned}
 (21) \quad & \llbracket D_2-\emptyset_i / aa_i / moshai_i \rrbracket^{g,w} \\
 & = \lambda P : P \text{ is name-bearing} \wedge \iota x [P(w)(x) \wedge g(i) = x] \\
 & \quad \forall f [P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(i)]
 \end{aligned}$$

- D<sub>2</sub> carries an index *i*, and denotes an iota coupled with an **assignment function** *g(i)* that rigidly designates the referent and is constant across worlds
- There are two presuppositions:
  - **Naming-bearing property** → restricts the combining nouns to be (quasi-)proper nouns (cf. Muñoz 2019)
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# Presupposition on the functional relation

- (22) a.  $P$  is name-bearing  $\wedge \forall f[P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(i)]$
- b. For every  $f$ , such that the name-bearing property  $P$  is satisfied at  $w$  by the individual that  $f$  maps onto from the speaker and addressee,  $f$  maps onto the same individual (from the spkr/addr) that the assignment functions maps onto (from the index  $i$ ).
- Effectively, there is only one unique individual that (i) bears the name (e.g. "Principal") and (ii) the speaker/addressee holds a relation with.
  - E.g. only one principal from the spker/addr's school in the context
    - Uniqueness
    - Relation

# A note on classifiers

- For current purposes, we suggest that classifiers perform an atomic check AT for the counting function, and have the type  $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, t \rangle\rangle$  (Trinh 2011).

(23) a.  $[[\text{CL}]]^{g,w} = \lambda P \lambda x: x \in AT(P(w)). [P(w)(x)]$   
 b.  $AT(P(w)) = \lambda x. [x \in P(w) \wedge \forall y [(y \in P(w) \wedge y \leq x) \rightarrow (y = x)]]$   
 (after Trinh 2011)

# Derivation: Bare CLs

- Definite bare CLs denote “standard” definite descriptions, like English *the* NP.

(24)  $[_{DP} D_{1-\emptyset} [_{CLP} CL [_{NP} N ]]]$

(25) The composition of *go-haauzoeng/headmaster-Ta* ‘the principal’

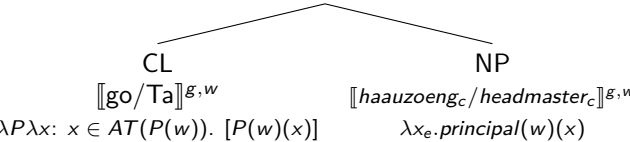
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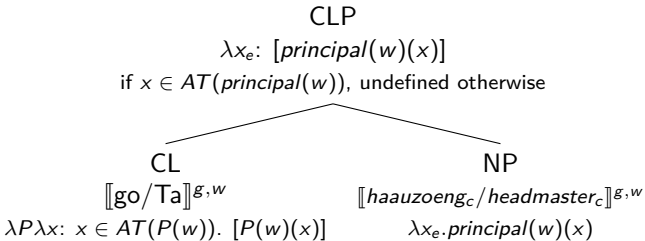


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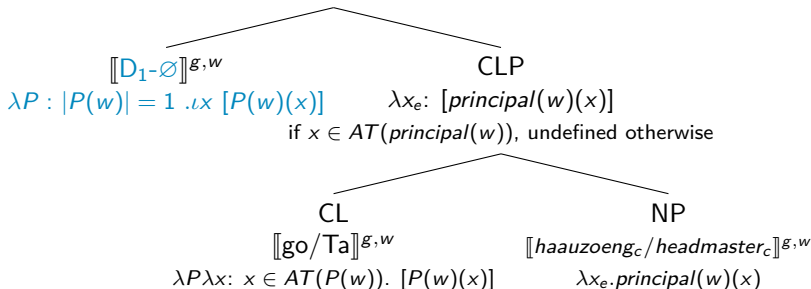


