

Definiteness in Ngamo (W-Chadic)

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Definiteness across domains

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Topic of the talk

- This talk discusses two kinds of definites in Ngamo (West Chadic)
- with a focus on where Ngamo **differs** from the standard pattern.

(1) Ngò rino. Ngò=i imu
 person enter.PFV.VENT person=DET.DEF.M do.1PL
 lakfù.
 greet.NMLZ
 “A man entered. **The man** greeted us.”

(2) (Njelu woke up late at night. When he woke up, ...)
 a. ... tère(#=i) bulinî.
 moon=DEF.DET.M shine.ICP
 “... **the moon** was shining.”

Plan of the talk:

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Saliency

Background

Ngamo

- Afroasiatic language, West-Chadic A.2 subgroup (Newman 1977)
- It is spoken by about 60'000 speakers in the Nigerian states Yobe and Gombe (Lewis 2009)



Figure 1: Map of Yobe and Gombe State, NE Nigeria

- SVO language with two tones (H/L).

The Ngamo DP

- All determiners follow the noun (3).

(3)	a.	Ngo =i	b.	Ngo =i yo'oto	c.	Ngo wommi'i
		man DEF		man LINK INDF		man DEM.DIST
		"the man"		"a man"		"that man"
	d.	Biya shap	e.	Biya shei	f.	Biya shim
		people all		people many		people few
		"all people"		"many people"		"few people"

- Word order within the DP:

(4) noun > poss > dem / num / adj / rel > def.det

The definite determiner

- Co-occurrence with proper nouns, pronouns, demonstrative, possessive and specific indefinite expressions

- (5)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>a. Halima =s
Halima DEF.F
“(the) Halima”</p> | <p>b. mandu wonsi =s
woman DEM.F DEF.F
“that (the) woman”</p> |
| <p>c. te =s
3SG.F DEF.F
“(the) she”</p> | <p>d. deino =mu =s
staying 1PL.POSS DEF.F
“(the) our staying” [D1G GKA 006]</p> |
| <p>e. a siyasa=i yo'oto ye'e
one.who.is politician=LINK INDF DEF
“the other politician” (lit. the a.certain politician)</p> | |

The definite determiner

- The form of the clitic *s'è* (f) / *i'è* (m/pl) depends on the gender/number of the noun...

- (6)
- a. ngo=**i**
man=DEF.DET.M
“the (previously mentioned) man”
- b. mandu=**s**
woman=DEF.DET.F
“the (previously mentioned) woman”
- c. mande=**i**
women=DEF.DET.PL
“the (previously mentioned) women”

The definite determiner

- and the DP position & whether it is preceded by a consonant or vowel.
- Schuh (2004:15): linking morpheme s/i + 'è'

(7) Ne moishmentik **bido=i'e** / **ngirak** ye'e
 1SG see.HAB.TOT monkey=DEF.DET vervet.monkey DEF.DET
 "I can see the (prementioned) monkey/vervet monkey."

(8) Ne tamko **bido=i** / **ngirak=i'e** ki Kule
 1SG showPFV monkey=DEF.DET vervet.monkey=DEF.DET to Kule
 "I showed the (prementioned) monkey/vervet monkey to Kule"

The clausal determiner

- A similar morpheme, related to *s'è/i'è* (Schuh 2005), is used in examples with narrow focus, conditionals, and when-clauses:

(9) Matko **(=i)* **Dayayi**.
die.PFV BM Dayayi

DAYAYI died. (as answer to 'Who died?')

(10) **Na** Njelu tefeno (ye), a ndutu gama=mu...
if Njelu arrive.VENT YE 3SG go.FUT.VENT place.of=1PL.POSS
"If Njelu arrived, he'll visit us [...]."

(11) **do** Njelu tefeno nzono (ye), Mary a ton
when Njelu arrive.VENT yesterday YE Mary at in
obis=to.
office=3SG.F.POSS
"When Njelu arrived yesterday, Mary was in her office."

