

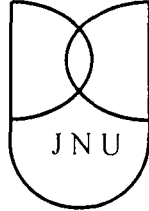
(IN)DEFINITENESS IN TAMIL

A dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of

Master of Philosophy

by

Janani K.



Centre for Linguistics
School of Language, Literature & Cultural Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

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Centre for Linguistics
School of Language, Literature & Culture
Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

Dated: 27 July, 2012

CERTIFICATE

This thesis titled “(In)definiteness in Tamil” submitted by Ms. Janani K., Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Dr. Ayesha Kidwai
(Supervisor)

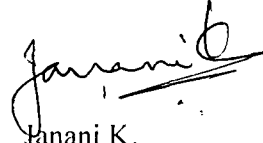
Centre for Linguistics
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Prof. Vaishna Narang
(Chairperson)

Dated: 27 July, 2012

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis titled “**(In)definiteness in Tamil**” submitted by me, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institute.



Janani K.

M.Phil Student

Centre for Linguistics

SLL&CS

JNU

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Abbreviations

1	First Person
2	Second Person
3	Third Person
ABL	Ablative
ACC	Accusative Case
COMP	Complementizer
COND	Conditional
CONJ	Conjunction
CPTL	Conjunctive Particle
DAT	Dative Case
DEM	Demonstrative
EMPH	Emphasis
EV	Evidential
FEM	Feminine
FUT	Future
HON	Honorific
IMP	Imperative
IMPERF	Imperfective
INF	Infinitive
INT	Interrogative
IR	Irrational
LOC	Locative
M	Masculine
NEG	Negation
NOM	Nominalizer

NONF	Non-finite
OBL	Oblique
PERF	Perfective
PI	Plural
PRES	Present Tense
PROG	Progressive
S	Singular

Chapter One

Introduction

Traditional grammars define indefiniteness and definiteness with the notion of familiarity: definiteness is that quality of nouns that are already familiar to all participants of a conversation in that particular context:

The chief use of the definite article is to indicate the person or thing that at the moment is uppermost in the mind of the speaker and presumably in that of the hearer too. Thus it recalls what has just been mentioned—or else the whole situation is sufficient to show what is meant.

(Jespersen 1933, p. 122)

Indefiniteness, on the other hand, is the quality of unfamiliar entities that are being introduced into a conversation for the first time. This proves to be a sound starting point for a discussion on (in)definiteness as it is found in natural languages, as this distinction in the quality of noun phrases is found cross-linguistically. Its universality is also coupled with a great diversity of ways in which languages encode the distinction.

Yet, despite the usefulness of the traditional grammar approach to (in)definiteness, and despite its intuitive appeal, later investigations have revealed that the assumptions of such an approach is inadequate to deal with the phenomenon in action in natural languages; anything more than a perfunctory survey of the facts involved reveals that a more nuanced theory is required.

In the tradition of logicians, the analysis of definite and indefinite articles was the Russellian account that does not consider NPs with articles as referring to individuals, and instead treats articles as quantificational (of the type $\langle et, \langle et, t \rangle$). In Russell's analysis, the difference between the definite and the indefinite article is that a statement made with *the* entails the one made with *a* but not vice versa. The definite also includes maximality as a part of its semantics, i.e., there is only one of the referent of the NP. Frege modified this arguing that the definite adds presupposition to the interpretation of the indefinite article. He also

considers the definite to be of type e and these are the main differences, according to Frege, between the definite and the indefinite article.

In the generative tradition, the starting point of the study on definiteness was an account of articles, their generation and interaction with nominals. This was quickly problematized, for the obvious reason that there are many languages lacking articles that still manage to encode the crucial difference between definites and indefinites, by employing various strategies. These range from the use of numerals, demonstratives, classifiers, etc. to the use of definite descriptions, discourse contexts and pragmatic strategies to convey (in)definiteness, and much work has also been done on the article-less Bare Noun Phrase and its interpretation in relation to (in)definiteness. Such work has also had consequences for languages with article such as in the case of the English bare plural.

