

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

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1 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?

1.1 Background: typology based on uniqueness vs. anaphoricity

- 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 {#vom/
Hans has a writer and a politician interviewed He has **from-the_{weak}**/
von dem} Politiker keine interessanten Antworten bekommen.
from the_{strong} politician no interesting answers gotten
'Hans interviewed a writer and a politician. He didn't get any interesting answers from the politician.' (Schwarz 2009:30)

- 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)

1.2 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.

Road map

- §2: An apparent unique-anaphoric dichotomy §5: Proposal
 §3: Functional relation §6: Competing referential expressions
 §4: Name-like properties §7: Concluding remarks

2 The flawed uniqueness-anaphoric dichotomy**2.1 An apparent pattern**

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

(3) Anaphoric: ✓ Bare CL vs. ✗ Bare N

- a. Gaaming camjat gindou [jat-go-haauzoeng] tung [jat-go-lousi]. {go-haauzoeng/
 Ka-Ming yesterday saw one-CL-principal and one-CL-teacher. CL-principal
 #haauzoeng} hou houjan. [C(antonese)]
 principal very kind

'Ka-Ming met a principal and a teacher yesterday. The principal was very kind.'

- b. Robi-r ek-jon headmaster ebong ek-jon shikhhok-er shathe dekha holo.
 Robi-r one-CL principal and one-CL teacher-GEN with see happen.
 {headmaster-Ti/ #headmaster} duschintay chilen.
 principal-CL/ principal worried AUX

'Robi met a principal and a teacher. The principal looked worried.' [B(angla)]

- On the other hand, in uniqueness situations where weak articles are used in German, only Bare nouns are used in Cantonese and Bangla.

(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-haauxeong/ haauxeong} 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 diyech-en?
 principal-cl/ principal you-DAT timetable-cl of.course give-PERF-3
 ‘The principal must have given you the timetable?’ [B]

- 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)

2.2 The unique-anaphoric dichotomy does not hold

- However, the dichotomy breaks if we consider (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. You and your colleague have a visit to a new school today. Neither of you have met anyone from the school before. This morning, when you both arrive at the school, you ask your colleague:

- a. {go-haauxeong/ #haauxeong} hai naam ding neoi?
 CL-principal principal be male or female
 ‘Is the principal male or female?’ [C]
- b. ki asha korchen {headmaster-Ta/ #headmaster} kemon?
 what hope do principal-cl principal how
 ‘What are you expecting, how is the principal?’ [B]

- 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)

- 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]
- 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 landed on the planet and collected data about the moon, and report to your team on the spaceship:
- 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]
- 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 “strong-weak” dichotomy of definites does **not** hold universally

- Note that other reported contrasts between unique and anaphoric definites in Schwarz (2009) also do not line up in Cantonese and Bangla.
- **Immediate situation uniqueness:** only bare CLs are allowed, as in (8).

(i) **Immediate situation uniqueness:** ✓ Bare CL vs. ✗ Bare N

Context: In a market, a man suddenly ran past you and took your handbag.

- a. {Go-gipfei/ #gipfei} coeng-zo ngo ge saudo!
 CL-robber/ robber rob-PFV 1SG MOD handbag
 ‘The robber took my handbag!’ [C]
- b. {chor-Ta/ #chor} palano-r aage o-ke dhor
 thief-CL/ thief run-GEN before 3-SG-DAT catch
 ‘Catch the thief before he runs away.’ [B]

- **Bridging:** In German and Fering (Schwarz 2009, 2013), there is a split. Bridging with a *part-whole relation* (e.g. church-tower, house-roof) only allows weak articles, and bridging with a *producer relation* (e.g. painting-painter, book-author) only allows strong articles.
- In Cantonese and Bangla, however, both cases can only be expressed by bare CLs. Bare Ns are disallowed.

