

Existence, uniqueness and familiarity

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Outline

- With pronouns, it's famously difficult to distinguish a 'familiarity' (dynamic) analysis from a 'uniqueness' (situation based, e-type) one.
- Even if you consider marble cases to be decisive in the realm of pronouns, they aren't in the realm of definite descriptions, because the relevant notion of familiarity is weakened.
- *There are no decisive cases, because there couldn't be in principle.*
- So (weak) 'familiarity' vs. (situation-based) 'uniqueness' is a distinction without a difference.
- This means any debate over whether, for example, Akan *nó* is a familiarity article or a uniqueness article is not actually substantive. We must break out of this dichotomy.
- For Akan *nó*:
 - Owusu's idea of an anti-uniqueness presupposition makes a lot of progress but leaves open some questions.
 - A quasi-names theory of bare nouns seems to have some promise.

1 Pronouns

Dynamic semantics provides an elegant account of **donkey sentences**.

(1) If a farmer owns a donkey, then he beats it.

- Dynamic semantics (Heim, 1982; Kamp & Reyle, 1993): indefinites are not quantifiers but rather serve to introduce novel discourse referents, and the pronouns pick up these established discourse referents.
- As Heim (1990) discusses, an alternative, non-dynamic view on which these pronouns are disguised definite descriptions (Evans, 1977, 1980; Cooper, 1979), incorporating a situation variable into the description, fares not too badly in the same empirical realm. (Evans called pronouns under this analysis 'E-Type pronouns').
- Elbourne (2005) argues at book length in favor of a situation-based, description-theoretic view of donkey pronouns.
- The discussion continues (Barker & Shan, 2008; Elbourne, 2009; Charlow, 2014).

Bishop sentences (attributed to Hans Kamp by Heim (1990)):¹

(2) If a bishop meets a bishop, then he blesses him.

- Easy to account for using distinct discourse referents: Two bishops in the situation described by the antecedent. No situation-relative uniqueness.
- Kadmon (1987) has a situation-based view that can account for some bishop-type sentences.
- Heim (1990) argues that Kadmon predicts uniqueness presuppositions that are too strong. (3) should presuppose that each man has at most one roommate under Kadmon's proposal.

(3) If a man shares an apartment with another man, he shares the housework with him.

- Elbourne (2005) says that in (2), there is an asymmetry between the two bishops such that one is part of a relevant situation that does not involve meeting another bishop and the other is not.
- Elbourne argues furthermore that only the situation-based view can account for the contrast in acceptability between (2) and (4). No relevant situation involving one bishop but excluding the other.

¹According to Hans Kamp (p.c.), Jan van Eijck presented the following example at a workshop on DRT that took place in Stuttgart in December of 1987 (where Irene Heim first presented the material that eventually appeared in her 1990 paper 'E-type pronouns and donkey anaphora'):

(i) If a man lives with another man, he shares the housework with him.

A version of the sentence involving bishops was given a few years later by Hans Kamp in the discussion period of a talk given by Angelika Kratzer in Tübingen (and presumably conveyed thereafter to Irene Heim), but the original insight is apparently due to Jan van Eijck.

(4) #If a bishop and a bishop meet, he blesses him.

- Barker & Shan (2008) argue that this contrast can in fact be accommodated under a dynamic theory, and they blame the infelicity on the difficulty of finding an antecedent for the pronouns.
- Elbourne (2009) expresses skepticism about this argument.

Marble cases (attributed to Barbara Partee by Heim (1982, 21)) could potentially distinguish a familiarity analysis from an e-type analysis.

(5) a. One of the ten marbles is not in the bag. It is probably under the sofa.
b. Nine of the ten marbles are in the bag. ??It is probably under the sofa.

- The first sentences in (5-a) and (5-b) are propositionally equivalent, but they differ in their anaphoric potential. One establishes a discourse referent (a ‘formal link’ in the words of Heim 1990) and the other does not, it seems.
- *Prima facie* evidence for familiarity theory of pronouns.
- Elbourne (2005) solves ‘the problem of the formal link’ via the assumption that NP-deletion requires an antecedent.

Summary. In the realm of pronouns, there is no clear evidence ruling out either a familiarity analysis or a situation-based, e-type analysis.

What makes us think we can tell these sorts of theories apart in the realm of definite descriptions?