In this dissertation, I will attempt to study in various ways in which (in)definiteness is encoded in Tamil, an article-less language. While there has been some work in this area in other South Asian languages such as Hindi (Porterfield and Srivastav, Dayal) and Bangla (Bhattacharya), with whom Tamil has some commonalities, work on (in)definiteness in Tamil is scarce. In particular, I will investigate the bare plural in Tamil and its interpretation, and its interaction with genericity. I will also try to account for other strategies employed to convey (in)definiteness, such as the use of the numeral “one” to convey indefiniteness and the use of demonstratives “that” and “this” to convey definiteness and/or specificity. What follows is a survey of some of the vast literature in this area of research.

1.1. Literature Review

1.1.1. Accounting for The Interpretation of Definites and Indefinites

The early transformational models of the grammar, such as Chomsky (1972), assumed articles encoding (in)definiteness to be introduced by Phrase Structure (PS) rules and the distinction between definiteness and indefiniteness was considered to be generated by the syntax, with the interpretative semantic component seeing to the semantics associated with it. However, this was later contested, as by Baker (1966) and Annear (1968), who suggested

that rather than being inserted by PS rules, the distinction between indefinite and definite NPs could be derived through other mechanisms in the Deep Structure. Annear in particular suggested that anaphoric pronouns and definite NPs were derived similarly. One of the crucial underlying assumptions around this question was that “...the derivation of a sentence need not be considered in isolation but as the last member of a string of sentences that constitute a discourse.” (Karttunen 1968) The account was therefore brought into the realm of discourse, in a manner similar to that of the traditional grammars and the familiarity theory.

Karttunen (1968) and Heim (1982) represent a departure from this approach to discourse, in what has come to be known as Discourse Representation Theory (DRT.) It was Karttunen (1968) that gave a truly nuanced account of (in)definiteness from a discourse perspective. Karttunen (1968) pointed out that a simple appeal to familiarity was not sufficient to explain many instantiations of the definiteness. For instance, a simple familiarity account such as the Baker-Annear hypotheses could not explain basic conjunctive sentences that would be considered ungrammatical:

(1) * (a.) I don't have a car but the car is black.

* b. Mary expected a present from Peter, although the present was very expensive.

Karttunen points out that in such utterances, the problem arises from assuming that the referential indice of any indefinite NP could later on be referred to by a definite NP. This was essentially a problem of treating NPs as *referential* elements, and therefore, in utterances such as (1a.), the referent of the indefinite NP has been negated while the use of the definite NP presupposes its existence causing the anomaly. Karttunen resolves this issue by suggesting that NPs be looked at not as referents but as *discourse referents*. A discourse referent differs from the notion of a referent in that it does not presuppose the existence of the referent and depends instead on the discourse context. Therefore, the use of a definite NP depends on the discourse context—the utterance would be ungrammatical if the definite NP does not refer to an already established discourse referent. A corollary to this rule is that a previously established discourse referent can only be referred to by a definite NP, rendering utterances such as (2a.) ungrammatical but (2b.) completely acceptable:

- (2) a. *I have a car but a car is black
 b. I have a car but the car is black.

The discourse referent is also time-bound in a certain sense, as it can come into existence and go out of existence

Heim (1983) further suggested a File Change Semantics that essentially makes the same assumptions as Karttunen but, using the metaphor of a file, attempts to demystify some of the more ambiguous assumptions of Karttunen. This was also conflated with a theory of indefiniteness, which has come to be known as the Heim-Kamp hypothesis. These two independently developed accounts followed from the traditional theory of indefiniteness among semanticists and logicians, who treated indefinites as being existential quantifiers. Heim (1982) challenged this idea, as did Kamp's (1981) Discourse Representation Theory (DRT).

Kamp (1981) proposes that the existential interpretation of the indefinite is not its basic reading; rather, it is a referential term and the existential interpretation is inherited from the existential force of the clause that contains it. Kamp points out that when the indefinite appears in the antecedent of a conditional clause, it gives a universal reading rather than an existential one, as in what Heim and Kamp call “donkey sentences”:

- (3) If a man owns a donkey he beats it.