(ii) **Bridging - producer relation:** ✓ Bare CL vs. ✗ Bare N

- a. Mingzai camjat maai-zo jat-fuk waa. {Go-waagaa/ #waagaa} bei-zo zittau keoi.
 3SG yesterday buy-PFV one-CL painting. CL-painter/ painter give-PFV discount 3SG
 ‘Ming bought a painting yesterday. The painter made him a good deal.’ [C]

- b. Onu kal mela theke ek-Ta painting kinte chay. {painter-Ta/#painter} naki
 Onu tomorrow fair from one-CL painting buy want painter-CL/painter NAKI
 khub naam kora
 very name do
 ‘Onu wants to buy a painting from the fair tomorrow. Apparently, the painter is very famous.’ [B]

(iii) **Bridging - part-whole relation:** ✓ Bare CL vs. ✗ Bare N

- a. Ngodei maai-zo jat-gaan uk. Daan {Go-ukdeng/ #ukdeng} gingjan lauseoi wo4.
 1SG buy-PFV one-CL house. but CL-rooftop/ rooftop unexpectedly leak SFP
 ‘We bought a house. But the roof unexpectedly leaks!’ [C]
- b. amra gram-er majhe ek-Ta bari khnuje peyechilam. {chhad-Ta/# tower} ektu
 We village-GEN middle one-CL house search got roof-CL/ roof little
 bhanga bhanga chilo
 broken broken was
 ‘We found a house in the middle of the village. The roof was a little crooked’ [B]

3 Functional relation licenses unique bare Ns

- 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 (s)he has announced that there will be an examination. You want to discuss this with a friend at college, who doesn't go to that art school. 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 jytloeng (vs. keoidei ge jytloeng)
 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:

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

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

What are the 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.

4 Name-like properties

Bare Ns \neq 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

4.1 Scopal behavior

- **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 principal)
- 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 principal)

- 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. (also noted in Jenks 2018 for Cantonese)¹

1. Note that his example (1) has a confound that the universal quantifier operates on entities (i.e. ‘city’), creating a co-varying reading for ‘mayor’ as *bridging* use. However, we have already seen that bare Ns cannot be used in bridging.

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

- a. Ngo muici heoi caacaanteng, {go-lousai/ lousai} dou wui tung ngo kinggai.
 1SG every.time go restaurant CL-boss boss ALL will with 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} ama-r shathe kotha bolen
 I whenever any office-LOC go, boss-CL/ boss 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)

- **Third**, bare Ns only have a *de re* reading when embedded under attitude verbs and lead to false statements in (13). Bare CLs, yet, allow (13) to be truthfully asserted with a *de dicto* reading.

(iv) De dicto: Bare CL: ✓ vs. Bare N: ✗

Context: Maggie is new to a school. In the first few days she forms a false belief about the school’s principal that he is unpleasant, because the person she thought was the principal was actually Billy. After a few days she finds out about her false belief and now knows who the real principal is. She says:

- a. Ngo zangging gokdak {go-haauzoeng/ #haauzoeng} hai go seiijan . [C]
 1SG used.to think CL-principal principal be CL bad.person
 ‘I used to think that the principal is a bad person.’ (true with Bare CL vs. false with Bare N)

- b. ami bhaptam {headmastar-Ti/ #headmastar} kharap manush [B]
 I thought principal-CL/ principal bad human
 ‘I used to think that the principal is a bad person.’ (true with Bare CL vs. false with Bare N)

Narrow scope under	Bare CLs	Bare Ns
Counterfactual	✓	*
∀ (co-varying)	✓	*
Attitude verbs (de dicto)	✓	*

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

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

- (i) Hai Oubaamaa heoi-gwo ge mui jat-go singsi, keoi dou tung {go-sizoeng/ sizoeng}
 at Obama go-EXP MOD every one-CL city 3SG all with CL-mayor mayor
 gin-gwo min.
 see-EXP face
 ‘In every city that Obama visited, he met with the mayor.’ [C]
 Bare CL: the mayor of that city, i.e. different mayors
 Bare N: the mayor of some random city, i.e. only one mayor (adapted from Jenks 2018:528-529)

4.2 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) *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.