2 Definite descriptions

Dawson & Jenks (2023) is a recent distillation of mountains of recent work making the following assumptions, unquestioningly following Schwarz (2009):

- There are (at least) two types of definites, ‘familiarity definites’ and ‘uniqueness definites’.
 - Familiarity definites are Heimian definites, presupposing a familiar discourse referent.
 - Uniqueness definites are situation-relative versions of Fregean definites, presupposing existence and uniqueness relative to a situation-dependent property.
- Familiarity definites behave just like strong definites in German, and uniqueness definites behave just like weak definites in German.

In this lauded paper, Dawson and Jenks say: *Here, documentary linguists! Just follow this easy recipe to decide whether your definite article is a familiarity article or a uniqueness article.*

	familiarity	uniqueness
anaphoric uses	yes	no
donkey sentences	yes	no
covarying uses	no	yes
larger situation uses	no	yes
part-whole bridging	no	yes
product-producer bridging	yes	no

With all due respect, linguists, I beg you, *Stop! Please! Think about it! These diagnostics do not actually distinguish among the theories.*

2.1 What do the theories actually predict?

Akan has two types of definites.

Definites marked with *nó*

(6) Kofi tɔ-ɔ pen. Na **pən nō** yε fitaa.
 Kofi buy-PST pen PST pen def COP white
 'Kofi bought a pen. The pen was white.'
 (Owusu, 2022, 13)

Bare definites

(7) Kofi re-hwε **ewia.**
 Kofi PROG-watch sun
 'Kofi is looking at the sun.'
 (Owusu, 2022, 13)

Building on the seminal work of Amfo (2006, 2007), Fretheim & Amfo (2008), and Arkoh (2011), there has been a debate in terms of Schwarz's distinction:²

- Arkoh & Matthewson (2013): *nó* encodes familiarity, while the bare noun expresses uniqueness
- Bombi (2018) analyzes *nó* as a uniqueness definite (although granted she rejects Schwarz's typology). She does not offer an explicit analysis of bare definites, but says that they constitute a subset of the uniqueness uses, and that *nó* and the bare noun are in free variation in global situation contexts.

²Arkoh & Matthewson's data comes primarily from the Fante dialect primarily; they report 2 Fante consultants, one Asante. Bombi's data comes from five speakers of Asante Twi. I collected intuitions from Rebecca Dufie Bonney, a speaker of Asante Twi, and Felix Kpogo.

Point of this section: On their own, these two claims about *nó* make the same empirical predictions.

So we need fresh perspectives. Two will be discussed in §3.

2.1.1 Situational uniqueness vs. weak familiarity

Frege: use of the definite article is permissible if one and only one object falls under the description.

(8) Fregean analysis
 $\text{the} \rightsquigarrow \lambda F . \iota x . F(x)$
 (presupposes existence and uniqueness wrt. F)

Anaphoric uses. Heim points out that *the glass* does not require uniqueness wrt. *glass*:

(9) A wine glass broke last night. **The glass** had been very expensive.

⇒ Motivation for familiarity theory of *the*.

(10) Heimian analysis / Schwarzian familiarity definite
 $\text{the}_i \rightsquigarrow \lambda F . \iota x . [F(x) \wedge x = v_i]$
 (presupposes familiarity of index)

In German, only the strong article is good in anaphoric cases like:

(11) a. Hans hat einen Schriftsteller und einen Politiker interviewt.
 Hans has a writer and a politician interviewed
 'Hans interviewed a writer and a politician.'
 b. Er hat *{vom / von dem} Politiker keine interessanten
 He has {from.the_{weak} / from the_{strong}} politician no interesting
 Antworten bekommen.
 answers gotten
 'He didn't get any interesting answers from the politician.'

But as Elbourne (2013) discusses, anaphoric cases can be handled under a Fregean analysis augmented with a situation variable.

(12) Elbournean analysis / Schwarzian uniqueness definite
 $\text{the} \rightsquigarrow \lambda s \lambda F . \iota x . F_s(x)$
 (presupposes existence and uniqueness wrt. F_s)

As shown above with (6), Akan *nó* has an anaphoric use, as predicted by the familiarity theory. Another example, similar to examples given by Arkoh & Matthewson (2013) and Bombi (2018):

(13) a. Ama hu-u ḥkyrekyereni bi ne sogani bi.
 Ama see-PST teacher INDEF and soldier INDEF
 ‘Ama saw a teacher and a soldier.’

b. ḥ-kyea-a **sogyaní nō**.
 3SG-greet-PST teacher DEF
 ‘He greeted the soldier.’
 (Owusu, 2022, 13)

Although she advocates a uniqueness-based analysis of the definite article, Bombi (2018) is not fazed by this type of data. Nor should she be.

