Are there "weak definites" in bare classifier languages?

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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?

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$_{weak}$**/ **by the$_{strong}$** 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$_{weak}$/ **from the$_{strong}$** politician no interesting answers
bekommen.
gotten
'Hans interviewed a writer and a politician. He didn't get any interesting answers from the politician.' (Schwarz 2009:30)

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 *no*
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)

- We also address how quasi-names **compete** with definite descriptions regarding the choice of referring expressions

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 headmastar ebong ek-jon shikhhok-er shathe
Robi-GEN one-CL principal and one-CL teacher-GEN with
dekha holo. {headmastar-Ti/ #headmastar} duschintay chilen.
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-haauzeong/ 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]

Unique definites vs. Anaphoric definites?

- The distinction between bare CLs and bare Ns seemingly pattern with the unique-anaphoric dichotomy.

Types of definites	**German/Fering Def. articles**	**Cantonese/Bangla** Bare CL	Bare N
Anaphoric (=3)	strong	✔	✘
Unique (=4)	weak	✘	✔

Table 3: The range of definites expressed by bare CLs and bare Ns (pt.1)

The **flawed** unique-anaphoric dichotomy

- **However**, the dichotomy breaks now.
- As in (5): only bare CLs, but not bare Ns, can refer to the unique principal.

(5) **Situation uniqueness-officer ✔ Bare CL vs. ✘ Bare N**

Context: You are an officer in Dept. of Education and visiting a school with your colleague. Neither of you has met anyone from the school before. Before entering the school, you ask your colleague:

a. {go-haauzeong/ #haauzoeng} hai naam ding neoi?
CL-principal principal be male or female
'Is the principal male or female?' [C]

b. ki asha korchen {headmaster-Ti/ #headmaster} kemon?
what hope do principal-CL principal how
'What are you expecting, how is the principal?' [B]

The **flawed** unique-anaphoric dichotomy

- The German/Fering strong-weak distinction does not align with the bare CL vs. bare N distinction

Types of definites	**German/Fering Def. articles**	**Cantonese/Bangla** Bare CL	Bare N
Anaphoric (=3)	strong	✔	✘
Unique, situation (=4)	weak	✘	✔
Unique, situation (=5)	weak	✔	✘

Table 4: The range of definites expressed by bare CLs and bare Ns (pt.2)

One more contrast: global uniqueness

- A similar pattern is found in cases of uniqueness which involve **globally unique** entities.

(6) **Global uniqueness-earth-moon**: ✘ Bare CL vs. ✔ Bare N
Context: You are a parent teaching your child elementary knowledge. You say to your child:

a. {#Go-jyutloeng/ jyutloeng} hai wongfan gozan zau gin-dou.
CL-moon/ moon at evening that.time then see-able
'The moon can be seen in the evening.' [C]

b. {#chaand-Ta/ chaand} shondher akashe dekha dey
moon-CL/ moon evening sky see give
'The moon appears in the evening.' [B]

One more contrast: global uniqueness

- Again, a flipped pattern is found in another context which ALSO displays **global uniqueness**: only Bare CLs are used; Bare nouns are infelicitous.

(7) **Global uniqueness-alien-moon**: ✔ Bare CL vs. ✘ Bare N
Context: You are an astronaut and are performing a mission on an alien planet. There is only one moon there. You say:

a. {Go-jyutloeng/ #jyutloeng} hai wongfan gozan zau gin-dou.
CL-moon/ moon at evening that.time then see-able
'The moon can be seen in the evening.' [C]

b. {chaand-Ta/ #chaand} shondher akash-e dekha dey
moon-CL/ moon evening sky-LOC see give
'The moon appears in the evening.' [B]

Not unique vs. anaphoric

- A *systematic* difference in the choice of definite forms is found in Cantonese and Bangla.
- However, this is **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

Next steps...

- Given that Bare CLs can be used in both anaphoric and unique contexts, we suggest that **bare CLs** are **plain definite descriptions**, covering cases of *both* anaphoric and unique definites (supporting Jenks 2018's claims about Cantonese).
- In the following, we focus on **bare Ns** by probing further into their *licensing conditions* among unique contexts.
- We will return to the infelicity of bare CLs in certain contexts later.