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

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

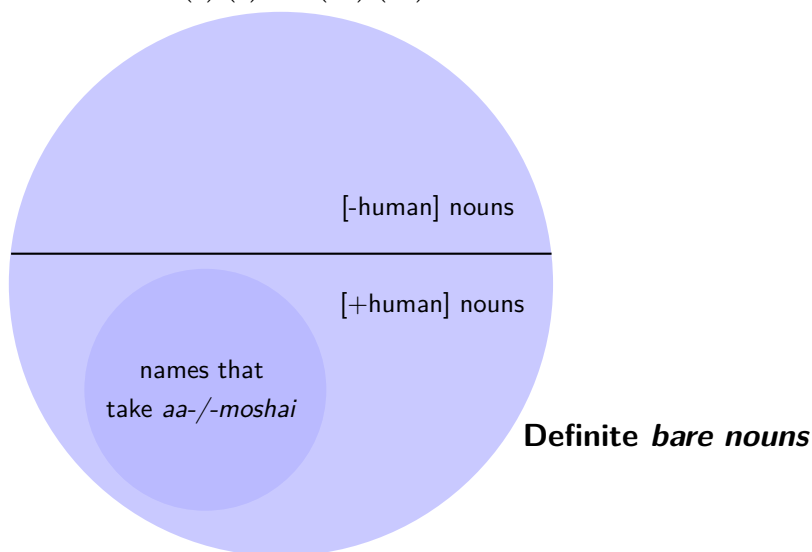
Name-marking devices in Cantonese and Bangla

- 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.
- (v) a. Hoenggong jingsihyun jau loeng go (***aa-**)**gaafai**: Zoenggaafai tung Loenggaafai.
 Hong Kong show.business have two CL AA-Kafai KF-Cheung and KF-Leung
 'There are two Ka-Fai-s (i.e. two persons that have the name *Ka-Fai* in the show business in Hong Kong: Ka-Fai Cheung and Ka-Fai Leung.' [C]

- b. Kolkata-r film-chottor-e du-jon Ghosh-(***moshai**) achhen: Robi Ghosh ebong
 Kolkata-GEN film-industry-LOC two-CL Ghosh-HONF are Robi Ghosh and
 Dilip Ghosh
 Dilip Ghosh
 ‘There are two Ghosh-s (i.e two persons that have the name Ghosh) in the film-industry of
 Kolkata: Robi Ghosh and Dilip Ghosh’ [B]

Parallel with definite bare Ns

- Besides proper names, the affixes combine with a **subset** of common nouns to yield a name-like reading (=15).²
- (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).



2. Along with *moshai*, there's another morpheme which works somewhat similarly: *babu* (Ankana Saha p.c). Despite appearances, *babu* has a different property than *moshai*. An important data that supports this claim is that *moshai* can be attached to *babu*: *babu moshai* but not the other way round: **moshai babu*. As we have claimed, *moshai* is a morpheme akin to proprial articles. As for *babu*, there are certain nouns that take them and get lexicalized. For example, the expression *daktar babu* 'doctor babu' is lexicalized to the extent that the classifier can combine with it *daktar babu-Ta* 'doctor babu-CL'. Importantly, *babu* is not a proprial article-like morpheme, unlike *moshai*.

5 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 : <i>iota</i>	(CL+)Common N	→ Def. descriptions	
	Bare Ns:	D_2 : <i>iota+g(i)</i>	Quasi-proper N	→ Ref. quasi-names	
	Proper names:	D_2 : <i>iota+g(i)</i>	Proper N	→ Ref. names	

5.1 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**: $\llbracket N_c \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda x_e. P(w)(x)$
 b. **Proper noun**: $\llbracket N_p \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda x_e. x \text{ bears } N_p \text{ at } w$
 c. **Quasi-proper noun**: $\llbracket N_q \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda x_e : P(w)(x). x \text{ bears } N_q \text{ at } w$

- 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.³
- 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.

3. Under a kind-denoting analysis, a common noun denotes a kind, and a classifier (like *go/Ta*) combines with the common noun to yield a property $\langle s, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$. The classifier individuates the kind.

- (i) The denotation of common noun $[_{NP} N_c]$
- $\llbracket haauzoeng_c/headmaster_c \rrbracket^{g,w} = \cap principal$
 $= \lambda w. \iota [principal(w)]$, where $\lambda w. \iota [principal(w)]$ is in the set of kinds K
 - Alternatively:
 $\llbracket haauzoeng_c/headmaster_c \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda w. principal_k(w)$, where $principal_k \in K$
- (ii) The denotation of $[_{CLP} CL [_{NP} N_c]]$
- $$\llbracket go/Ta \rrbracket^{g,w} (\llbracket haauzoeng_c/headmaster_c \rrbracket^{g,w}) = \cup \cap principal$$
- $$= \lambda w \lambda x. [x \leq_{AT} \iota [principal(w)]]$$
- $$= \lambda w \lambda x. [principal(w)(x)]$$

We leave whether proper nouns can denote kind in classifier languages as an open issue.

