Inconsistencies of the Consistency Test
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In some languages, bare nouns can have different interpretations in different environments, as demonstrated for Shan, a Southwestern Tai language:

1) **Shan Bare Noun Interpretations**

a. *māa hāw jū.*
   dog bark IMPF
   ‘Dogs are barking.’
   existential: ∃

b. *māa hāw.*
   dog bark
   ‘Dogs bark.’
   generic: Gen

b. *māa hāw.*
   dog bark
   ‘Disappear disappear go PRF
   ‘Dogs are extinct.’
   kind: ∩

c. *māa māwāj hāaj kwāa jāw.*
   dog disappear disappear go PRF
   ‘S/he is a dog.’
   predicate: ∪

2) **Type Shifting Operators** (Dayal 2004: (77a)):

   - a. ·P, l P× s t× [P_l(x)]
   - b. t: l P× s t× [P_l(x)]
   - c. ∃P, l Q t× [P_l(x)]&Q(x)

3) **Consistency Test** (Löbner 1985): If P is true for an individual term t, then ¬P cannot be true for t.

4) **Consistency** (Dayal 2004: (77c)): For any type shifting operation π and any X: π(X) if there is a determiner D such that for any set X in its domain, D(X) = π(X)

- A neo-Carlsonian type-shifting analysis, introduced by Chierchia (1998) and Dayal (2004), has been proposed for bare nouns for a variety of languages.
  - Hindi (Dayal 2004)
  - Mandarin (Yang 2001; Jenks 2018)
  - Shan (Moroney 2018)
  - Thai (Jenks 2015)
  - Nuosu Yi (Jiang 2018)
  - Indonesian (Little & Winarto 2018)

5) **#The child** is sleeping but **the child** is not sleeping.

6) **That child** is sleeping but **that child** is not sleeping.

Talk Organization

- §2 Types of definiteness
- §3 Previous use of the Consistency Test: Why it is a problem
- §4 What the Consistency Test tells us
- §5 Discussion
- §6 Conclusion
2 Types of definiteness

- Schwarz (2009) proposes that there are two types of definiteness expressed by German:
  
  i weak, contracted form (e.g., vom ('by the')), expressing uniqueness
  
  ii strong, non-contracted form (e.g., von dem ('by the')), expressing anaphoricity/familiarity

(7) **GERMAN: UNIQUE DEFINITE** (Schwarz (2009): (40))

Das Buch, das du suchst, steht in dem Glasschrank.

(8) **GERMAN: ANAPHORIC DEFINITE** (Schwarz (2009): (23))


It has also been claimed that Thai (Jenks 2015) and Mandarin (Jenks 2018) have these two types of definiteness, but they are expressed by a bare noun (uniqueness) and a demonstrative expression (anaphoricity).

It is clear that the Shan demonstrative behaves like a demonstrative in terms of the Consistency test, shown in (9).

However, it is optionally available to express anaphoric definiteness, as shown in (10) and (11).

3 Previous use: Three case studies

- This section examines the use of the consistency test in three classifier languages that do not mark plurality: Nuosu Yi (Jiang 2018), Thai (Jenks 2015), and Shan (Moroney 2018).

- It is clear that the Shan demonstrative behaves like a demonstrative in terms of the Consistency test, shown in (9).

- However, it is optionally available to express anaphoric definiteness, as shown in (10) and (11).

The obligatoriness of the demonstrative in Thai anaphoric definite cases, suggests that the Blocking Principle is in effect, yet the Consistency test does not show that the demonstrative should be considered a definite determiner.

According to the Consistency test, the Mandarin demonstrative does not have the status of a determiner even thought it expresses anaphoric definiteness in the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Bipartite</th>
<th>Marked anaphoric</th>
<th>Generally marked</th>
<th>Marked unique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German, Lakhota</td>
<td>Def\textsubscript{weak}</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>Def</td>
<td>Def\textsubscript{weak}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin, Akan, Wu, Cantonese, English</td>
<td>Def\textsubscript{strong}</td>
<td>Def</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>(unattested)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Important, in the marked anaphoric cases,
  
  - the demonstrative expresses anaphoric definiteness in Mandarin (Jenks 2018), and
  
  - a definite expression separate from the demonstrative expresses anaphoric definiteness in Akan (Arkoh & Matthewson 2013) and Wu (Simpson 2017).

- According to the Consistency test, the Mandarin demonstrative does not have the status of a determiner even thought it expresses anaphoric definiteness in the language.

3 Previous use: Three case studies

- This section examines the use of the consistency test in three classifier languages that do not mark plurality: Nuosu Yi (Jiang 2018), Thai (Jenks 2015), and Shan (Moroney 2018).

- It is clear that the Shan demonstrative behaves like a demonstrative in terms of the Consistency test, shown in (9).