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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-unique-teacher)but *not* in (5) (situation-unique-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'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***.

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) (unique-situation-teacher)and (6) the referent can be substituted with **'our principal'** and **'our moon'** respectively and in (5) (global-uniqueness-alien-moon) and (7) (unique-situation-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)
1SG-GEN moon 3SG-GEN moon
'our moon' (vs. their moon) [B]

Adding up

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

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

- 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 referent and the discourse participants.
- 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 ∀ 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	✔	*
∀ (co-varying)	✔	*

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

➜ Unique bare Ns behave like **rigid designators**

(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
student-CL/ student sat
'The student sat down.' [B]

- Bare CLs, in contrast, do not have such a restriction.

Nouns : Permitted

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

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'	*hoksaang*	*chhatro*
	'colleague'	*tungsi*	*shohokormi*
	'girl'	*neoizai*	*meye*
	'worker'	*bakleng*	*sromik*
	'old person'	*loujan*	*buro*
Non-human	'goldfish'	*gamjyu*	*chinamach*
	'bunny'	*touzai*	*khorgosh*
Inanimate	'river'	*ho*	*nodi*
	'pen'	*bat*	*kolom*

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.

Parallel with definite bare Ns

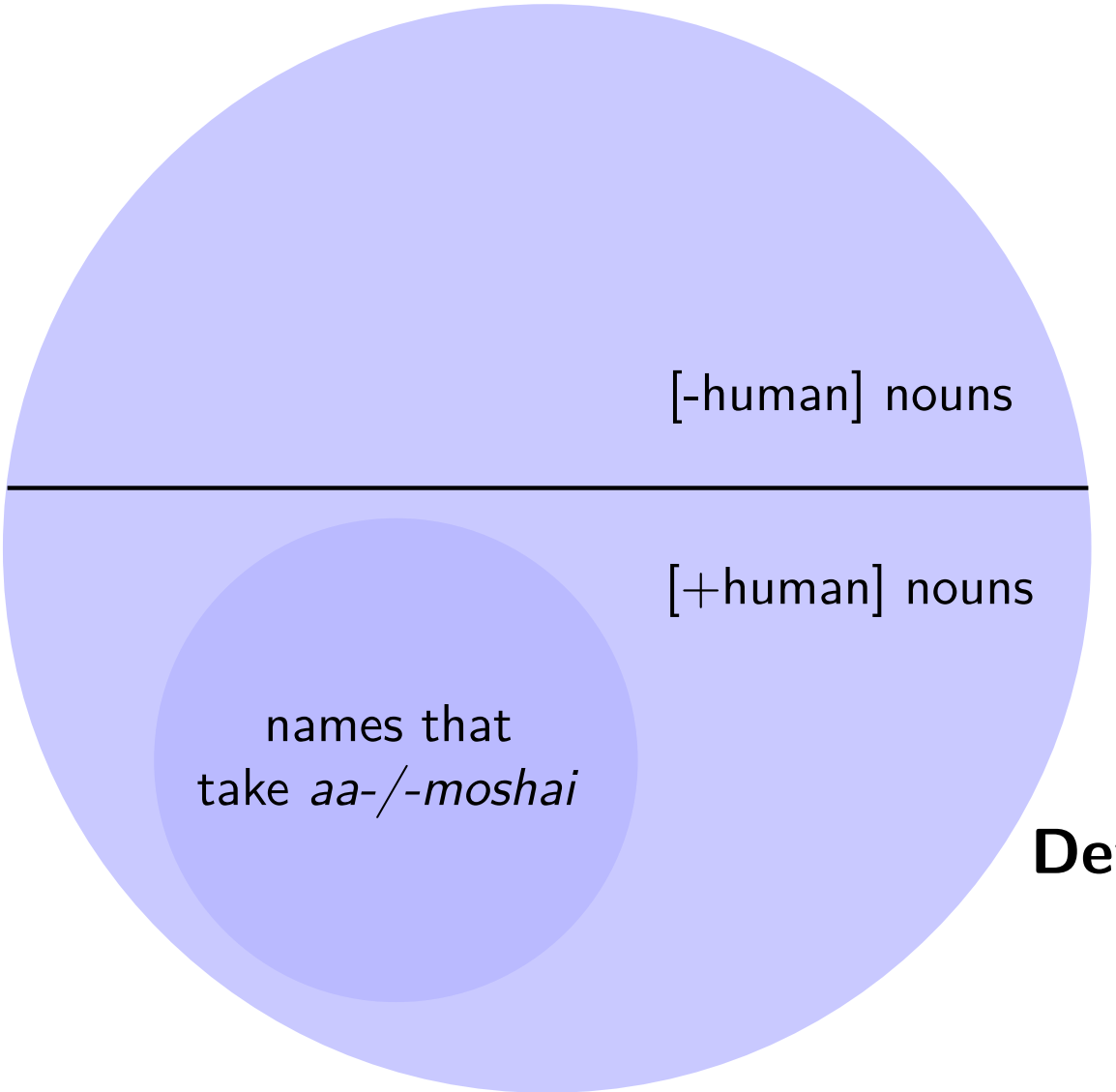
- Besides proper names, the affixes combine with a ***subset*** of common nouns to yield a name-like reading (=15).