Two kinds of definites

Two kinds of definites, crosslinguistically

- Two kinds of definites in Standard German (Schwarz 2009)

- (12) (inherent) UNIQUENESS
Armstrong flog als erster **zum** **Mond**.
Armstrong flew as first.one to-the_{unique} moon
'Armstrong was the first to fly to the moon.' (Schwarz 2009:29)
- (13) (strong) FAMILIARITY
(Hans brought a friend home for dinner today.)
Er hat uns vorher ein Foto **von dem** **Freund** gezeigt.
He has us beforehand a photo of the_{familiar} friend shown
'He had shown us a photo of the friend beforehand.' (Schwarz 2009:21)
- found in several unrelated languages (Lakhota, Hausa, Mauritian Creole, Thai, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Japanese, i.a.; Schwarz 2013, Jenks 2015)

Bare nouns in 'uniqueness definite' contexts

- **(Inherent/situational) uniqueness expressed by bare nouns**
- 'Global situation' use (referent known due to common world knowledge)

- (2) (Njelu woke up late at night. When he woke up, ...)
... tètè(≠=ì) bulinî.
moon=DEF.DET.M shine.ICP
"... the moon was shining."

Bare nouns in ‘uniqueness definite’ contexts

- ‘Larger situation’ use (referent known due to community membership)

- (14) (Jajei has been away from home for some months. When she comes back, her mother greets her and says:)
- Àdà(#=ì) màtko tère=i yò gèdã.
 dog=DEF.DET.M die.PFV month=LNK REL last
 “The dog died last month.”

Bare nouns in 'uniqueness definite' contexts

- 'Immediate situation' use (referent present in utterance situation)

(15) Takàrda sò kò kaja=s à ka
book REL 2SG.M buy=DEF at head
tepùr(#=sè) à bì wò'òtô.
table=DEF.DET.F at room food
"The book that you bought is on the kitchen table."

=s'è/=i'è in 'familiarity definite' contexts

- =s'è/=i'è described as a 'previous reference' marker in Schuh (2004:15), indicates *salience*/(strong) *familiarity*
- Cannot be used when a referent is unique but not (hearer-)salient (2).

- (2) (Njelu woke up late at night. When he woke up, ...)
 ... tètèrè(#=ì) bulinî.
 moon=DEF.DET.M shine.ICP
 "... the moon was shining."

=s'è/=i'è in 'familiarity definite' contexts

- Can be used when a referent is prementioned (1)

(1) Ngò rìno. Ngò=i imu
 person enter.PFV.VENT person=DET.DEF.M do.1PL
 lakdù.
 greet.NMLZ
 "A man entered. **The man** greeted us."

Subject vs. object position

- Subject / object position does not play a role (unlike e.g. in Mandarin Chinese, Jenks 2018)

(16) (Kule and I saw a woman and a man.)

- a. **Màndù=s** lakɔ́a ne'è.
woman=DET.DEF.F greet.PFV 1SG
“The woman greeted me.”
- b. Kulè lakɔ́a **màndù=s'ê**.
Kule greet.PFV woman=DET.DEF.F
“Kule greeted the woman.”

Subject vs. object position

- Subject / object position does not play a role (unlike e.g. in Mandarin Chinese, Jenks 2018)

(17) (Njelu woke up late at night. When he woke up, ...)

- a. ... **tèrè**(#=ì) bulinî.
moon=DEF.DET.M shine.ICP
“... **the moon** was shining.”
- b. ... **mòiko tèrè**(#=ì'è).
saw.PFV moon=DEF.DET.M
“He saw the moon.”

Bridging and covariation

Bridging examples

- Schwarz (2009) notes for German that **product-producer bridging** involves 'familiarity' definites

(18) *Das Theaterstück* missfiel dem Kritiker so sehr, dass er in
 the play displeased the critic so much that he in
 seiner Besprechung kein gutes Haar # **am** / **an dem Autor**
 his review not.a good hair at-the_w / at the_s author
 ließ.
 left

"The critic disapproved of the play so thoroughly that he pulled the author to pieces in his review."