Predicted by...		
<i>nō</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
anaphoric use	✓ yes	yes

Why can’t weak definites in German be anaphoric? I don’t know, but it’s not because they are situation-uniqueness definites.

Donkey sentences also receive an elegant analysis under the familiarity theory.

(14) If a farmer owns a donkey, then **the farmer** beats **the donkey**.

Elbourne has a situation-uniqueness theory of these too.

Schwarz (2009, 276):

“the overall picture that emerges is that of a hybrid theory of covarying interpretations of definites in donkey sentences, as we allow both covariation via the situation argument alone (for weak-article definites) as well as via a dynamically bound index argument (for strong article definites)”

Arkoh & Matthewson (2013) show that donkey sentences are good in Akan.

(15) Ogwedzinyí bíará áa ḥ-wó efúpɔnkó nō ɔtsiná **efupɔkó nō** dó
 trader every REL 3SG-have camel CD 3SG-sit camel DEF on
 ‘Every trader who owns a camel sits on the camel.’

This does not distinguish the two theories, contra Dawson & Jenks (2023, 20).

Predicted by...		
<i>nō</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
donkey anaphora	✓ yes	yes

Marble sentences are good with English *the*.

(16) Nine of the ten marbles are in the bag. **The missing one** is probably under the sofa.

Prima facie bad for familiarity theory of *the*. Options:

1. Reject familiarity theory in favor of an Elbournian theory of *the*.
2. Weaken to 'weak familiarity' (Roberts, 2003), or relativize familiarity to hearers rather than the discourse, requiring *hearer-oldness* rather than *discourse-oldness* (Prince, 1992; Arkoh & Matthewson, 2013).

Both German articles are good in marble cases:

(17) a. Wir haben 10 Eier versteckt, aber die Kinder haben erst 9 gefunden.
 we have 10 eggs hidden but the children have only 9 found
 'We hid 10 eggs, but the kids have only found 9 of them.'

 b. **Im** / **In dem** fehlenden Ei ist eine Überraschung.
 in-the_{weak} / In the_{strong} missing egg is a surprise.
 'There is a surprise in the missing egg.'

Akan *nó* also good in marble sentences.

(18) a. Mágó anán go kotokú *nó* mó, Ámá hú-u báasá,
 mango four pour sack def in Ama see-past three
 'There are four mangoes in the sack, Ama found three.'

 b. **mágó** **nó** áa wáyíw *nó* na ɔ-ye-dé páá
 mango DEF REL 3SG.PERF.miss CD FOC 3SG-do-nice more
 'The missing mango is nicer.'

The strategy in the literature has not been to reject the familiarity view but rather to weaken the relevant notion of familiarity.

Predicted by...		
<i>nó</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
marble cases	✓ yes	yes

Bishop sentences can involve definite descriptions (Schwarz, 2009, 244):

(19) If a bishop meets a bishop, then **the bishop** blesses the other bishop.

Bishop sentences in German require a strong article (Schwarz, 2009, 245):

(20) When a professor recommends a student to another professor, his application is read [... **von dem** Professor / ***vom** Professor ...] with great attention.

Schwarz writes (p. 245),

"[w]hile there is at least one proposal that reconciles bishop-sentences with a situation-based uniqueness analysis of donkey definites, namely that by Elbourne (2005), these German data suggest that such a proposal *is not needed*, as the German uniqueness definites (expressed by the weak article) are not available in this configuration in the first place." [emphasis mine]

We can discard the proposal, but not the fact that the proposal works.

If bishop sentences are actually compatible with the situation-based uniqueness analysis, then (20) is expected to be good a situation-uniqueness article.

Arkoh & Matthewson (2013) show that *nó* works in bishop sentences, and adduce this as data in favor of their familiarity account:

(21) *Se osoányi tsiw siká áa ɔ-kɔ asoáfó a-fófór hó*
 if minister plug money REL 3SG-go ministers PL-new 3PL.POSS
sikasém hó ntotúí mu do á wɔ-kánfo osoányí nó yée
 budget in on part 3PL-praise minister DEF well
 'If a minister cut the budget of other ministers, the minister is well praised.'