(15) a. **aa-**{haauzoeng/*hoksaang} zodai-zo.
AA-principal/student sit.down-PFV
'Principal/*Student sat down.' [C]

b. {headmaster/*chhatro}-**moshai** boshlo
principal/student-HONF sat
'Principal/*Student sat down.' [B]

- 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.
- The affixed Ns are interchangeable with bare Ns with no change in felicity patterns, including the ones in (3)-(5) and (11)-(12).

Parallel with definite bare Ns



Definite *bare nouns*

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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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)

	[DP level	[NP level]]	
Bare CLs:	D_1: *iota*	(CL+)Common N	➜ Def. descriptions
Bare Ns:	D_2: *iota*+g(i)	Quasi-proper N	➜ *Ref.* quasi-names
Proper names:	D_2: *iota*+g(i)	Proper N	➜ *Ref.* names

NP level

- 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: $[\![N_c]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda x_e.P(w)(x)$

b. Proper noun: $[\![N_p]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda x_e.$ x bears N_p at w

c. Quasi-proper noun: $[\![N_q]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda x_e : P(w)(x).$ x bears N_q at w

- Note that (common) nouns in classifier languages are usually treated as kind-denoting (Krifka 1995; Chierchia 1998; Yang 2001; Jiang 2020).
- For simplicity, we follow Trinh (2011) and assume a property denoting analysis.

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) $[\![\textit{haauzoeng}_c/\textit{headmaster}_c]\!]^{g,w}$ (common noun)
$= \lambda x_e.\textit{principal}(w)(x)$

(19) $[\![\textit{haauzoeng}_q/\textit{headmaster}_q]\!]^{g,w}$ (quasi-proper noun)
$= \lambda x_e : \textit{principal}(w)(x).\ x$ bears *haauzoeng/headmaster* at w

- The set of ambiguous nouns is language-specific, which depends on the naming convention, and can be diagnosed by vocative and title uses.

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

- **D_1** denotes an iota operator, with a **uniqueness** presupposition.

DP level: D_2

- Unique bare Ns (quasi-names) and proper names are derived by D_2.
- D_2 is also null, but may spell out as *aa-* (Cantonese) or *-moshai* (Bangla) if the NP is [+human].