Bridging examples

- ... whereas **whole-part bridging** involves 'uniqueness' definites

(19) *Der Kühlschrank* war so groß, dass der Kürbis
 the fridge was so big that the pumpkin
 problemlos **im** / # **in dem Gemüsefach**
 without.a.problem in-the_w / in the_s crisper
 untergebracht werden konnte.
 stowed be could
 "The fridge was so big that the pumpkin could easily be stowed in the
 crisper."

- the same was found in Akan (Arkoh & Matthewson 2013), and Bulu (Barlew 2014)

Bridging examples

- ... and in Ngamo: =i'è definites possible in product-producer bridging

(20) I bought a book last week.

Kule gomta a **gofshe=i** ki man'i.

Kule introduce.PFV one.who.does writing=DEF.M to wife.3SG.POSS

“Kule introduced the author to his wife.”

Bridging examples

- ... but not in **whole-part bridging** examples:

(21) Nzuni ahanko bo dumbi motano me shirankok
 3PL open.PL.PFV door car=1SG but steal.PL.PFV.TOT
siteri(=to/*=i'e) nzono.
 steering.wheel=3SG.F/DEF.M yesterday
 “They broke into my car and stole the steering wheel yesterday.”
 (Comment: to use =i'e, you have to have talked about it before.)

Covarying bridging examples

- The same contrast is observed in covariation examples
- with product-producer bridging (22)

(22) La makaranta yiya ke yo karanta takarda
 child student which also REL read.PFV book
 ndalo a gomi ki a gofshe=i'e
 want.PFV 3SG.SBJV meet.SBJV with one.who.does writing=DEF.M
 "Every student that read a book wanted to meet the author."

Covarying bridging examples

- and with part-whole bridging:

(23) Lei a shiri yiya yo aha bo dumbi mato
 even one.who.does stealing which REL open.PFV door car
 shirkok **siteri** (=to/*=i'e).
 steal.PFV.TOT steering.wheel =3SG.F/=DEF.M
 “Every thief who broke into a car stole the steering wheel.”

Other definite expressions

Other definite expressions

- Schwarz (2009, §2.2.5) observed that definite kind reference involves the ‘uniqueness’ definite
- expressed in Ngamo using a bare noun

(24) GERMAN

Am / #an dem **Zebra** kann man sehen, dass die Natur
on-the / on the zebra can one see that the nature
symmetrisch ist
symmetrical is.
“The zebra shows us that nature is symmetrical”

(25) NGAMO

Tùrùm à dàti wàllak lei àrè àwè=s siyà kè
lion in height surpasses even type cat=LNK which also
“The lion is the tallest of all living cats.”

Other definite expressions

- ... and 'weak definites' too

(26) GERMAN

Maria ging **zum** / #zu dem **Supermarkt**.

Maria went to-the / to the supermarket

“Maria went to the supermarket.”

(27) NGAMO

Maleka nda ndishe **goma** — lei goma=i yiya.

Maleka want.PFV go.NMLZ market even market=LINK which

“Maleka wants to go to the market — any market.”

Overview

- Ngamo definites pattern like the German ones (Schwarz 2009):

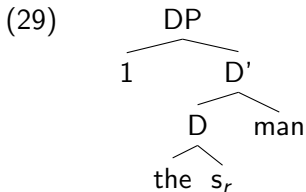
	Example	German	Ngamo
anaphoric	“a book ... the book”	strong	= <i>i'e</i>
unique	“the moon” / “the king”	weak	∅
bridging I	“a book ... the author”	strong	= <i>i'e</i>
bridging II	“a car... the steering wheel”	weak	∅/possessive
covarying I	“every book... the author”	strong	= <i>i'e</i>
covarying II	“every car... the steering wheel”	weak	∅/possessive
kind reference	“the lion is a mammal”	weak	∅
weak definites	“go to the doctor”	weak	∅

Table: Definite articles in German and Ngamo

Analysis of =s'è/=i'è definites

- Familiarity modelled with the help of a covert individual pronoun enforcing salience (Schwarz 2009, Elbourne 2005)

(28) **'Familiarity' definite article** (Schwarz 2009):
 $\lambda s_r. \lambda P. \lambda y. \exists! x [P(x)(s_r) \ \& \ x = y]. \iota x [P(x)(s_r) \ \& \ x = y]$



Salience

Salience

- Barlew (2014): for the Bulu (Bantu) determiner -tè, the relevant notion is not anaphoricity but **salience**:
 - anaphoric and demonstrative contexts (s. German, Schwarz 2009)
 - also **any context which makes clear that the addressee is attending to the referent**
 - because the referent is in the immediate context and perceptually prominent ('bottom-up salience')
 - because the speaker knows (due e.g. to the addressee's actions or goals) that (s)he is attending to the referent ('top-down salience')
 - Importantly, for top-down salience, the referent need not be in the immediate linguistic or non-linguistic context.