(18) $\llbracket \text{haauzoeng}_c/\text{headmaster}_c \rrbracket^{g,w}$ (common noun)
 $= \lambda x_e. \text{principal}(w)(x)$

(19) $\llbracket \text{haauzoeng}_q/\text{headmaster}_q \rrbracket^{g,w}$ (quasi-proper noun)
 $= \lambda x_e : \text{principal}(w)(x). x \text{ bears } \text{haauzoeng}/\text{headmaster} \text{ at } w$

- The set of ambiguous nouns is language-specific, which depends on the naming convention, and can be diagnosed by vocative and title uses.
- A quasi-proper noun can always be used in vocatives and titles (but not the opposite - non-human nouns like *hokhaau/iskul* ‘School’ cannot be vocatives/titles).

(vi) Vocatives

a. Wei, *haauzoeng*/**hoksaang*, ngo soeng man je!
 voc *principal*/student 1SG want ask thing
 Literally: ‘Hey, Principal/*Student! I have a question to ask.’ [C]

b. *headmaster*/**chhatro*, am-ar ek-Ta proshno ache
principal/student, 1SG-GEN one-CL question AUX
 Literally: ‘Principal/*Student, I have a question.’ [B]

(vii) Titles

a. Waasingdeon *zungtou*/**hoksaang*
 Washington *president*/student
 ‘President/*Student George Washington.’ [C]

b. *Rashtrapoti*/**chhatro* Washington
president/**student* Washington
 ‘President Washington/*Student Washington’ [B]

5.2 DP level

- 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).⁴

4. Syntactic movement triggered by D_1 :

(i) a. $[_{DP} D_1 - \emptyset [_{CLP} CL [_{NP} N]]]$ (Cantonese: CL-to-D movement \rightarrow CL-N)
 b. $[_{DP} \uparrow [_{D'} D_1 - \emptyset [_{CLP} CL [_{NP} N]]]]$ (Bangla: NP-to-Spec movement \rightarrow N-CL)

$$(20) \quad \llbracket \mathbf{D}_1 - \emptyset \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda P : |P(w)| = 1 . \iota x [P(w)(x)]$$

- \mathbf{D}_1 denotes an iota operator, with a **uniqueness** presupposition.
- Unique bare Ns (quasi-names) and proper names are derived by \mathbf{D}_2 .
- \mathbf{D}_2 is also null, but may spell out as *aa-* (Cantonese) or *-moshai* (Bangla) if the NP is [+human].

$$(21) \quad \llbracket \mathbf{D}_2 - \emptyset_i / aa_i / moshai_i \rrbracket^{g,w} \\ = \lambda P : P \text{ is name-bearing} \wedge \quad . \iota x [P(w)(x) \wedge g(i) = x] \\ \quad \forall f [P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(i)]$$

- \mathbf{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** \rightarrow restricts the combining nouns to be (quasi-)proper nouns (cf. Muñoz 2019)
 - **Functional relation** \rightarrow (i) capturing the the relation between the speaker (=s) and addressee (=a) and the referent; (ii) derives the uniqueness

(22) Presupposition on the functional relation

$$a. \quad P \text{ is name-bearing} \wedge \forall f [P(w)(f(s \oplus a)) \rightarrow f(s \oplus a) = g(i)]$$

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
 - \rightarrow Uniqueness
 - \rightarrow 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).

$$(23) \quad a. \quad \llbracket \mathbf{CL} \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda P \lambda x : x \in AT(P(w)). [P(w)(x)]$$

$$b. \quad AT(P(w)) = \lambda x . [x \in P(w) \wedge \forall y [(y \in P(w) \wedge y \leq x) \rightarrow (y = x)]]$$