(21) $[\![D_2\text{-}\varnothing_i / aa_i / moshai_i]\!]^{g,w}$
$= \lambda P : P \text{ is name-bearing} \wedge \forall f[P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(i)] . \iota x[P(w)(x) \wedge g(i) = x]$

- **D_2** 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)
  - **Functional relation ➜** (i) capturing the the relation between the speaker (=s) and addressee (=a) and the referent; (ii) derives the uniqueness

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. $[\![\text{CL}]\!]^{g,w} = \lambda P \lambda x\colon\ x \in AT(P(w)).\ [P(w)(x)]$

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) $[_{DP}\ D_1\text{-}\varnothing\ [_{CLP}\ CL\ [_{NP}\ N\ ]]]$

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

NP

$[\![haauzoeng_c / headmaster_c]\!]^{g,w}$

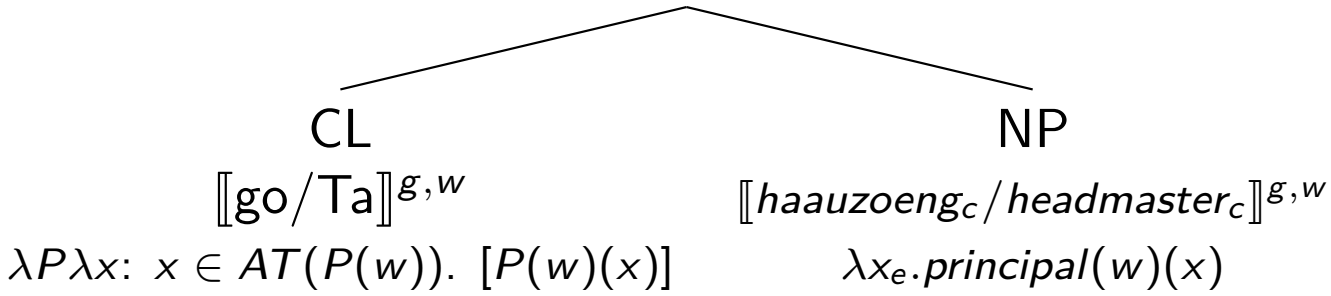
$\lambda x_e.principal(w)(x)$

Derivation: Bare CLs

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

(24) $[_{DP}\ D_1\text{-}\varnothing\ [_{CLP}\ CL\ [_{NP}\ N\ ]]]$

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



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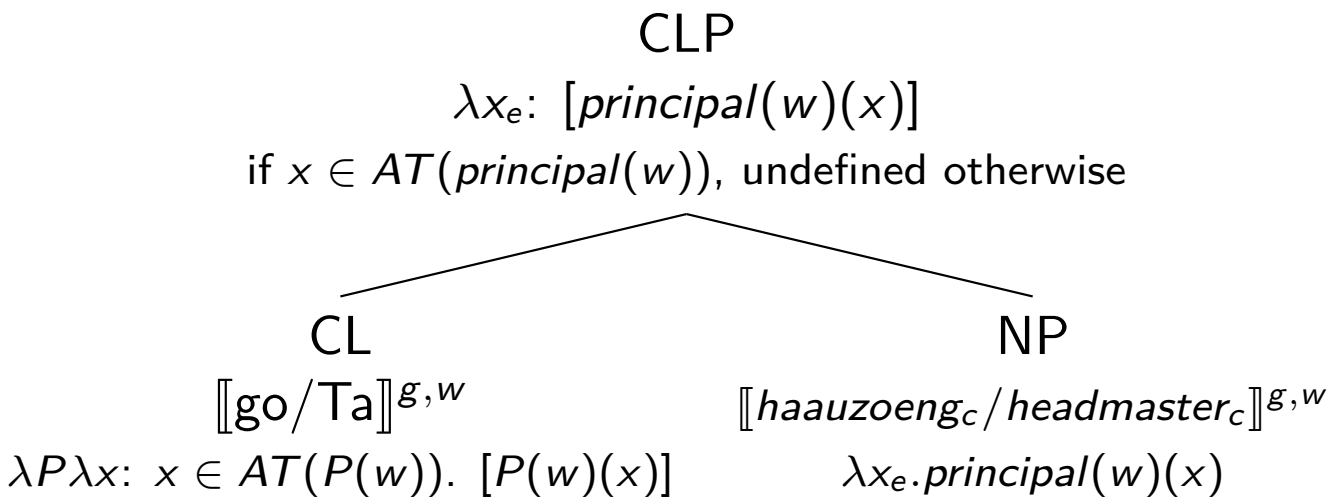