Predicted by...		
<i>nó</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
bishop sentences	✓ yes	yes

Situational uniqueness uses are obvious fits for situation-uniqueness:

(22) *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.'

But these are also predicted to be possible under a weak familiarity analysis, as long as the existence of a mayor is inferrable in the discourse.

Immediate situation. Prior mention not necessary.

(23) a. Context: A man and a woman are arguing in the street. Ama and Kwame are sitting in front of their house where they can see but not hear them. Kofi walks in and sees them staring. He says oh...

b. **Papa nō de maame nō ka**
 man DEF owe woman DEF debt
 'The man owes the woman money.'
 (Owusu, 2022, 15)

Institutional situation.

(24) **okasamafó nō** bé-bá s'eeséí árá, ...
speaker DEF FUT-come now just
'The speaker will arrive soon, ...'
(Amfo (2007, 146))

(25) **S3fó nō** bé-dzí-kán abɔ mpáá
priest DEF FUT-take-first beat prayer
'The priest will pray first (before anything taking place).'
(Arkoh & Matthewson, 2013, 12)

(26) **Headmaster nō** bε-ma wo timetable
headmaster DEF FUT-give 2SG timetable
'The headmaster will give you a timetable.'
(Bombi, 2018, 149)

(27) **Adwuma panin ?(no)** a-kyε enne
company head DEF PERF-late today
'The boss is late today.'
Bare noun "maybe OK as a title or a name that we call the person" (RDB, p.c.)

National situation.

(28) **ɔmanpanin (*nō)** be bleme obi
president DEF FUT blame someone
'The president will blame someone.'
(Owusu, 2022, 17)

Global situation.

Arkoh & Matthewson (2013, 11):

"Our claim that Akan *nō* corresponds to a German strong article predicts that when talking about globally unique referents such as the pope or the moon – which in German take a weak article, as shown above – *nō* will be left out. [Comment: This prediction doesn't follow from the assumption that *nō* is a familiarity article –EEC] This is correct, as illustrated in..."

(29) **Kwámi nyá-a krataá fí-i** Egyá krɔkrɔn póp hɔ
Kwami get-PST letter from-PST father holy pope there
'Kwami got a letter from the holy father Pope.'

(30) **Awia (nō) re-bo enne**
sun DEF PROG-hit today
'The sun is shining today.'
(Bombi, 2018, 150,155)

		Predicted by...	
	<i>no</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
immediate situation	✓	yes	yes
institutional situation	✓	yes	yes
national situation	✓ / ×	yes	yes
global situation	✓ / ×	yes	yes

Situational uses in Akan will be discussed in more detail in §3.

Covarying uses of certain kinds are bad with strong articles in German:

(31) At every train station that our train entered, a letter {**vom Bürgermeister** / ***von dem Bürgermeister**} was handed to me.

But Schwarz (2009, 282ff) himself notes that a familiarity article is expected to be good here.

On this analysis, a covarying interpretation of the strong article definite would result if [the anaphoric index] gets bound by *every train station*, and thus should, in principle, be available, contrary to what we observe.

This is a diagnostic for ‘German-like’ but not for familiarity vs. uniqueness.

Bridging anaphora is also compatible with both analyses.

Arkoh & Matthewson (2013, 13):

“An important mechanism used by Schwarz (2009) to distinguish between weak and strong definites is bridging (what Prince, 1992 called ‘inferrables’; see Section 1.4). There is a distinction between part-whole bridging, which licenses a weak article, and relational anaphora bridging (where the interpretation of an NP is inferred from the preceding utterance or discourse), which licenses a strong article.”

No! It’s not a mechanism to distinguish.

- In the absence of other assumptions, weak familiarity and situation-uniqueness both:
 - predict product-producer cases to be good;
 - predict part-whole bridging cases to be bad if they involve relational nouns, and good otherwise.
- Moreover, Schwarz (2009, 219) posits a special type shifting operation that only applies to the weak article in order to account for relational bridging cases.