The above has the following logical representation:

- (4) $(\forall x) (\text{Donkey}(x) \wedge \text{Owns}(\text{man}, x) \rightarrow \text{Beats}(\text{man}, x))$

(4) shows that the indefinite expression in (3), *a donkey* appears as a universal quantifier, problematizing the traditional view that an indefinite introduces an existential quantifier. The logical equivalent of (4) that uses the existential quantifier would not capture the semantics

of (3). For instance, (5) can have two logical representations, (6a) and (6b), which are logical equivalents, with the existential quantifier taking narrow scope in (6b). But such a structure is not possible for (3) because the existential quantifier, not having wide scope, would not be able to bind *it* in (3):

(5) If Pedro owns a donkey, he is rich.

(6) a. $(\forall x) (\text{Donkey}(x) \wedge \text{Owns}(\text{Pedro}, x) \rightarrow \text{Rich}(\text{Pedro}))$

b. $(\exists x) (\text{Donkey}(x) \wedge \text{Owns}(\text{man}, x)) \rightarrow \text{Rich}(\text{Pedro})$.

To solve this problem, Kamp suggests that a general account of conditionals, the interpretation of indefinites and pronominal anaphora is required. Both Heim and Kamp independently solve the problem with similar accounts. For Heim, an indefinite is assumed to not have any existential force of its own, i.e., not quantificational, but a free variable that can get bound in two different ways.

These two ways depend on Heim's tripartite structure to logical representations, consisting of an unselective quantifier (from Lewis' (1975) analysis of Q-adverbials), the restrictive clause and nuclear scope. The quantifier unselectively binds the variables in the nuclear scope, while the quantifier and all elements bound by it are restricted by the restrictive clause. An NP that is not bound by an overt quantifier must move to the restrictive clause and get an generic interpretation.

On the other hand, in sentences like (3), where the NP is bound by an overt quantifier introduced by *if*, an operation called existential closure operates, with the unselective implicit existential operator over the whole text and on the Nuclear Scope of tripartite structures. Thus, sentences like (3) are accounted for by restricting the scope of the existential operator.

Heim combines this account with her theory of File Change Semantics and argues that definites are also variables, except that they have an old reference in the file, and are essentially anaphoric.

Diesing (1992) further extends this theory to apply to bare plurals to explain their behaviour in various contexts. She also goes further, introducing a Mapping Hypothesis that ties up the tripartite structure of logical representations suggested by Heim to syntactic structures, with the tree being split into two. The claim is that elements in the VP are mapped into the nuclear scope and the material from IP (or TP) into the restrictive clause. In the case of NPs, Diesing claims that subjects in the specifier of TP will be mapped to nuclear scope and that in [Spec VP] position will map into the restrictive clause. The empirical foundation to this is laid with the behaviour of the bare plural NPs in English. More specifically, Diesing is interested in kind-level and individual-level predicates as these do not allow bare plurals the generic and indefinite readings that other predicates allow. A study of the kind of readings that the stage/individual predicates allow the bare plural facilitates an analysis of where the NPs are represented in the logical representation: the bare plural NP of a stage-level predicate can appear in both nuclear scope and restrictive clause as it allows both generic and existential interpretation, while the subject of the individual level predicate can only appear in the restrictive clause. This system is also adapted for the interpretation of indefinites.

1.1.2. The Bare NP

All these accounts, however, took their starting point from languages that have articles, as in English. Languages that lack articles present an interesting problem, especially for Heim, who claims that in languages that lack articles, NPs could be either definite or indefinite or ambiguous. However, this is an inherently problematic assumption as “the difference between given and new information . . . in an important part of language organization” (Porterfield and Srivastav 1988, p.265). Further, actual research points otherwise than the ambiguity theory. Porterfield and Srivastav (1988), for instance, argue, with evidence from Hindi and Indonesian, that Heim's account is insufficient to deal with the facts of articleless languages, which reveal a decided lack of ambiguity of (in)definiteness in the interpretation of their NPs. This argument is also further developed and fleshed out with more data from Russian and Chinese in Dayal (1992, 1999, 2000), and the status of bare nominals as indefinites and kind terms is also explored from a cross-linguistic perspective.