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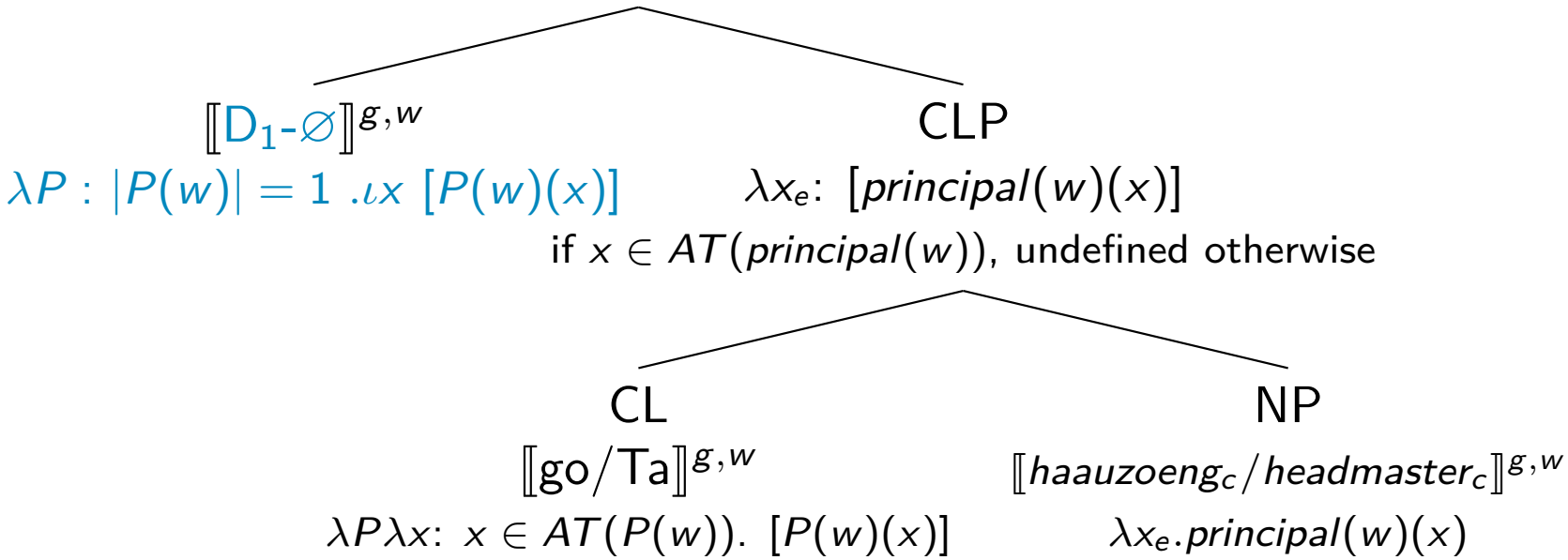

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(25) The composition of *go-haauzoeng/headmaster-Ta* 'the principal'

DP

$\iota x.[principal(w)(x)]$

if $x \in AT(principal(w)) \wedge |principal(w)| = 1$; undefined otherwise

$[\![D_1\text{-}\varnothing]\!]^{g,w}$

$\lambda P : |P(w)| = 1\ .\iota x\ [P(w)(x)]$

CLP

λx_e: $[principal(w)(x)]$

if $x \in AT(principal(w))$, undefined otherwise

CL

$[\![go/Ta]\!]^{g,w}$

$\lambda P \lambda x$: $x \in AT(P(w))$. $[P(w)(x)]$

NP

$[\![haauzoeng_c/headmaster_c]\!]^{g,w}$

$\lambda x_e.principal(w)(x)$

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) $[_{DP}\ D_2\text{-}\varnothing_5/aa_5/moshai_5\ [_{NP}\ N_q\ ]]$