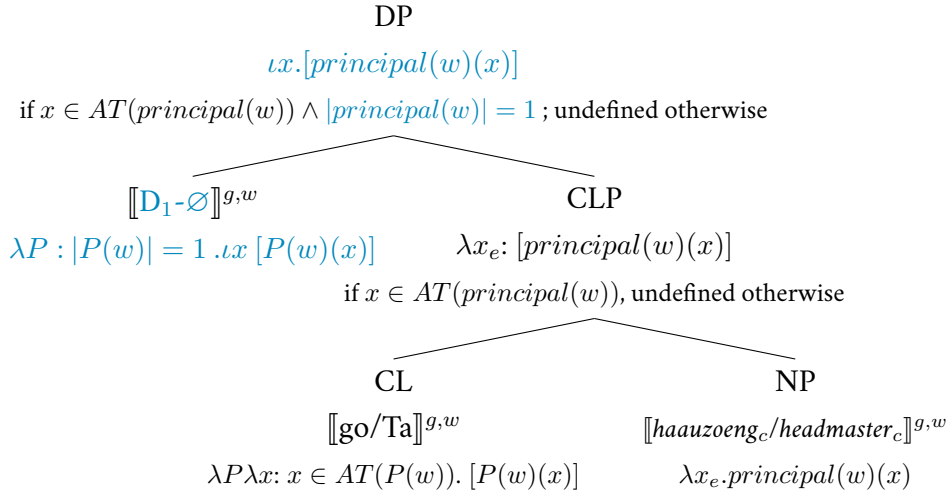
(after Trinh 2011)

5.3 Derivations

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

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

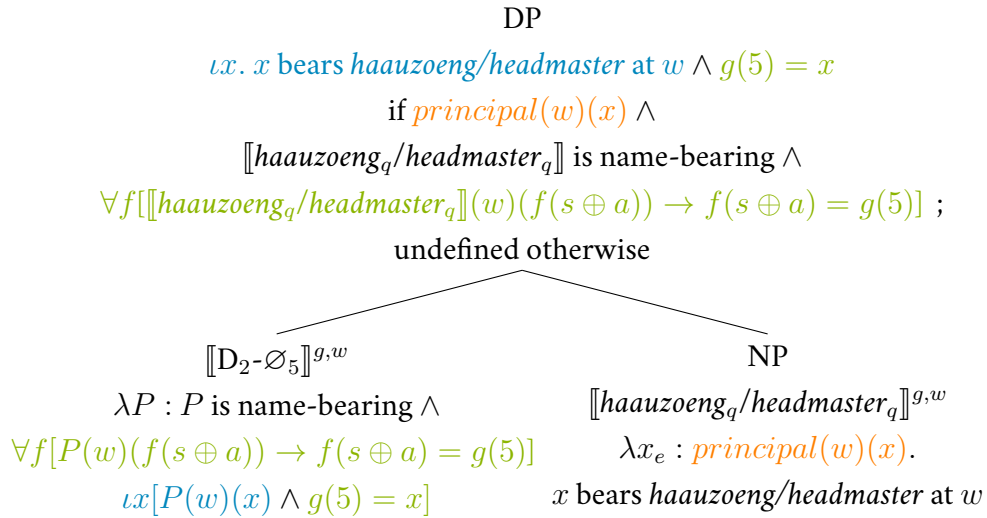
(25) The composition of *go-haauzoeng/headmaster-Ta* ‘the principal’



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

(26) $[\text{DP } D_2-\emptyset_5/\textit{aa}_5/\textit{moshai}_5 [\text{NP } \text{N}_q]]$

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



6 Competing referential expressions

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)

#1: 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

#2: 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

#3: 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*⁵
- 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]

#4: 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:*

5. Accommodation also happens in some cases where the relation between the discourse participants and the referent is unclear. In an example like (1), both bare N and bare CL is felicitous even though the speaker is not related to the driver in a typical sense (Andrew Simpson p.c).

- (i) *Context: A car has crashed into a tree. A team of firefighters arrive at the scene and see that the car is starting to catch fire. They are concerned about the driver of the car, who they cannot see – they fear he might still be in the car and in danger. One firefighter shouts:*
- ei, driver/ driver driver-Ta kothay? ami toh kau-ke dekh-te pacchi na
 hey driver driver-CL where I TOP someone-ACC see-INF can NEG
 'Hey where's the driver? I can't really see anyone.'