Product-producer bridging in Akan

(32) Asa nō yε-ε ɔ-hene nō fε ara ma ɔ-kyε-ε **ayiribɔfɔɔ**
 dance DEF do-PST chief DEF beautiful just COMP 3SG-give-PST drummer
panin nō adeε.
 leader DEF thing
 'The dance was so beautiful that the chief gave the lead drummer a gift.'
 (Arkoh & Matthewson, 2013, 15)

Part-whole bridging in Akan

(33) Ye-hu-u dan dadaw bí wɔ ekurasi hɔ **ne** **nyensedan**
 3PL-see-PST building old INDEF be.located village there POSS roof
 (***nō**) e-hodwow
 DEF PERF-worn.out
 'We saw an old building in the village; its roof was worn out.'
 (Arkoh, 2011, 80)

(34) Iguán nō so árá ma nyímpá anán na wó-dzí-i ...
 sheep DEF big just COMP person four FOC 3PL-eat-PST ...
 'The sheep was so big that four people ate ...
 a. ...# **kón nō**
 ... neck DEF
 ... the neck'
 b. .. **ní kón**
 ... POSS neck
 ... its neck'
 (Arkoh & Matthewson, 2013, 14)

It seems that the possessive construction is taking precedence over *nō* here.

	Predicted by...		
	<i>nō</i>	weak familiarity?	situation-uniqueness?
product-producer bridging	✓	yes	yes
part-whole bridging	✗	yes/no	yes/no

Summary. Weak familiarity and situation-uniqueness make all the same predictions.

2.1.2 Pure uniqueness, non-existence and non-familiarity

Anti-uniqueness effects show that *the F* doesn't presuppose existence of an *F*.

(35) a. Anna didn't score the *only* goal.
 b. ... #It wasn't a bicycle-kick, either.

Analysis given by Coppock & Beaver (2015):

(36) Pure uniqueness analysis
 $\text{the} \rightsquigarrow \lambda F \lambda x . \partial(|F| \leq 1) \wedge F(x)$

- *the* purely contributes uniqueness (max 1 F) but not existence, and creates a predicate in combination with F . ('Non-saturating analysis')
- Type shifts (IOTA, EX) may then apply for argumental uses of definites.
- If IOTA applies then the interpretation is 'determinate' (denoting an individual).
- In some cases, EX applies, yielding an 'indeterminate' interpretation.
 - In such cases, the noun phrase is *definite* (a morphosyntactic category), but not *determinate* (denoting an individual).
- Indeterminate and under negation \Rightarrow doesn't license subsequent anaphora

This 'pure uniqueness' analysis does not presuppose existence of an F , so:

- No presupposition of weak familiarity wrt F .
- No presupposition of situation-uniqueness wrt F .

Yifrach & Coppock (2020) use anti-uniqueness effects with exclusives in order to argue that the definite article in Turoyo (an endangered Semitic language) encodes uniqueness, but not existence (or weak familiarity).³

(37) Muše lat-yo **'u** **kałowo yēhidoyo** d-u kłow-awo
 Moushe NEG-COP DEF author only of-DEF book-DEM.FEM
 'Moushe is not the only author of that book.'

(38) Sona lo zmërla wa **'i** **zmirto yahidayto** b-u hago
 Sona NEG sing COP.PST DEF song only at-DEF party
 'Sona did not sing the only song at the party.'

Owusu (2022) addresses anti-uniqueness effects in Akan but the example has focus on the subject, rather than *only*:

(39) a. ε-n-yε Kofi na ɔ-hye-ε [goo baako pε **nó** aa
 3SG-NEG-COP Kofi FOC 3SG-score-PST [goal one only DEF rel
 ε-ba-e **nó**]_i
 3SG-come-PST CD]
 'Kofi did not score the only goal.'

³Superlatives are fronted, taking the place of the definite article.

(i) lat-no 'u hadomo d-i iqartaydi d-këtla **nacëm-tër** **kacaro**
 NEG-1SG DEF person of-DEF family.POSS COMP-has small-CMPR waist
 'I'm not the one in the family with the thinnest waist.'

b. Na ε_i -yε bicycle-kick
 part 3SG-COP bicycle-kick
 'It was a bicycle-kick'

Anti-uniqueness effects only arise when you have focus on *only*.

Relative readings of superlatives (Szabolcsi, 1986; Coppock & Beaver, 2014; Bumford, 2018)

(40) Perhaps Gloria climbed the highest mountain out of all of her friends. #The prize is a picture of it.