Porterfield and Srivastav present an early departure from the Heim analysis of the bare NP in

articleless languages. They instead take a Carlson-style analysis to genericity [Carlson 1977] because both languages have a generic reading of the bare NP, with Hindi bare NPs also having an additional definite reading. In his seminal dissertation, Carlson presented an alternative to the then-existing account for the three different readings of the bare plural, viz. Chomsky (1975), which posited a null specifier for bare plurals, which would make the bare plural three-way ambiguous. Carlson demonstrated that this was, in fact, not the case, for no such ambiguity existed in the interpretation of the English bare plural; and the difference in interpretation could be accounted for through the interaction of the context with the bare NP. Carlson's work, although not directly on (in)definiteness, has greatly influenced the approaches taken to NPs as a whole, particularly in relation to indefiniteness and have bearing on articleless languages. His argument that there are significant and consistent differences between bare plurals and indefinites in terms of scope has led to much debate. Carlson (1977 and 1989) crucially argued that bare plurals have a kind interpretation while Diesing (1992) and Kratzer (1995), following from the Kamp-Heim hypothesis, suggest instead that bare plurals refer to both kinds and indefinites. It is in this context that Dayal (1999, 2004) argues in favour of Carlson's hypothesis with data from articleless languages.

Porterfield and Srivastav show that bare NPs consistently give one of two readings (definite or generic) in discourse contexts, and are never truly indefinite nor ambiguous. This is supported by discourses such as the following:

(7) HINDI

- a. kal lounge-me mene ek ajeeb drishya dekha .
 yesterday in the lounge I a strange sight saw
 waha kuch log the
 there some people were
- b. ek admi₁ sari pahne tha
 one man sari wearing was
- c. ek Orat₂ gana ga rahi thi
 one woman was singing
- d. ek admi₃/admi₁ gana sun raha tha Or
 one man song was listening and

e. ek Or admi, tebal par khaRa tha
 another man table on was standing

Although this points towards the bare NP only giving a definite reading, the bare NP has also been analyzed as able to refer to an indefinite by Gambhir (1981):

(7) kamre me chuuha hai
 room in mouse is
 “There is a mouse in the room.”

Dayal (2000) resolves the data in (4) by appealing to Carlson's scope diagnostics that show that such instances are of weak indefinites:

(8) kamre me chuuhe nahin hain
 room in mice not are
 “There aren't any mice in the room.”

In the logical form of (8), the negation takes scope over the existential ($\neg\exists$) rather than the other way around ($\exists\neg$). Therefore, Dayal argues that this is not a true indefinite, but rather represents an instantiation of the bare plural with the associated genericity effect.

Porterfield and Srivastav also propose that the only instance where the bare NP bears a new index is when it carries a generic reading, particularly a D-generic or a definite generic, as opposed to an I-generic or an indefinite generic¹.

The Hindi bare plural lines up with D-generics in its interpretation, i.e, it gets a generic

¹ Porterfield and Srivastav refer to Krifka's system of generics based on the English bare plural, which has both D- and I-generic interpretations:

(4) I-Generics:

- a. A madrigal is polyphonic
- b. He enjoys a good party.

(5) D-Generics:

- a. The rat reached Australia in 1770
- b. In Alaska, Bill photographed the grizzly.

reading only when used with a generic tense, otherwise giving a non-universal reading. The Hindi bare NPs also share with English D-generics their behaviour in relation to natural kinds, with both unable to refer to kinds whose properties are not naturally associated with them:

(9) HINDI

a. wo dakter se shadi kar rahi he

she doctor with marriage is doing

“She is marrying a doctor.”

b. wo *ø/ek lambe, garib daktar se shadi kar rahi he

she a tall, poor doctor with marriage doing

“She is marrying a tall, poor doctor.”

Dayal (1992, 1999) further also observe a systematic difference in the interpretation of the Hindi singular and plural NPs. Though both are bare, certain differences arise quite consistently that resists a unified analysis of both, as would be suggested by the analysis of English plural. Particularly, when the bare NP occurs in the subject position of sentences with an episodic reading, the singular breaks pattern with the English plural, and does not give an existential reading, while the bare plural behaves like its English counterpart:

(9)a. bacca khel rahaa hai
 kid play-PROG-PR
 'The kid/*a kid is playing.'

b. bacce khel rahe haiN
 kids play-PROG-PR
 'The kids/(Some) kids are playing.'