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

NP

$[\![haauzoeng_q/headmaster_q]\!]^{g,w}$

$\lambda x_e : principal(w)(x).$

x bears *haauzoeng/headmaster* at w

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(26) $[_{\text{DP}}\ \text{D}_2\text{-}\varnothing_5/aa_5/moshai_5\ [_{\text{NP}}\ \text{N}_q\ ]]$

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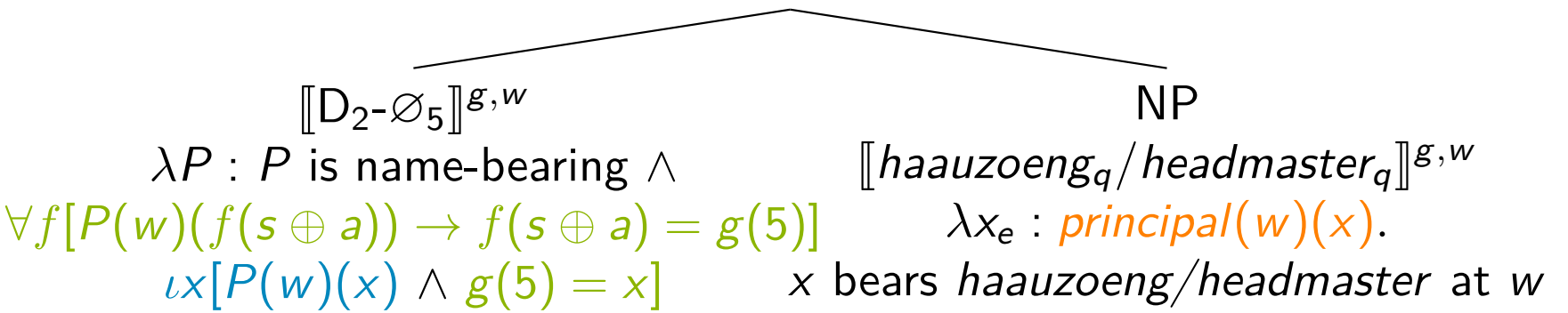

Derivation: Bare Ns

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(26) $[_{DP}\ D_2\text{-}\varnothing_5/aa_5/moshai_5\ [_{NP}\ N_q\ ]]$

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

DP

$\iota x.\ x$ bears *haauzoeng/headmaster* at $w \wedge g(5) = x$
if $principal(w)(x) \wedge$
$[\![haauzoeng_q/headmaster_q]\!]$ is name-bearing $\wedge$
$\forall f[[\![haauzoeng_q/headmaster_q]\!](w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(5)]$;
undefined otherwise

$[\![D_2\text{-}\varnothing_5]\!]^{g,w}$
$\lambda P : P$ is name-bearing $\wedge$
$\forall f[P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(5)]$
$\iota x[P(w)(x) \wedge g(5) = x]$

NP
$[\![haauzoeng_q/headmaster_q]\!]^{g,w}$
$\lambda x_e : principal(w)(x).$
x bears *haauzoeng/headmaster* at w

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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
  ➜ the presuppositions for using D_2 are **not** met
  ➜ D_1 is used instead.

➜ **bare CLs** are allowed; bare Ns are disallowed

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

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) $[_{\text{PossP}}$ our $[_{\text{NP}}$ 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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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 unique	Definite description anaphoric	Quasi-names
Cantonese	CL-lang.	bare CL		bare N/*aa-*
Bangla	CL-lang.	bare CL		bare N/*-moshai*

Table 9: The typology of definiteness with quasi-names (pt.1)

- The choice of the referring expressions depends on various factors:
  - *Maximize Presupposition* for bare N vs. bare CL
  - *Competing proper names* for proper name vs. quasi-name.

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.

Language	**Type**	**Definite description**		**Quasi-names**
		unique	**anaphoric**	
Cantonese	CL-lang.	bare CL		bare N/*aa-*
Bangla	CL-lang.	bare CL		bare N/*-moshai*
Mandarin	CL-lang.	bare N		bare N
Akan	Non-CL-lang.	determiner *no*		bare N
Hindi	Non-CL-lang.	bare N		bare N/*-ji*
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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All the errors are of course our own responsibilities.

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