We speculate that in cases like these two factors that facilitate accommodation. First, the firefighter's presence in the accident-site. Second, the knowledge about the driver's current predicament which allows the speaker to 'pretend' that they are related to the driver, perhaps a relation like 'the firefighter of the driver-situation'.

- 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 bhodro
 dog-CL dog 1PL-GEN dog Bobby but very-INT well.behaved
 '(Whatever you say,) the dog/ Our dog/ Bobby is very well-behaved.' [B]

- Why are **bare CLs** 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) [_{POSSP} our [_{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)

7 Concluding remarks

- 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/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*).
- 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/ <i>aa-</i>
Bangla	CL-lang.	bare CL		bare N/ <i>-moshai</i>
Mandarin	CL-lang.	bare N		bare N
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)

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Number

We suggest that common nouns are number-numeral and denote both atomic and plural individuals in Cantonese and Bangla, where *regular* plural morphology is not found (but see **Saha:2023** for a recent singular kind analysis for Bangla).⁶

$$(31) \quad \llbracket N_c \rrbracket^{g,w} = \{a, b, c, a + b, b + c, a + c, a + b + c, \dots\}$$

We treat proper nouns as always singular, as evidenced by their incompatibility with plural and group classifiers (see (35) below). We similarly assume that quasi-proper nouns are also singular.

6. *-gulo* in Bangla is not a regular plural morpheme and may apply to mass nouns (**Dayal:2014**).

$$(32) \quad \llbracket N_p \rrbracket^{g,w} = \{a, b, c, \dots\}$$

$$(33) \quad \llbracket N_q \rrbracket^{g,w} = \{a, b, c, \dots\}$$

Plural classifiers, such as *di* in Cantonese, result in a set that consists of plural individuals only.

$$(34) \quad a. \quad \llbracket \text{CL}_{PL} \rrbracket^{g,w} = \lambda P \lambda x: x \notin AT(P(w)). [P(w)(x)]$$

The plural classifier requires the combining noun to denote plural individuals, and cannot combine with proper nouns which denote singular individuals. Similarly, group classifiers, such as *dol* in Bangla, cannot combine with proper nouns.⁷

$$(35) \quad a. \quad \text{Baan-dou jau} \quad \{\text{leong-go/} \quad * \text{jat-di/} \quad * \text{jat-baan}\} \quad \text{Gaaming.}$$

class-LOC have two-CL_{individual} one-CL.PL one-CL_{group} Ka-Ming

‘In the class, there are two Ka-Mings/*some Ka-Mings/*a group of Ka-Mings.’ [C]

$$b. \quad \text{class-e} \quad \{\text{du-To/} \quad * \text{ek-dol}\} \quad \text{Robi achhe}$$

classroom-LOC two-CL_{individual}/ one-CL_{group}

‘There are two Robis/ *a group of Robis in the class.’ [B]

With the number component, the proposed analysis also predicts quasi-names to always be **singular**, just like referential proper names.

$$(36) \quad a. \quad \text{Context: you invited your class teachers, Mr. Wong and Miss Chan to a class picnic, but they both cannot attend. You tell your classmates:}$$

{\#Lousi/ Wong-lousi tung Can-lousi} (dou) waa m-lai.

teacher Wong-teacher and Chan-teacher ALL say not-come.

‘{\#The teacher/ Mr. Wong and Miss Chan} (all) said they cannot join.’ [C]

$$b. \quad \text{Context: you invited your class teachers, Miss Onu and Miss Pritha to a class picnic, but they both cannot attend. You tell your classmates:}$$

{\#didimoni/ Onu-didimoni aar Pritha-didimoni} bollo ashte parbe na

teacher/ Onu-teacher and Pritha-teacher said come can NEG

‘{\#The teacher/ Ms. Onu and Ms. Pritha} said they cannot join.’ [B]

This is strikingly different from Mandarin definite bare Ns, which is number-neutral. The definite plural reading is available using bare Ns, and becomes obligatory with the distributive operator *dou*:

$$(37) \quad \text{Xuesheng (dou) shui-zhao le.}$$

student all slept SFP.