Dayal (1999) suggests a kind-based approach to explain the Hindi bare NP facts—they behave either as definite and kind-denoting. The key fact is that they are not indefinites as their behaviour is clearly in variation with that of indefinites, and instead the indefinite reading seems to be arising from the reference to kinds. The kinds-based approach involves the operation *nom* which maps the predicate to the corresponding kind term. However, this applies to plurals but for the singular, it presents a problem as *nom* is an operation that is undefined for the singular. As a solution, Dayal suggests imposing the atomicity constraint on the nominal through the singular number as this will rule out object-level quantification of bare singulars. This still leaves open the question of generic and episodic readings of the

Hindi singular bare NP. However, the main argument in favour of a kinds approach to the Hindi NP is that it can account for the distinctions based on number marking.

A kinds based approach is also able to better account for the subject-object asymmetry observed in Porterfield and Srivastav in Hindi episodic sentences:

- (10) a. jOn kitab par raha he
 john book is reading
 “John is reading one or more book(s)”
- b. kal admi chiTTi laya tha
 yesterday man letter brought
 “Yesterday, the man brought a letter.”
 * “Yesterday, a man brought a letter.”

Here, a bare NP in object position is ambiguous in terms of quantification, i.e, it could refer to one or more books. However, in the subject position, it takes only a definite reading.

Rather than a case of reference to an indefinite, Porterfield and Srivastav explain this as an instantiation of the activity of book-reading (an incorporated structure), which presupposes the existence of one or more books and causes the existential reading of the sentence. This is more appealing than a logical representation like $\exists x[\text{book}(x) \ \& \ \text{read}(a, x)]$ because, as Dayal notes, although this is appealing in similar cases in Greenlandic, where number is explicitly marked by morphology, this form of the Hindi nominal behaves like a singular in every other instance. Such an analysis supports the idea of treating the singular NP as denoting atoms, “. . . with plurals denoting its closure under sum formation.”

Dayal gives convincing arguments in favour of a kinds-based approach to capture the range of variation in the interpretation of the bare NP in Hindi. In Chapter Two, I will try to evaluate this approach with the facts of Tamil bare NPs.

1.1.3. Indefinite Articles

In articleless languages, as reviewed so far, the bare NP functions in different ways from the

NP of languages with articles, encoding (in)definiteness in unexpected ways. However, articleless languages do employ other strategies to convey (in)definiteness such as the use of numerals and demonstratives. The most common method of conveying indefiniteness in articleless languages is to use the numeral “one” or some form of it, which is interpreted as the introduction of an unfamiliar referent in the discourse. Yet, the problem arises when one attempts to identify if the numeral is being used as a numeral or in fact as an article. To identify if a language truly uses the numeral as an indefinite article, Dryer (2011) suggests the following diagnostic: if a language uses the numeral as an indefinite article in at least some of the contexts where English uses its indefinite article, and where using the numeral in English would be ungrammatical, then it has a distinctive use of the numeral as an article.

Heine (1995, 1997) presents a cross-linguistic investigation on the presence and use of articles in natural language and provides a list of tendencies noted in languages with articles. One important hypothesis that Heine makes is that in languages with articles, the indefinite article has a high probability of having evolved from the word that denotes the numeral “one”. This leads him to hypothesize that languages develop articles in a five-stage model of evolution, with the following stages:

Stage One is the numeral stage where the “one” word functions purely as a numeral and the bare NP might be used to convey indefinite specific reference. In Stage Two, the article takes a presentative function, where it is used exclusively to present or introduce unfamiliar referents to a discourse and might be confined to the initial stage of the discourse where the main participants are introduced. The article begins to give a further specific reading in Stage Three, where not just unfamiliar referents are introduced to the discourse but also specific referents, to indicate a referent who is not in the shared discourse and is familiar to the speaker but not to the hearer. This function of the article to encode specificity is further widened to include non-specific readings in Stage Four, and entities that are unfamiliar to both speaker and hearer may be introduced with the article. In the final stage, the article evolves into a generalized article and can be used across nouns of all types such as plural count and mass nouns. Heine stresses that the stages are broad tendencies rather than discrete units and languages in the process of grammaticalization may show the tendencies of two or more stages at the same time, and other overlaps.

