

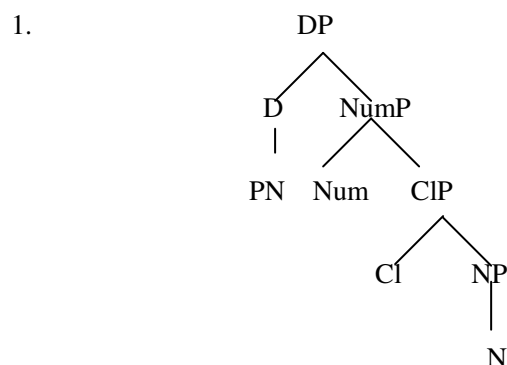
Bare and non-bare proper names in Chinese

Claims: This paper makes a distinction between two types of proper names (hereafter PNs) in Mandarin Chinese—bare PNs and non-bare PNs, in the form of one+CI+PN. We argue that bare PNs are individual-denoting, i.e. ‘rigid designators’ (Kripke 1972) and non-bare PNs are property-denoting, i.e. denote the property of being an individual with a certain name and with a certain characterizing property. In particular, with regard to the semantics of non-bare PNs, we further argue that (i) the individual referred to by the non-bare PN instantiates a presupposed property; (ii) non-bare PNs introduce sets of alternatives and the alternatives are ranked along a certain scale, e.g. possibility/likelihood (Horn 1989) or prototypicality; (iii) non-bare PNs are focus-marked and the existence of ‘alternatives is contributed by focus’ (Rooth 1992).

Problems posed by previous research:

According to the Causal Theory of proper names, a proper name is a ‘rigid designator’, which denotes the same object in every possible world (Kripke 1972). This definition also applies to PNs in Chinese. It is argued that Chinese PNs are arguments, inherently of type e, and they are definite (e.g. A. Li 1999, Chierchia 1998).

A. Li (1999) argues that Chinese has no definite articles, but its nominals have a DP level, as shown in (1). She further argues that PNs, along with demonstratives and pronouns, are base-projected as the head of DP.



Chierchia (1998) makes a semantic claim that Chinese bare nouns and proper names are both mapped onto arguments, but bare nouns are kind-denoting (as default), of type k and proper names are individual-denoting, of type e.

According to A. Li (1999) and Chierchia (1998), we do not expect PNs to be modified by numeral classifiers. Syntactically, according to the structure in (1), it is neither possible for CI to cross the Num node to modify D nor for PN to lower itself to N to be modified by CI, assuming that head movement is leftward. Semantically, classifiers have the ‘atomizing’ function from a mass domain to a set of atoms (Chierchia 1998), but proper names do not denote a mass domain but unique individuals, so it is neither necessary nor possible for classifiers to perform the atomizing function to a proper name.

However, this expectation is not born out. In Mandarin Chinese, we find many examples of non-bare PNs, in the form of [one+CI+PN] in the following two constructions and contexts—the

BA construction and existential clauses, as in (2).¹

2. a. tamen ba (yi ge) Te-Luo-Yi gongpo le. [BA construction]
 they BA one Cl Troy conquer Perf
 ‘They conquered Troy, (a well-guarded fortress).’
 b. Zhongguo chu le *(yi ge) Liu Xiang. [Existential clause]
 China appear Perf one Cl Liu Xiang
 ‘In China emerged Liu Xiang (in hurdling).’

Preliminary observations:

- (i) One+Cl is optional in BA constructions (2.a). The presence of one+Cl doesn’t change the truth condition of the sentence, but there are some interpretational differences. E.g. (2.a) means that they conquered Troy, no matter whether one+Cl is present or not. The bare PN, *Te-Luo-Yi*, and the non-bare PN, *yi ge Te-Luo-Yi*, both denote the unique individual *Troy*. But in addition to the denotation of the individual *Troy*, the non-bare PN also implies some related property to individual *Troy*, like *being a well-guarded fortress*. So with *yi+Cl*, it is better to interpret (2.a) as: they conquered Troy, a well-guarded fortress.
- (ii) One+Cl is obligatory before PNs in existential constructions (2.b). Otherwise, the DE, that is, ‘definiteness effect’, of existential clause is violated. Existentials with non-bare PNs don’t simply assert the (dis)appearance of some individual(s) but predicate the instantiation of a property. The use of non-bare PNs in existentials implies some property related to the individual referred to by the PN, such as *a good hurdler*. So it is more appropriate to interpret (2.b) as: in China emerged LiuXiang as a hurdler or in hurdling.
- (iii) BA construction with non-bare PNs expresses some sort of unexpectedness. For example, (2.a) with a non-bare PN means that it is unexpected that they conquered Troy because of its being a well-guarded fortress.
- (iv) Existentials with non-bare PNs express the highest degree of prototypicality. For example, (2.b) means that Liu Xiang is chosen as the most prototypical individual in hurdling in a certain context, e.g. *in the Chinese circle of hurdling*.

Based on these four observations, following the ‘rigid designator’ approach of proper names (Kripke 1972, Chierchia 1998), we assume that proper names are mapped to argumental type *e* as a default setting, so the bare PN like *Lisi* or *Troy* denote a unique individual that bears some proper name, as in (3.a). With regard to non-bare PNs, we argue that they don’t simply denote an entity that bears certain name as bare PNs do, but that they denote the property of being an individual with the name represented by the PN and meanwhile of being characterized with a certain presupposed characterizing property, as illustrated in (3.b).