- Another indeterminate definite taking scope under an entailment-cancelling operator
- That's why anaphora isn't licensed
- According to Bumford (2018)
 - the definite article contributes a (possibly new) discourse referent at an early phase of the dynamic processing, low in the tree
 - a uniqueness check may be carried out after additional information from the surrounding sentential environment is integrated into the dynamic sequence
- In any case, either there is no existence presupposition, or it is obligatorily locally accommodated inside the entailment-cancelling operator.
- No reason for it to be obligatorily locally accommodated (Coppock & Beaver, 2015)
- So there is no existence presupposition.
- A fortiori, there is no weak familiarity or situation-uniqueness presupposition.

Akan: Hard to test when superlatives are formed with relative clauses.

Familiarity under the pure uniqueness account. Even if the definite article does not itself *encode* any sort of familiarity, anaphoric uses can be accommodated in a dynamic system where predicates can come with an index (Beaver & Coppock, 2015).

(41) $\text{the bishop}_i \rightsquigarrow \lambda x . \text{there is at most one bishop labelled } i, \text{ and } x \text{ is a bishop labelled } i$

Assume a dynamic system where meanings are relations between input assignments and output assignments. Assignments are partial functions from indices to individuals.

There are two possible cases.

- i is defined on the input assignment. If i maps to an object in the domain that is a bishop, then $bishop_i$ is guaranteed to be unique by virtue of the fact that there is only one object that can end up as the value for i in the output assignment.
- i is novel.
 - If there are multiple bishops, then $bishop_i$ is not unique so the article is predicted to be bad.
 - If there is exactly one bishop, then $bishop_i$ is still unique so the article is predicted to be good.

Result: dual behavior of *the*.

- uniqueness without familiarity (as in indeterminate uses)
- familiarity without uniqueness (as in bishop cases)

Generally, definite articles that allow indeterminate uses are predicted to have anaphoric uses, as long as predicates can come with indices.

2.2 Conclusions so far

- There is massive overlap in the predicted distributions between situation-based uniqueness analyses and weak familiarity analyses.
- It is possible in principle to determine whether a given article encodes an existence presupposition, but the tests are hard to run in Akan.
- We still don't have much insight into what governs the distribution of *nó* and bare definites. We need a fresh perspective.

3 Akan: fresh perspectives

Owusu (2022) contributes a fresh perspective on Akan. Building on work on demonstratives (Robinson, 2005; Dayal & Jiang, to appear), Owusu proposes that *nó* is a familiarity article that carries an anti-uniqueness presupposition.

$$(42) \quad n\acute{o}_i \rightsquigarrow \lambda P \lambda x \lambda s . [\partial(x = v_i \wedge \exists s' [s \leq s' \wedge |\{z | P(x)(s')\}| > 1]) \wedge P(x)(s)]$$

So *pen* *nó* is felicitous as a way of referring to a pen that has already been introduced into the discourse, as long as the situation being characterized is part of a larger situation with multiple pens.

Handles a lot of data but does leave open some questions.

I suggest that it is worth considering a view on bare definites in Akan as quasi-proper names, in the manner advocated for Mandarin by Yip et al. (2023), if only to take stock of what is at stake.

On the quasi-names theory,

- bare definites are like quasi-names in English like *Mom*
- there is a type shifting operation invoking a relation (what I will call a **name relation**) that maps the plurality consisting of the speaker and the hearer in the context of utterance to a designated individual in the extension of the noun

Random fun data point that seems totally in line with both analyses:

(43) a. 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 you call your wife back home on earth. She asks how many moons there are. You answer that there is only one moon on the planet, and continue:

b. *ɔsram nō pue anwummere*
moon DEF come.out evening
'The moon can be seen in the evening.'
(RDB, p.c.)

3.1 Questions for anti-uniqueness theory

3.1.1 On national-situation uses

(44) **Ghana manpanin (nō)** á-ká se m-bofrá nō n-kɔ sukúu
Ghana president DEF PERF-say that PL-child DEF OPT-go school
'The Ghana President has said that the children should return to school.'

Without *nō*, "the journalist may or may not be a Ghanaian. If the journalist is a Ghanaian then he/she does not recognize the current President as his/her President. According to my consultant, this can be regarded as a derogatory speech" (Bonney, 2022, 111).

Interestingly, *nō* is also dropped in a version of (44) with *Ghana* replaced by *Senegal*. "In the news they would report it as 'Senegal president', giving the same respect that they give to the Ghanaian president" (RDB, p.c.).

