



**(in)definiteness
& genericity
across languages**



$\langle e, t \rangle$

$\langle e, t \rangle$

Bardi (in)definites

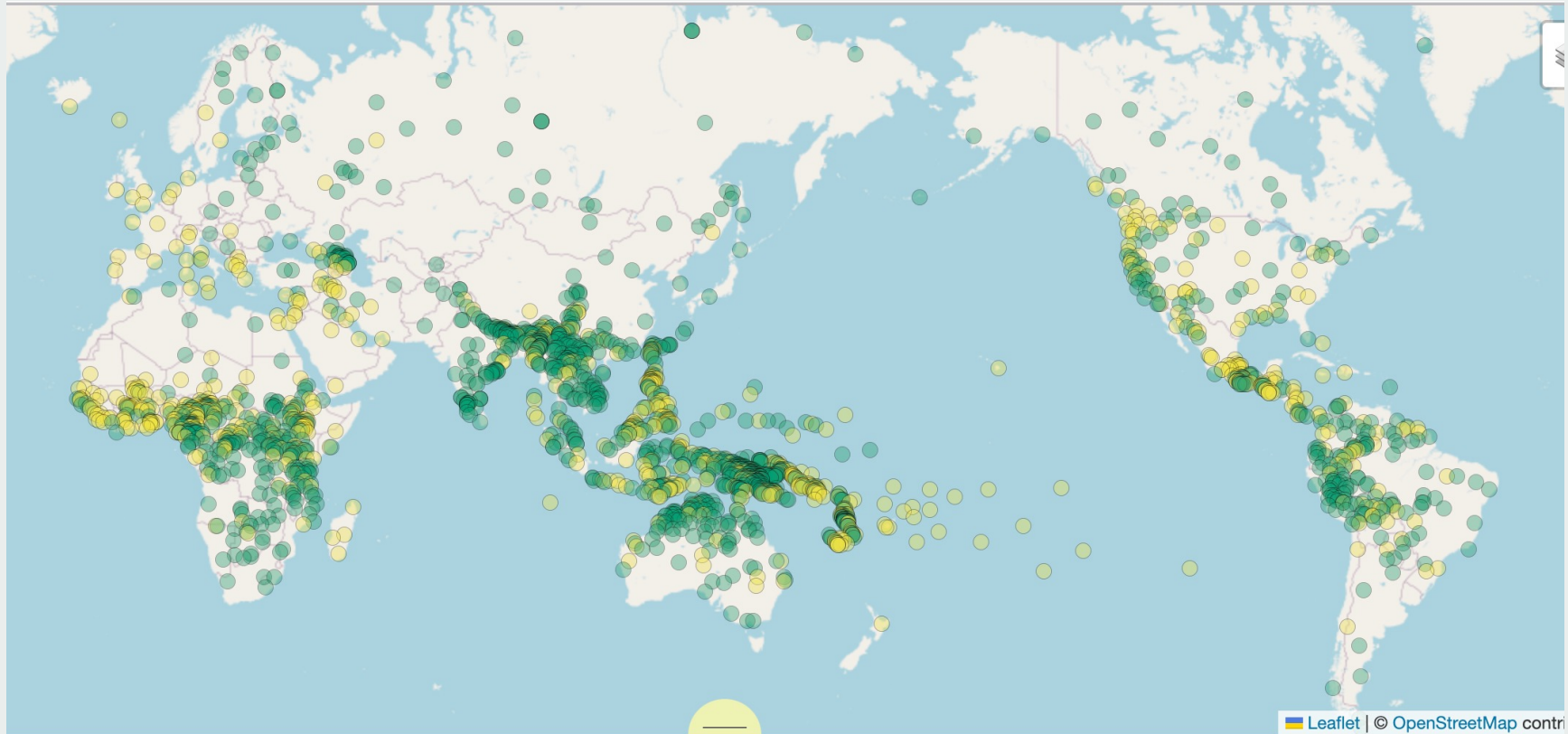
Claire Bovern

Yale University



Definite determiners

- Grambank feature 1;
Skirgård et al (2023)
- Yellow = yes
Green = no





Hitchhiking ... to the archives

Deal (2015):

“reasoning from some data points of speaker behavior to linguistic meaning”

Bardi and the (in)definites questionnaire

- Today: focus on definiteness and optionality (or not) of number

Preliminaries

lindoo-nim i-ngi-lirrimi-gal=jard.

curlew-ERG 3-PST-sing.out-REC.PST=1A.IO

"The curlew sang out to us." (definite, the unique referent the text is about)
(Aklif 1994d; + other examples)

- Indefinites can be marked by

	Nominal	Verb
✓	[bare]	[overt agreement] – specified for number
✓	[bare]	[no number marking] – number neutrality??
X	indef. determiner	

- Definites can be marked by

	Nominal	Verb
✓	[bare]	[overt person/number agreement]
✓	[bare]	[no number marking]
✓	[<i>ginyinggi/irr</i> Noun]	[number marking??]

Bare nouns

... *galandarr-goordoo* *bardaga* *i-na-mi-na-n=jin.*
hollow-QUAL tree 3-TR-seeK-PST-CONT=3M.IO
"He was looking for a hollow tree for him."

lindoo-nim *i-ngi-lirrimi-gal=jard.*
curlew-ERG 3-PST-sing.out-REC.PST=1A.IO
"The curlew sang out to us." (definite, the unique referent the text is about)
(Aklif 1994d; + other examples)

Bare nouns (with agreement)

*Ginyinggon arriminjal gaarra marnanyib iyoodin, ginyinggon
o-rr-o-n=irr irrolo-ng aarli.*

3-A-poke-CONT=3A spear-INST fish

"Then we wait for the tide to leave the reef dry and we spear the fish."

(ARL2.02 – DW)

*Roowil innyana gala booroongan, gala
ambooriny i-na-ng-gala-na-n=irr.*

person 3-TR-PST-visit-PST-CONT=3A.DO

"He walked to his country, he came across people."

(JS-Jankarr)

Bare nouns (without agreement)

l-ng-irr-inya-na

3-PST-AUG-pick.up-PST

"They picked up rocks."

goolboo.

rocks

Determiners?

- *ginyinggi*
- *irr*

3 minimal personal pronoun

3 augment personal pronoun

Barnin jirrijirr injoonoo jin birrii injalana

nyalaboo darral i-m-booloo-na anyjimadan ginyinggi gaarra.

there come.out 3-pst-come-pst back 3min salt.water

"She stood there and her mother saw the water start to come out again." (JS-BBB)

- These tend to be topics, perhaps as expected since *ginyinggi* is a pronoun. BUT it's not obligatory for topichood (cf. examples above)

Optional plurality?

- Number marking => sets of atoms, not groups
- Evidence for number neutrality where no agreement

Issues:

- Ginyinggi as free pronoun or grammaticalized determiner?
- Functions of agreement? – nonconfigurational language
- Number mismatches
- Minimality vs singularity
- Optional plurals?
- ...



Negative data vs Rabbit holes

Thank you!

- Bardi elders and community members
- NSF Grant “Semantics of Negation in Time and Space”