3. a. $\| \text{bare PN} \| = d_D$
 b. $\| \text{non-bare PN} \|_M, w = \lambda x [x=d_D \wedge \text{P-property}(x)]$, where P-property is a presupposed characterizing property.

¹ Chinese is a SVO language. When the object is preposed before V, an object marker is required and BA undertakes such a role. This syntactic metamorphosis has a semantic restraint for the direct object. The object after BA must be definite or specific.

Theoretical explanations:

With regard to the semantics of non-bare PNs, we make the first claim that the individual referred to by the non-bare PN instantiates a certain presupposed characterizing property (P-property) in certain contexts and the presupposed property associates with the lowest end of a likelihood scale.

Take (2.a) for example, with the presence of one+Cl, the property of *being a well-guarded fortress* is introduced to the proper name *Troy*. With this presupposed property, the conquering of Troy will result in some unexpectedness to the addressee. In other words, it has a low degree of likelihood that they conquered Troy. So it is better to translate (2.a) with the non-bare PN as: they EVEN conquered Troy, but in the sense that it is the most unexpected thing for them to do, not in the sense that they actually conquered weaker cities too.

The association of the interpretation of non-bare PNs in BA constructions with EVEN shows that non-bare PNs are sensitive to focus or focus-marked. Along this line, we make the second claim that the non-bare PN introduces a set of alternatives related to the individual and the property denoted by the non-bare PN and that the alternatives can be ranked along a certain scale, e.g. likelihood. But in BA construction, as in (2.a), the alternative set is not related to the individual Troy, but to the property of predicate, e.g. the conquering of Troy. For example, we can assume that the alternative set is: {make a plan to attack Troy, break into Troy, defeat Troy} and ‘defeat Troy’ is ranked as the lowest end of the scale of likelihood. That is, compared with the alternatives, like ‘break into Troy’, it’s a less likely thing that they conquered Troy. With regard to the semantics of non-bare PNs, in addition to the assertion as represented in (3.b), we still need a presupposition as represented in (4) (cf. Krifka 1995, Giannakidou 2007).

4. a. $\exists x\lambda P: \lambda Q [[x=d_D \wedge P(x)] \wedge [Q(x) \neq P(x)]] \wedge \forall Q [Q(x) \neq P(x) \rightarrow \text{likelihood}(Q(x)) > \text{likelihood}(P(x))]$
b. $\lambda Q [[\text{Teluoyi}=\text{Troy} \wedge \text{they conquered Troy}] \wedge [Q(x) \neq \text{they conquered Troy}]] \wedge \forall Q [Q(\text{Troy}) \neq \text{they conquered Troy} \rightarrow \text{likelihood}(Q(\text{Troy})) > \text{likelihood}(\text{they conquered Troy})]$

Turing to existential clauses, we see that only non-bare PNs are acceptable but not bare PNs, because bare PNs violate the ‘definiteness effect’. But the unexpectedness effect that is observed in BA constructions is not observed for non-bare PNs in existentials. It is not plausible to interpret (2.b) as ‘it is unexpected that in China emerged Liu Xiang.’ In contrast, it is more appropriate to interpret it as ‘for example, in China appeared Liu Xiang in hurdling’, which seems to answer a question by giving an example,

There are two things to be noted. On the one hand, the individual referred to by non-bare PNs in existentials also instantiates some related presupposed properties in the context. E.g. in (2.b), *Liu Xiang* is presupposed to have the property of being a hurdler.

On the other hand, non-bare PNs in existentials also have the focus-sensitivity, which is called ‘particularizer’, such as *for example, particularly* (Beaver & Clark 2008). We argue that the element marked by particularizers introduces an alternative set related to the individual denoted by the non-bare PN and the alternative individuals are ranked according to prototypicality and the individual ranked on the highest end of a scale is picked out. Assume that the non-bare PN *yi ge LiuXiang* introduces an alternative set of hurdlers as: {X, Y, LiuXiang} and they are ranked as $\text{LiuXiang} > X > Y$ in terms of achievement in hurdling. In other words, (2.b) means that Liu Xiang is the most prototypical instance of being a hurdler in a certain context.

We can formalize the presupposition associated with non-bare PNs in existentials as in (5).

5. a. $\exists x\lambda P: \lambda y [y \neq x \wedge P(x)] \wedge \forall y [y \neq x \rightarrow \text{prototypicality}(P(x)) > \text{prototypicality}(P(y))]$
b. $\lambda y [y \neq \text{LiuXiang} \wedge \text{LiuXiang emerges as a hurdler}] \wedge \forall y [y \neq \text{LiuXiang} \rightarrow \text{prototypicality}(\text{LiuXiang emerges as a hurdler}) > \text{prototypicality}(y \text{ emerges as a hurdler})]$

In sum, bare and non-bare PNs are characterized with distinctive semantics. Particularly, bare PNs are individual denoting and non-bare PNs are property denoting. Sentences with bare PNs only make assertions and there is no implicature or whatsoever. But sentences with non-bare PNs not only make assertions, as in (3.b) and but also make presuppositions, as in (4) and (5).

Another point that is worth noting is that non-bare PNs in BA constructions and existential clauses, are both focus-marked and introduce alternative sets, but in BA construction, the focus is like ‘scalar’ additives’, such as *even*, and in existentials, the focus is like ‘particularizers’, such as *for example* in Beaver & Clark’s terms (2008). The former is associated with the lowest end of a scale, i.e. the scale of likelihood, and the latter is associated with the highest end of a scale, i.e. the scale of prototypicality.

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