‘The students all fell asleep.’ [M]

7. In English, *Smiths* or *some Smiths*, with the plural *-s*, may unproblematically mean pluralities of persons with the name Smith. The difference between plural CLs and the plural *-s* might be that plural morphemes perform the sum function and combine singular entities into plural entities, whereas plural classifiers only check the plurality and filter out singular individuals. This difference is formalized as presupposition here.

8.2 Appendix 2: More cross-linguistic data

- **Mandarin**, following Dayal and Jiang (2022) and Simpson and Wu (2022), employs bare Ns for both unique and anaphoric definites (*against* Jenks 2018).
- Mandarin bare Ns can also express quasi-names, such as *Lousi* ‘Teacher’ (Cheng and Sybesma 1999). While both quasi-names and standard definite descriptions are bare Ns, there is a way to tease them apart.
- Associative plural *tamen* ‘3PL’ can only attach to a name, but not a definite description.

(38) a. {*na ge laoshi/ *wo laoshi} **tamen** lai-le [M]
 that CL teacher 1SG teacher 3PL come-PFV
 Int.: ‘{That teacher/ my teacher} and related people came.’

b. {Huang-laoshi/ Zhangsan} **tamen** lai-le [M]
 Huang-teacher Zhangsan 3PL come-PFV
 ‘{Teacher Huang/ Zhangsan} and related people came.’

- Only definite *laoshi* ‘teacher’, but not definite *xuesang* ‘student’, may take associative plural.
- The noun restriction parallels Cantonese and Bangla, suggesting that *laoshi* (but not *xuesang*) can be a quasi-name in Mandarin.

(39) {Laoshi/ *xuesang} **tamen** lai-le [M]
 teacher student 3PL come-PFV
 ‘{The teacher/ *the student} and related people came.’

- Looking at **Hindi**, which also uses **bare Ns for definites** but is **not a classifier language**, we find that it has name-marking devices (such as *-ji*) like Cantonese and Bangla (Bhatt and Davis 2023). Although Hindi doesn’t have different strategies that mark unique and familiar definites, and keeping certain exceptions (*ladke-ji* ‘the boys who I respect’ and *ladki-ji* ‘the girl who I respect’) in mind, it seems that nouns can take the suffix *-ji* behave like quasi-names.
- **First**, both names and quasi-names can be affixed with the suffix *-ji*.

(40) a. {Rajesh/ Rajesh-**ji**} aaye hē [H]
 Rajesh Rajesh-HONF come AUX.3PL.HONF
 ‘Rajesh has come.’

b. {Pradhan-mantri/ Pradhan-mantri-**ji**} aaye hē [H]
 Prime-minister Prime-minister-HONF come AUX.3PL.HONF
 ‘The Prime-minister has come.’

- **Second**, nouns with the *ji* suffix resist taking scope under attitude predicates, resulting into a false statement as in (41).

(41) De dicto: N: ✓ vs. N-ji: ✗

Context: Anu is new to a school. In the first few days she forms a false belief about the school's principal that he is unpleasant, because the person she thought was the principal was actually Ravi. After a few days she finds out about her false belief and now knows who the real principal is. She says:

main sochti-thi ke {headmaster/#headmaster-ji} ek bure insaan hē [H]
 1SG think-PAST that principal/principal-HONF one bad person AUX.3PL.HONF
 'I used to think that the principal is a bad person.' (true with N vs. false with N-ji)

- Quasi-names can also be found in **languages with an overt definite determiner**.
- **Akan**, with determiner *no*, also has definite bare Ns that exhibit name-like properties (N restrictions in Bombi *et al.* 2019; world-rigidity in (42)).

(42) Co-variation: N-no: ✓ vs. Bare N: ✗

Abiribiara Kofi bε-kɔ sukuu mu nsrahwe no, headmaster (no) ne no kasɔ [A]
 time.every Kofi FUT-go school inside visit DET, principal DET and 3SG.OBJ talk
 'Whenever Kofi goes for a school inspection, the principal talks to him.'

(N *no*: potentially different principals vs. Bare N: only one unique principal)

(Comfort Ahenkorah p.c.)

- This challenges the strong-weak definite distinction proposed for Akan (resonating with Bombi 2018; Owusu 2022; *contra*. Arkoh and Matthewson 2013).

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