- However, the consistency test cannot account for its optionality in definite constructions, as in (15).
The Consistency test do not correlate with the obligatoriness of the demonstrative/definite in anaphoric definite contexts in Nuosu Yi and Thai.

### Table 2: Summary of three case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use in anaphoric definite context</td>
<td>optional</td>
<td>obligatory</td>
<td>optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4 What the Consistency test tells us

- When a demonstrative is used anaphorically, the Consistency test results in a contradiction, as in (16).

- The Thai demonstrative produces the same contradictory reading when it is used anaphorically, as in (17).

### 5 Discussion

#### 5.1 Analysis of Thai, Jenks 2015; Jenks 2018

- Jenks’s (2015) has an analysis for why the Thai bare noun cannot be used in anaphoric environments, but he has a more recent analysis in Jenks’s (2018) for Mandarin, and he says that “basically identical facts hold in Thai” (Jenks 2018: 531).

- The analysis is as follows:
  - Unique and anaphoric definiteness are expressed separately in Thai, following Schwarz’s (2009) analysis of German definite articles.
  - Unique definiteness is expressed using bare nouns that type-shift via t.
  - Anaphoric definiteness, which requires an extra semantic argument that can be filled by an index, cannot be expressed using type-shifting, so a demonstrative is used instead.
  - t cannot be used in anaphoric cases because “there is a default preference in Mandarin and German for explicitly representing indices whenever possible” (Jenks 2018: 524).
  - This is a form of Maximize Presupposition (Heim 1991).

- Given that there are languages where bare nouns can express anaphoric definiteness, like Shan, as in (10), or in Nuosu Yi, as in (15), how can we predict the case of Thai?

- This type of analysis works better for German, where there is competition between two overt definite articles, or for a language like Akan or Wu, where an overt anaphoric definite article—distinct from the demonstrative—would ‘block’ anaphoric definite type shifting.

- Do we want to say that the demonstrative in Thai functions as an anaphoric definite determiner?

### Table 3: Typology of definiteness marking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Marked anaphoric</th>
<th>Generally unmarked</th>
<th>Marked/unmarked(?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Def₁₉₆₉</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/Def₁₉₆₉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td>Def₃₉₆₉</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/Def₁₉₆₉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuosu Yi</td>
<td>Def₃₉₆₉</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/Def₁₉₆₉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>Def₁₉₆₉</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0/Def₁₉₆₉</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Analysis of Nuosu Yi, Jiang 2018

- For Nuosu Yi, the explanation that Jiang (2018) gives for why su is optional in definite contexts is by saying that the definite article is applying at a higher level than the bare noun.

- When the definite article or a demonstrative combine with a noun, a classifier is required.

- The bare noun is a kind and can be type shifted into an entity, using one of the paths discussed by Trinh (2011), Dayal (2011), or Jiang (2012).

- A classifier shifts the noun from a kind to a property of type 〈e, t〉, which can combine with the determiner su.

- Blocking does not take place because the determiner does not apply to bare nouns.

- Thus both t type-shifting and the definite determiner are available in the language.
If we were to say that the Thai demonstrative is functioning as an anaphoric definite article, that would be problematic for this explanation:

- The Thai demonstrative is obligatory in anaphoric definite contexts.
- The classifier must appear with the demonstrative, shown in (19).

(19) Thai: Demonstrative (Jenks 2015: (93a))

\[ \text{thúrian *(lûuk) nî/nân/nôon durian CLF this/that/yonder ‘this/that/yonder durian’} \]

Thus, we would expect that if Jiang’s (2018) explanation were applicable to Thai, there would be cases where the bare noun is an option in definite anaphoric contexts in Thai.

5.3 The status of the consistency test

This leaves us with a few options for interpreting the role of the Consistency test as it relates to the Blocking principle.

**Option 1: The Consistency test identifies definite determiners**

- Nuosu Yi demonstrator optionality in anaphoric contexts can be explained along the lines of Jiang (2018).
- Thai demonstrator obligatoriness in anaphoric contexts is difficult to explain in a way that is consistent with the Nuosu Yi and Shan cases.
  - If the Thai demonstrative is an anaphoric definite determiner, the Consistency test cannot tell us that.
  - If the Thai demonstrative is a demonstrative, we have to rely on an apparently language-specific preference for overt expression of indices.

**Option 2: The Consistency test demonstrates fixed reference of a nominal expression**

We lose a means of identifying definite determiners and consequently lose a means of constraining type-shifting.

6 Conclusion

The Consistency test provides information about the reference produced by a particular nominal expression in a particular context.

However, it fails to predict the obligatoriness of determiner/demonstrative elements in definite contexts in Nuosu Yi and Thai.

Taking a closer look at the linguistic and non-linguistic contexts where these expression occur as well as considering the properties of the languages themselves might lead to more insight into this topic.

References