=s'è/=i'è: salience

- Same found for Ngamo: 'bottom-up salience'

(30) (Shuwa is sitting outside in the evening, looking at the sky. A stranger comes up to her and says ...)

Tere=i bulinni.

moon=DEF.DET.M shine.ICP

"The moon is shining."

(Comment: He can say this, thinking that she is looking at the moon — if she's not looking at the moon, it is not good.)

(31) Shuwa is sitting outside in the evening, reading a book. A stranger comes up to her and says ...

(Comment: You have to say *tere*, because the moon is not in her mind, she has no business with it)

=s'è/=i'è: salience

- Same found for Ngamo: 'top-down salience' (?)

(32) Njelu wants to travel. Gimsi sees him looking in his pockets, searching for something. She says:

Namko mamabudī=k mota=s Kule.
take.PFV key=LINK.F car.DEF.DET.F Kule
"KULE took the car keys."

- Non-anaphoric examples ((30)/(32)) no problem for (28): all free pronouns are resolved in the same way, independent of the source of the salience (Heim & Kratzer 1998:239–242)
- **Immediate predictions:** pronouns and German familiarity definite possible in these contexts

Differences

Difference 1: Compositionality

- as stated above, *s'e/i'e* can take proper nouns, pronouns, demonstrative, possessive and indefinite expressions as an argument.

- (5)
- | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|--|
| a. | Halima=s
Halima=DEF.F
“('the') Halima” | b. | mandu wonsi=s
woman DEM=DEF.F
“that ('the') woman” |
| c. | te=s
she=DEF.F
“('the') she” | d. | deino=mu=s
staying=1PL=DEF.F
“The staying of ours” |
| e. | a | siyasa=i | yo'oto ye'e |
| | one.who.is | politician=LINK | INDF DEF |
| | “the other politician” (lit. the a.certain politician) | | |

Difference 1: Compositionality

- Does *s'e/i'e* take individuals (type *e*) as arguments?
- Grubic (2015): For at least some of these arguments, an analysis as type $\langle e, t \rangle$ seems reasonable.
- e.g. demonstrative 'determiners' are similar to adjectives.

- (33) a. Takarda (so) **wonse** *(so) na'ako(=s'e)
 book REL DEM.PROX.F REL big=DEF.DET.F
- b. Takarda (so) na'ako (so) **wonse**(=s'e)
 book REL big REL DEM.PROX.F=DEF.DET.F
 " That big book "

Difference 1: Compositionality

- The indefinite analyzed as coerced to a kind of adjectival reading ('another' → 'other')
- Specific indefinites crosslinguistically often seem to contain an adjectival component (G. ein **bestimmter**/ **gewisser** ..., E. a **certain** ...)

(5)e. a siyasa=i yo'oto ye'e
 one.who.is politician=LINK INDF DEF
 "the other politician" (lit. the a.certain/another politician)

- Hypothesis: also $\langle e, t \rangle$ analysis for proper nouns (following e.g. Elbourne 2005), pronouns (cf. Sugamoto 1989, Noguchi 1997 for Japanese pronouns), for possessives (Giorgi & Longobardi 1991, Matthewson & Davis 1995).

Difference 1: Compositionality

- But: alternatively, one could analyze familiarity definites in Ngamo as composed of uniqueness definites (type e) + an element contributing familiarity (e.g. Hanink 2017 i.a.)
- I am looking forward to your comments on this!

Difference 2: competition

- **Difference 2:** when a referent is both anaphoric and situationally unique, the =i'è definite is used. A classic case of 'maximize presupposition'?