RDB: What about *asante hene no* 'Asante chief DEF'?

FK: That one is awful. I wouldn't even try that. Then you really have a problem with the Kumasi people.

Question for Augustina: *Does the anti-uniqueness presupposition account for the rudeness effect?*

Quasi-names theory: It's less distant to call someone by name.

Cf. *the woman* instead of *Mom*

Question for Augustina: *Other countries have presidents, and it is apparently possible to expand the situation to include them, so why isn't the anti-uniqueness presupposition satisfied in (28)?*

Quasi-names theory: *president* determines a function that maps the speaker and addressee to a designated individual.

Question for Augustina: *What is the difference between pope, president and finance minister on the one hand and company boss and headmaster on the other? In all these cases there is a larger situation with more instances of the category.*

Quasi-names theory: In the former cases, the name-relation is guaranteed to be defined in any given context of utterance in the speech community.

3.1.2 On global-situation uses

(45) a. Context: The beginning of a documentary on the solar system
b. **Awia** (***nó**) yε nsoroma
sun DEF COP star
'The sun is a star'
(Owusu, 2022, 16)

(46) a. Context: There is a children's show on TV about colors. They have a picture of the sun but it is painted green. A parent points to the sun on the TV and says...
b. **Awia** (**nó**) yε green
sun DEF COP green
'The sun is green'
(Owusu, 2022, 19)
Bare \Rightarrow False! **Nó** \Rightarrow True!
With **nó** "it refers to the sun on the TV show."

Question for Augustina: *Since there are two suns (the real one and the fake one) in this context, should the bare noun be ruled out?*

Quasi-names theory: Maybe the sun on the TV show is not the one that the name-relation maps to.

3.2 Evidence for quasi-names theory

Yip et al. (2023) give several pieces of evidence supporting a quasi-names theory of bare nouns in Mandarin:

- Inability to appear in counterfactuals
- Lack of situation-dependent variation
- Lack of *de dicto* readings

3.2.1 Counterfactuals

Counterfactuals: *nó* becomes better:

(47) a. *Se yetuu aba no maa Kofi a*
if 1PL vote-PST vote DEF give-PST Kofi REL
'If we had voted for Kofi...'
b. *anka Ghana manpanin ?(nó) a-be-yε nipakumni*
then Ghana president DEF PERF-FUT-be murderer
... then the Ghana President would have been a murderer.'

Comments from RDB: "Prefer to use *nó*, but not terrible without it. If we had voted for Kofi, that person would have been my president, so you can have it without *nó*."

Same pattern with specific member of parliament:

(48) a. *Se yetuu aba no maa Kofi a*
if 1PL vote-PST vote DEF give-PST Kofi REL
'If we had voted for Kofi...'
b. *... Gomoa East mmara-hye-badwa-ni #(no) a-be-yε nipakumni*
... Gomoa East member.of.parliament DEF PERF-FUT-be murderer
... the Gomoa East MP would have been a murderer.'

Question for Augustina: *Isn't the anti-uniqueness presupposition violated in (47-b) and (48-b)?*

Quasi-names theory: Names are rigid designators, so they don't work in counterfactuals.

3.2.2 Co-variation

When the reference of the noun phrase varies according to the value assigned to a variable bound by a quantifier, *nó* is preferred:

(49) Abere biara a me-kɔ ɔman bi mu no, me ne ɔmanpanyin no
 every time REL 1SG-go country certain in CD 1SG CONJ president DEF
 nya nketaodie
 get meeting
 'Every time I visit a country, I meet with the president.'
 (RDB, p.c.)

3.3 De dicto readings

When the noun phrase receives a *de dicto* construal under the attitude verb 'think', *nó* is preferred:

(50) a. Context: Ousmane, a visitor to Ghana from Senegal, mistakenly identifies Okrah, whom he dislikes, as the president of the country. On realizing it is in fact Kofi who is the president, he remarks:
 b. Na me-dwene se **mampanin no** ye nipa bɔne
 used.to 1SG-think COMP president DEF be human bad
 'I used to think that the president is a bad person'
 (RDB, p.c.)

(51) εbiribiara mɛkɔ adidibea hɔ no, me ne **adwuma wura no** di
 every.time 1SG-go restaurant any DEF 1SG CONJ work owner DEF eat
 nkɔmɔ.
 conversation.
 'Every time I go to restaurants, the boss chats with me.'

