**Number interpretation in bare noun definites in Odia** Prior literature in the realm of classifier languages (**CL**) (Chierchia, 1998, Dayal 2004,2012 a.o.) forward the idea that bare nouns(BN) have *kind* interpretations at their most basic form and can have definite readings which are number-neutral. That is, the definite interpretation of *dog* could refer to a singular *dog* or a maximal plural individual *the dog(s)*. This is supported by cross-linguistic evidence from languages like Mandarin, Thai (Jenks 2015, 2018), Nuosu - Yi (Jiang 2012) a.o. For a numeral classifier language like Odia (South-Asia), the definite interpretation seems to arise from an overt movement of the nominal to specDP *across* a classifier.[1]The following examples illustrate this:

(1) dui-ta pila kheluthil-e
two-CL child play-3.PL
'Two kids were playing'

(2) pila dui-ta kheluthil-e
child two-CL play-3.PL
'**The two kids** were playing'[2]

Prior work on such constructions in Bangla (Dayal, 2012) discusses that the raised nominal, checks a [+def] feature in DP to trigger a definite interpretation (3).

(3) $[_{DP}\ N_i\ [_{D'}\ D_{+def}\ [_{NumP}\ [_{Num'}\ NUM\ [_{Cl\ P}\ [_{CL'}\ CL\ [_{NP}\ t_i\ ]]]]]]]$

The classifier is assumed to be a function from *kind to (atomic) object* level individuals ($\langle e^k, et\rangle$), defined as follows in (4):

(4) $[\![\text{-ta}]\!] = \lambda x^k \lambda y[^{\cup}x(y) \wedge \mathbf{AT}(y)]$

It is assumed to be a *necessary* function to pave way for the definite reading - the trace of the raised nominal combines with the classifier and only then the nominal is interpreted to be definite at DP by covert $\iota$-shift. For a complete account of such analysis I refer the reader to Dayal (2012, 2014). As per *Blocking Principle* (Chierchia, 1998), BNs in these languages are then predicted to not have a definite reading with a covert operation, since an overt representation (*raising*) of definiteness is available. But counter evidence for this has been shown for Nuosu - Yi (Jiang, 2012) and even for Bangla (Biswas, 2012). In Bangla, it has been noted that a sub-class of definites (cf. Schwarz, 2009), also known as *weak* or *unique* definites[3] contexts where the referent *uniquely* salient to the interlocutors, are encoded by bare nouns. Parallel examples are found in Odia, in (5) the BN 'shop' refers to a unique referent:

(5) aji dokan bandh thila
today shop close be.PST
'The shop was closed today'

Note: BN in Odia have a range of readings such as kind, generic, predicative. Definite readings are only achieved in unique contexts as discussed in Hawkins (1978).

The raising analysis discussed before cannot apply here since there is neither an overt classifier, nor can one $\iota$-shift to a kind level argument. To account for such cases of definites, I adopt the function *Evaluation Index (EI)* as proposed by Jiang (2018).

[1]Also seen in the closely associated language, Bangla (SA)
[2]If the numeral is dropped here, the reading is a singular child.
[3]There is another distinct notion of weak definites that I don't refer to here.

*EI* is defined as function that shifts arguments from kind to object level - ($\langle e^k, e\rangle$). *EI* restricts the kind argument to a specific situation and yields the *maximal* member in that situation. I formally define *EI* as follows while keeping the essence of previous definitions by Jiang (2018):

(6) $\text{EI} = \lambda s \lambda x_k . \iota y[^{\cup}x(y)]$
In a relevant situation, *EI* is a complex function that takes the situation variable $s$ and a kind-level argument. It type-shifts the kind argument via combination of the operators *pred* $^{\cup}$ ($e_k \rightarrow \langle e, t\rangle$) and $\iota$ (in the said order) and yields a definite reading. The two operators need to apply together or it would lead to wrong predictions such as (i) BN having predicate type readings in an argument position, and (ii) BN being able to compose with numerals freely without the aid of a classifier.[4]

**While this analysis helps us in arriving at definite reading for BN, it doesn't address the fact that only singular readings are possible for such cases.** To account for this I suggest that Odia illustrates an optionality in number marking on nominals. The BNs could be number neutral or singular (depending on the kind of predicate its used with). Odia also has a plural marker which varies between a number neutral or plural reading. Ahn et al. (2021) present independent evidence for proposing a three way number distinction account for Bangla and Korean nominals. Bare nouns in these languages are either singular and carry a presupposition of *atomicity*, or they are unspecified for number. I assume the same for Odia - the nominal in definite readings has to carry a *atomic* presupposition, supplied by a number feature[5] that modifies nominals (7):

(7) $\text{SG} \text{ - } \lambda x_k : \forall z[z \leq x \rightarrow \text{ATOMIC}(z)].[x]$ $\langle e_k, e_k\rangle$

(8) $^{\cap}\text{NP-NUM}, \langle e^k\rangle$

$^{\cap}\text{N}_{\langle e_k\rangle}$ $\quad$ $\text{SG}/\text{PL}/\text{NULL}_{\langle e_k, e_k\rangle}$

This account is empirically supported by subject agreement in Odia. While number marking on N itself cannot be interpreted, I discuss that it gets reflected in the form of verbal agreement as a form of syntactic agreement (Sauerland 2005). For cases where evidence from overt agreement is not available (such as non-animate nouns, non case marked object position of the argument) I assume that there is a resolution of number at the inference level, i.e. pragmatically resolved. This remains to be addressed as future work.

**Selected references:** *Positively polar plurals: Theory and predictions* (Ahn et al. 2021), *Reanalyzing definiteness in Bangla* (Biswas, 2012), *Reference to Kinds across Language* (Chierchia 1998), *Number Marking and (in)Definiteness in Kind Terms* (Dayal 2004), *Bangla classifiers: Mediating between kinds and object* (Dayal, 2012), *The Plural Is Semantically Unmarked* (Sauerland et al., 2005) *Two types of definites in natural language* (Schwarz, 2009), *Definiteness in Nuosu Yi and the theory of argument formation* (Jiang, 2018), *Two kinds of definites in numeral classifier languages* (Jenks 2015).

[4]Direct numeral modification of nouns is not possible in Odia.

[5]This feature could be singular/plural/unmarked for number - I just provide discussion on singular for space restrictions.