While the idea of an evolutionary approach to the development of articles in languages is inherently problematic as it assumes that the creation of generalized article is a tendency or goal of every language and therefore creates an uncomfortable hierarchy of language development, Heine's categorization is nevertheless useful, especially in the analysis of the use of the Tamil numeral "one" as an indefinite article, as I shall explore in Chapter Three.

1.1.4. Demonstratives and Determiners

The use of demonstratives to encode definiteness is not one that is exclusive to articleless languages; English-type languages with articles also employ demonstratives for some of the same functions as languages without articles. Therefore, as in the case of the numeral being used as an indefinite article, the diagnostic of comparison with English may be employed here again to show that the use of the demonstrative to convey definiteness in languages without articles is wider than it is in English; and the demonstratives may be used in contexts where in English the definite article would be used and the demonstrative would be anomalous.

Demonstratives have long been observed to have two functions, the anaphoric and non-anaphoric use. Non-anaphorically, the demonstrative may be accompanied by a gesture such as pointing or shrugging and is used to refer to something in the immediate surrounding of the participants of the discourse. The anaphoric use is where the demonstrative is used to refer back to a previously established referent in the discourse, parallel to the definite article *the*.

Himmelman (1996) presents a cross-linguistic study of demonstratives and suggests the following criteria for the identification of a true demonstrative:

- a. the element must be in a paradigmatic relation to elements which . . .
locate the entity referred to on a distance scale: proximal, distal, etc.

b. the element should not be amenable to the following two uses which are characteristic for definite articles:

– *larger situational use*: demonstratives are not usable for first mention of entities that are considered to be unique in a given speech community . . .

– *associative-anaphoric use* as exemplified by the following example from the Pear Stories where replacing the definite article in *the branch* by a demonstrative would sound fairly odd . . .

Diessel (1999) classifies demonstratives into four kinds:

- i. demonstrative pronouns
- ii. demonstrative determiners
- iii. demonstrative adverbs and
- iv. demonstrative identifiers

Category (i) and (ii) prove relevant for the purposes of this dissertation. Demonstrative pronouns or pronominals are those that are used in place of NPs and carry the morphological properties of nominals if any, such as gender, number or case. Demonstrative determiners or adnominals are those “that are formally distinguished from demonstratives in other syntactic contexts.” (Diessel 1999, p.57) Traditionally treated as modifiers of the noun, he notes that in the linguistic literature, the determiner is treated as a head to NP. Diessel, however, disagrees with Abney's (1987) hypothesis of determiner-as-head.

Diessel suggests from cross-linguistic data that a majority of languages do not formally distinguish between pronominals and adnominals. In a small cross-section of languages, the pronominals and adnominals are distinguished in their stems or inflectional behaviour. Diessel considers these to be separate categories, namely demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative adjectives. However, despite the fact that most languages, including English, do not distinguish the two morphologically or phonologically, on the strength of languages that do grammaticalize this difference and on the analysis of English *this* and *that* that show all signs of being distinct from determiners, Diessel argues against an Abney-style analysis that does away with the distinction between pronouns and determiners. This fits in well with the NP/DP debate and the Tamil facts also have interesting consequences to Diessel's arguments.

1.2. Organization of Chapters

The discussion on how Tamil encodes (in)definiteness in the absence of articles in this dissertation will be organized in the following manner:

In Chapter Two, I will deal with the question of the interpretation of bare NPs in Tamil. I will particularly be looking at how the behaviour of Tamil bare NPs compares with that of Hindi and what repercussions the differences between the two has for Dayal's analysis.

Chapter Three will be roughly divided into two parts, the first dealing with the use of the numeral one as an indefinite marker and the second part, with the use of demonstratives to encode definiteness. I will also use this as a point of discussion for the NP/DP debate. In Chapter Four, I analyze fragments of a spoken test to support the claims thus far.