3.4 Potential objections to quasi-names theory

Functional nouns à la Löbner (1985)

Examples from Owusu (2022, 37):

(52) **Abofra nó maame/papa (#nó)** ba-a ha
 child DEF mother/father DEF come-PST here
 'The child's mother/father came here.'

(53) **Abrantie nó yere (#no)** ba-a ha
 man DEF wife DEF come-PST here
 'The man's wife came here.'

(54) **Abofra nó nua baa (nó)** ba-a ha
 child DEF sibling woman DEF come-PST here
 'The child's sister came here.'

Owusu points out that the ungrammaticality of *nó* in these cases is contrary to what a situation-uniqueness account predicts.

I would add: It's also contrary to what a weak familiarity account predicts.

Anti-uniqueness presupposition could be added to either analysis for these.

Not really expected under quasi-names theory. Maybe *nó* doesn't have a chance to apply because the nominals are already type *e*.

Superlatives

Context: A tour guide providing tourists with general information about Ghana

(55) [Bepɔ (#nó) áa ε-wa paa wɔ Ghana] ne Afadjato
[mountain DEF REL 3SG-tall very be.located Ghana] COP Afadjato
'The tallest mountain in Ghana is Afadjato.'
(Owusu, 2022, 37)

This is bad for the quasi-names theory.

But relative clauses can occur without *nó* even when head noun + relative clause content is unique and satisfies anti-uniqueness presupposition:

(56) a. Context: Dufie and Priscilla go to a party. During the party, they watch one man dancing. The next day, Dufie says to Priscilla:
b. [Papá a ná ó-ré-sá nó] bisá-á me me nōma
[man REL IPFV 3SG-PROG-dance CD] ask-PST 1SG 1SG.POSS number
'The man who was dancing asked me for my number.' (Bombi et al., 2019, 186)

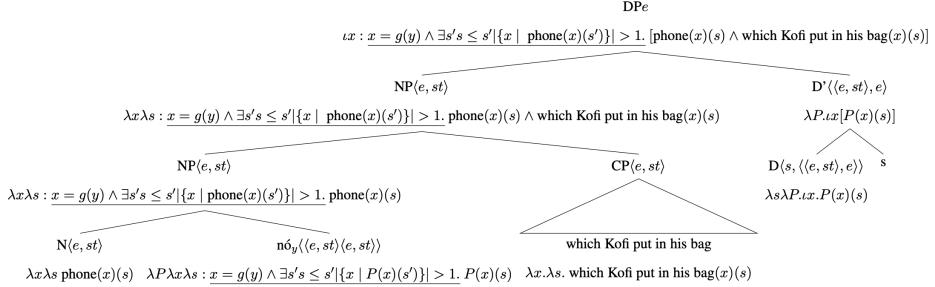
(57) [Onipa a ɔtó-o ndwom nó] yé-ε adé
[person REL 3SG-throw-PST song DEF] do-PST something
'The person who sang the song did well.'
(Saah, 1995, 151)

Of course, *nó* is sometimes possible in relative clauses:

(58) a. 'Yesterday Kofi went to Circle to buy a phone and a laptop. When he got home he realized that...'
b. [fon nō áa ɔtɔ-e nó] yé fake
[phone DEF REL 3SG-buy-PST CD] COP fake
... The phone he bought was a fake.'
Owusu (2022)

On Owusu's analysis, the determiner in relative clauses combines just with the head noun:

(25) $\llbracket [\text{DP fon } \mathbf{nó} [\text{RC } \text{àà Kofi de-hyee ne bag mu}]] \rrbracket \approx \text{The unique familiar phone which Kofi put in his bag}$



The noun combines with *nó* first, which means that the familiarity and non-uniqueness presupposition need to be satisfied for the noun property. The relative clause CP then combines with the NP via predicate modification yielding a property of type $\langle e, st \rangle$. Finally, the resulting NP combines with the D head for a the DP meaning in (25).

If this is right (as it seems), then in the superlative example (55) we would only expect *nó* if the head noun alone satisfies the requirements that *nó* puts on it.

4 Conclusion

- Forget about weak familiarity vs. uniqueness.
- Owusu's anti-uniqueness theory is interesting for Akan, but a quasi-names theory is interesting too.

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