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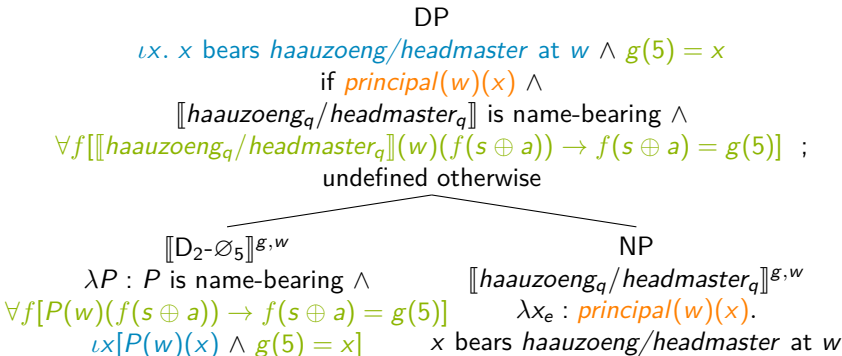


# Derivation: Bare Ns

- Unique bare Ns denote referential quasi-names whose referent holds a relation with the speaker and the addressee, like English *Mom*.

(26) [DP D<sub>2</sub>-∅<sub>5</sub>/aa<sub>5</sub>/moshai<sub>5</sub> [NP N<sub>q</sub> ]]

(27) The composition of *haauzoeng/headmaster* 'the principal'



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# Four cases of (non-)competition

In Cantonese and Bangla:

- #1 ✓ Bare CLs / ✗ Bare Ns (only bare CLs)
- #2 ✗ Bare CLs/ ✓ Bare Ns (only bare Ns)
- #3 ✓ Bare CLs/ ✓ Bare Ns (both bare CLs and bare Ns)
- #4 ✗ Bare CLs/ ✗ Bare Ns (neither bare CLs nor bare Ns)

# Satisfying presuppositions

## #1 ✓ Bare CLs / ✗ Bare Ns (only bare CLs)

### ✓ Uniqueness; ✗ Relation

- Situation uniqueness - officer in (5): the principal is not the speaker/addressee's (i.e. the officers') principal
  - the presuppositions for using  $D_2$  are **not** met
  - $D_1$  is used instead.
- Anaphoric in (3): the referent principal is newly introduced in the discourse by a linguistic expression, who is also not the speaker/addressee's principal
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# Maximize Presupposition

#2 ✗ Bare CLs/ ✓ Bare Ns (only bare Ns)

✓ Uniqueness; ✓ Relation

- Situation uniqueness - teacher in (4): the principal is the speaker/addressee's (i.e. the teachers') principal → the presuppositions for using  $D_2$  are met
- By **Maximize Presupposition** (Heim 1991): the form with a stronger presupposition will be chosen over the form with a weaker presupposition
  - $D_2$ 's presupposition is stronger than  $D_1$
  - $D_2$  is chosen over  $D_1$
  - bare CLs are disallowed; **bare Ns** are allowed

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# Accommodation

## #3 ✓ Bare CLs/ ✓ Bare Ns (both bare CLs and bare Ns)

### ✓ Uniqueness; ✗ Relation

- There are cases where the speaker can *pretend* to hold a functional relation with the referent and therefore  $D_2$  can be **accommodated**.
- Being in the situation 'school' allows the accommodation to occur

(28) *Context: A music band constituted of school students is visiting a different school for a music competition. They have been waiting for a long time as the show can't start before the principal arrives. A member of the band says ...:*

a. {Go-haauzoeng/ haauzoeng} zung mei-dou.  
 CL-principal principal still not-arrive  
 'The principal hasn't arrived yet. [C]

b. {headmaster-Ti/ headmaster} ekhono ashe ni  
 principal-CL principal still come NEG  
 'The principal hasn't arrived yet. [B]

# Proper name over Quasi-name

#4 ✗ Bare CLs/ ✗ Bare Ns (neither bare CLs nor bare Ns)

✓ Uniqueness; ✓ Relation

- Lastly, there are cases where either the proper name, or the use of a possessive overrides the use of a quasi-name.

(29) *Context: You and your family are sharing various stories about your pet dog Bobby. Some of them portray that the dog is silly. You, on the other hand, want to defend your dog. You say:*

a. {#Zek-gau/ #gau/ **ngodei zek-gou**/ Bobby} hou gwaai gaa3  
 CL-dog dog 1PL CL-dog Bobby very well-behaved SFP  
 '(Whatever you say,) the dog/ Our dog/ Bobby is well behaved. [C]

b. {#kukur-Ta/ #kukur/ **ama-der kukur**/ Bobby} kintu khub-e  
 dog-CL dog 1PL-GEN dog Bobby but very-INT  
 bhodro  
 well.behaved  
 '(Whatever you say,) the dog/ Our dog/ Bobby is very well-behaved.[B]