Chapter Two

2.1 Tamil Bare NP: The Facts

The status of (in)definiteness of Tamil has not so far been explored at any length in the literature. An articleless language, it might not be unexpected to find that the Tamil bare NP behaves in many ways like the Hindi bare NP. How do the Tamil facts in fact compare against the observations made by Porterfield and Srivastav (1988) and Dayal (1992, 2000 and 1999)? Does the Tamil bare NP line up against the English bare plural and D-generic, following Dayal's claims that the Hindi bare singular behaves like the definite generic and the bare plural, like that of English? In many cases, Tamil bare NPs deviate from the English bare plurals in the expected way, and pattern with Hindi.

One of the basic readings of the Hindi bare singular is that of definiteness in discourse contexts. The Tamil bare singular, too, allows the definite reading:

(11)

nEttu oru azhagAna bomma vAngi ad-a mejai-la ve-cc-en
 yesterday one beautiful doll bought that-ACC table-LOC keep-PST-1p.S
 "Yesterday I bought a beautiful doll and put it on the table."

bUkambatt-Ala bomma klzha vizhundu odanji-pOccu
 earthquake-because of doll down fall break-PERF
 "The doll fell and broke due to the earthquake."

The Tamil bare nominal is also compatible with kind-level predication, like its Hindi counterpart:

(12) Tamil

nAi nandriuLLa jIvan
 dog faithful creature
 "The dog is a faithful creature."

b. na:igalinge migavum sAdAraNam (Literary Tamil)
 dogs here very common
 "Dogs are common here."

When dealing with object-level predicates with imperfective aspect, Dayal (1992, 1999) notes that both the singular and plural receive a generic reading. Dayal accounts for this as a case of aspect behaving as a generic operator that binds individual instantiations of the kind, leading to a definite interpretation:

- (13) a. kutta bhauNktaa hai
 dog bark-PR
 “The dog barks”
 b. kutte bhauNkte hain
 dogs bark-PR
 “The dogs bark.”

The Tamil bare NP, however, presents an interesting contrast to this. While the simple Tamil bare NP in a sentence with imperfective aspect seems to behave like the its Hindi counterpart, a deeper look at the data is more revealing:

- (14) a. nAi kolaikk-um
 dog bark-IMP. IR
 “The dog barks.”
 b. nAigal kolaikk-um
 dogs bark-IMP. IR
 “The dogs bark.”

Despite the imperfective (habitual) marker “-um”, the most natural reading of (11a.) and (11b.) is a definite one. The generic reading is less preferred, but still possible. However, consider the following example from Porterfield and Srivastav, a conditional statement that they claim to have a generic interpretation:

(15) Hindi

- a. agar bacce ke pas khilOna ho, to wo khush rahta hai
 if child-with toy have, then he happy remains
 “If a child has a toy, he is happy.”

- b. kal ek se do ke beech me jabbi chorne ghar me ghusa
 yesterday one two between whenever thief house-in entered
 pulisne usko pakar liya
 police him caught
 “Yesterday, between one and two, whenever the thief entered the house, the
 police caught him.”

(15a.) is a universal statement about children as it gets a generic interpretation, while (15b.) becomes anomalous due to the forced universal reading in the presence of an imperfective tense, in a context that does not easily lend itself to a universal reading. The Tamil bare nominal as in (16), on the other hand, proves completely resistant to the generic reading.

(16) TAMIL

- kozhanda kitta bomma irund-A avan sandOshamA irupp-An
 child LOC toy be-COND he happy be-IMPERF.3SM
 “If the child has a toy, he is happy.”

This presents a problem to Dayal's analysis as the status of the interaction between the imperfective tense and the bare NP with regard to genericity seems unclear in Tamil.