- (34) Kule told me a story about the moon.
 Kika ka'a, ne kura tere=i
 because like.that 1SG inspect.PFV moon=DEF.DET
 nzonok bedi.
 yesterday night
 "Because of that, I looked at the moon last night."

Difference 2: competition

- Note that implicitly, I was assuming a covert D with the meaning in (35-a) (Schwarz 2009)
- Is the preference for *s'è/i'è* due to maximize presupposition?

- (35)
- 'Uniqueness' definite article
 $\lambda s_r. \lambda P: \exists! \mathbf{x}[\mathbf{P}(\mathbf{x})(s_r)]. \iota x. P(x)(s_r)$
 - 'Familiarity' definite article
 $\lambda s_r. \lambda P. \lambda y: \exists! \mathbf{x}[\mathbf{P}(\mathbf{x})(s_r) \& \mathbf{x}=\mathbf{y}]. \iota x. P(x)(s_r) \& \mathbf{x}=\mathbf{y}$

Difference 2: competition

- BUT: in German, the ‘uniqueness’ definite is used (cf. also Schwarz 2009:34f).

(36) Kule told me a story about the moon.
Deswegen habe ich letzte Nacht **vom** / ?? **von dem** **Mond**
therefore have I last night of.the_{weak} / of the_{strong} moon
geträumt.
dreamed
“Because of that, I had a dream about the moon last night.”

- Contrast in Ngamo not due to maximize presupposition!

Difference 2: competition

- Tentative hypothesis: due to the fact that uniqueness definites are **bare**
- Bare nouns in Ngamo have typical readings of bare nouns crosslinguistically: definite, indefinite, generic, kind (Chierchia 1998, Dayal 2004, 2011)
- Definite reading not due to covert determiner but to type-shift
- Competition effect due to **blocking principle**: overt articles preferred to type-shift
- **Immediate prediction**: contrast between languages with 2 types of definites depending on whether uniqueness definites are bare or not!

Difference 3: demonstrative vs. anaphoric

- **Difference 3:** Ngamo seems to allow for demonstrative uses of *s'e/i'e* definites, BUT: a second *s'e/i'e* definite is preferably understood to be anaphoric (37)

(37) Shuwa and Dimza are standing in front of Shuwa's bookshelf. Shuwa says, pointing:

Ne kaja **takarda=s** ki Potiskum, ??**takarda=s** me
 1SG buy.PFV book=DEF.DET.F at Potiskum book=DEF.DET.F but
 ki Barno.
 at Maiduguri.

(intended:) "I bought this book in Potiskum, and this book in Maiduguri."

(Comment: even though you are pointing, it should be "takardas ... takardas so'otos/wanses" [(='the other book'/'(the) that book')] — 'takardas' sounds as though you are still talking about the same book.)

Difference 3: demonstrative vs. anaphoric

- In German, it is fine (38).

(38) (Context as in (37))

Ich bin **von dem** / **#vom Buch** begeistert, aber **von**

I am of the_{strong} of.the_{weak} book enthusiastic but of

dem / **#vom Buch** eher enttäuscht.

the_{strong} of.the_{weak} book rather disappointed

"I am enthusiastic about that book, but disappointed by that book."

- In Grubic (2015:165), I hypothesize that this is due to a salience ranking (linguistic context > non-linguistic context)
- It may however just be due to the impossibility of stressing the determiner!
- **Predictions:** cross-linguistic differences wrt required salience of referent OR differ wrt stressability of determiner

Summary

Summary

- Findings Ngamo:
 - *sè/iè* is a familiarity determiner: found in anaphoric contexts and with product-producer bridging (as well as 'simple' demonstrative examples)
 - bare nouns used as uniqueness definites: in global, larger and immediate situation uses and with whole-part bridging.
- Potential extensions or crosslinguistic differences to discuss and test:
 - Salience, in particular top-down examples
 - Potentially different compositional structure?
 - Competition between familiarity & uniqueness definites: bare nouns
 - (proposal where they are stacked: what predictions for competition?)
 - complex (contrastive) demonstrative uses: different salience requirement? different stressability?