# Proper name over Quasi-name

- Why **bare CLs** are banned: **Maximize Presupposition** (on the DP level)
  - **Bare Ns, possessives, proper names**, all presuppose **Relation**; but **bare CLs** do not presuppose **Relation**
- Why **bare Ns** are banned: **Name competition** (on the NP level)
  - The noun 'dog' cannot have a quasi-proper noun use due to the existence of a proper name 'Bobby'
  - Unlike the principal case, there is no conventional force to prefer a **quasi-name** over a proper name (e.g. avoid directly calling the principal's names for respect)
- Another choice: use a *common noun* → **Possessive constructions**

(30) [<sub>PossP</sub> our [<sub>NP</sub> Common Noun ]]

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# Proper name over Quasi-name

- Why **bare CLs** are banned: **Maximize Presupposition** (on the DP level)
  - **Bare Ns**, **possessives**, proper names, all presuppose **Relation**; but **bare CLs** do not presuppose **Relation**
- Why **bare Ns** are banned: **Name competition** (on the NP level)
  - The noun 'dog' cannot have a quasi-proper noun use due to the existence of a proper name 'Bobby'
  - Unlike the principal case, there is no conventional force to prefer a **quasi-name** over a proper name (e.g. avoid directly calling the principal's names for respect)
- Another choice: use a *common noun* → **Possessive constructions**

(30) [<sub>PossP</sub> our [<sub>NP</sub> Common Noun ]]

- Possessives in the form of "our NPs" also presuppose (i) uniqueness, and (ii) a functional relation between the NP and the speaker and addressee (i.e. 1PL)

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- ① Introduction
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# Conclusion

- We have argued that definite bare Ns in Cantonese and Bangla are **quasi-names**, not unique definites.
- Definite bare CLs are **not** anaphoric definites either - they are standard definite descriptions (covering both uniqueness and anaphoric uses).

Language	Type	Definite description		Quasi-names
		unique	anaphoric	
Cantonese	CL-lang.		bare CL	bare N/ <i>aa-</i>
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Table 9: The typology of definiteness with quasi-names (pt.1)

- The choice of the referring expressions depends on various factors:
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# Extension

- **Akan**, with determiner *no*, *also* has definite bare Ns that exhibit name-like properties (N restrictions in Bombi et al. [2019](#)).
- **Mandarin** bare Ns can also express quasi-names, such as *Lousi* ‘Teacher’ (Cheng and Sybesma [1999](#)).
- **Hindi** uses name-marking devices such as *-ji* (Bhatt and Davis [2023](#)) that can attach to bare Ns and make name-like reference (similar to Bangla *moshai*).

# Extension

- What we have shown in this talk leads to a **novel** claim: Quasi-names are pervasive in other languages (both CL and non-CL), and they participate in the **competition** for nominal reference
- This calls for a re-examination of the typology of definites. In particular, we need to bring in (*quasi-*)names into the picture.

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Akan	Non-CL-lang.	determiner	<i>no</i>	bare N
Hindi	Non-CL-lang.	bare N		bare N/ <i>-ji</i>
German	Non-CL-lang.	weak articles	strong articles	?
Fering	Non-CL-lang.	weak articles	strong articles	?

Table 10: The typology of definiteness with quasi-names (pt.2)

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# Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the four anonymous SALT reviewers for their valuable comments. We are also very grateful to Zoltán Szabó, Andrew Simpson, Diti Bhadra, and the members of Yale Semantics Reading Group for their help, in particular Veneeta Dayal, for her guidance and continuous support.

For discussions, we wish to thank:

Eno Agolli, Dorothy Ahn, Simon Charlow, Elizabeth Coppock, Jon Gajewski, Maribel Romero, Uli Sauerland, Florian Schwarz and the audience at Yue-25 (Jinan), UConn, and the South Asian Semantics reading group.

For judgment and comments, we wish to thank:

Ka-Wing Chan, Sheila Shu-Laam Chan, Tommy Tsz-Ming Lee, and Carmen Kin Man Tang for Cantonese; Arko Banerjee, Kousani Banerjee, Diti Bhadra, Nirnimesh Bhattacharjee, Ishani Guha, Ankana Saha for Bangla; Comfort Ahenkorah for Akan.

All the errors are of course our own responsibilities.

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