Similarly, when the Tamil bare nominal appears with an object-level predicate with the progressive aspect, it does not give a definite reading, only the indefinite one:

- (17)a. meenu pustagam paDicci-t-rukk-a
 meenu book read-PROG-PRES-FEM
 “Meenu is reading a book/*the book/books”

This is still unproblematic for Dayal's analysis which claims that the indefinite reading arises because these are individual instantiations of the kind terms due to existential quantification. The diagnostic for this is to test the scopal properties of the indefinite, as the bare nominal

would take obligatory scope over negation while regular indefinites would not:

- (18) a. meenu pustagam paDikka mATTA
 meenu book read won't
 “Meenu won't read any book.”
 *“There is a book Meenu won't read.”
- b. meenu enda/oru puttagam(-um) padikka maaTTaa
 meenu any/one book(CONJ.) read NEG
 “There is a book Meenu won't read.”

(18a.) establishes the bare singular as kind-denoting, for it does not allow the existential to take scope over the negation, to mean “There is a book that Meenu won't read.” (18b.) incidentally reveals that all is not well and simple with the regular Tamil indefinite for it does not interact scopally as expected of regular indefinites².

However, (18a.) still does pose some problems for a Dayal-style analysis of the bare plural as it does not give a definite reading here, having consequences for the incorporated account of the nominal.

On a similar vein, Dayal (1992, 1999) claims that the Hindi bare NP shows a variation in behaviour between the singular and the plural in episodic sentences—the bare plural can receive an indefinite reading, while the bare singular resists this reading:

- (19)a. baccha khel raha he
 child play PROG-PR
 “The kid/*a kid is playing.”
- b. bacche khel rahe hain
 children play PROG-PR
 “The children/(some) children are playing.”

Here again Tamil shows some variation from Hindi as the bare plural in episodic contexts also resists an existential interpretation as does the bare singular:

² This will be elaborated on in Chapter 3, where I deal with “oru” as an indefinite marker.

- (20)a. kozhanda vilayadi-tt-irukk-an
 child play-PROG-PR-3.m
 “The kid/*a kid is playing.”
- b. kozhandaiga vilayadi-tt-irukk-aanga
 children play-PROG-PR-3.pl
 “The children/*some children are playing.”

This is also a problem in Dayal's system, as it hinges crucially on the difference in number marking between singular and plural bare NPs.

2.2. A Closer Look at the “Problem” Facts

Almost all of the Tamil bare NP facts prove to be problematic to the current analysis. Some of these arise from other factors but most need to be accounted under Dayal's analysis. The main differences between Tamil and Hindi bare NPs with regard to interpretation of (in)definiteness is summarized below.

Language	Bare Singular	Bare Plural
<i>Object-level Predicates with Imperfective Aspect</i>		
HINDI	Generic	Generic
TAMIL	Definite > Generic	
<i>Object-level Predicates with Progressive Aspect</i>		
HINDI	Definite & Indefinite	Definite & Indefinite
TAMIL	Indefinite	
<i>Bare NP in Episodic Sentences</i>		
HINDI	Definite	Definite & Indefinite
TAMIL	Definite	

2.2.1. The Imperfective Aspect Marker *-um*

The Tamil bare NP in an episodic context with an imperfective aspect gives, as previously observed (in (14) and (16)), the unexpected preference for the definite reading, and the generic reading is weak at best and seems forced. This could perhaps be due to the presence of the aspect marker “-um.” “-um” is an imperfective marker that gives both habitual and future tense readings. The unusual reading it gives to the bare singular might be because it does not give a generic reading that can bind every instantiation of the kind.

A possible explanation for this may be found in Babu's (2006) analysis of the two flavours of the imperfective marker in Malayalam *-um* and *-unnu*. Although native speakers do not make out a semantic distinction between the imperfective use of these markers, Babu claims that the former has a *characterizing* property while the latter has an *accidental* one. This captures the intuition that the *-um* marker refers to a characteristic property of the NP while the *-unnu* marker is closer to generalizations made from observing the repeated behaviour of the referent involved. Babu formalizes this semantic distinction in the following way: the characteristic marker *-um* behaves like the English generic, an extensional operator binding the variable; *-unnu*, on the other hand, is analyzed as a generalization over episodes, and therefore gives a different reading.

I would like to propose this as an explanation for the deviant Tamil data in (14 a.-b.) and (16). Although Tamil does not have two different markers for the imperfective aspect, I would like to suggest that it does encode this difference, as there is a split in the data, with the imperfective marker in (14b.) behaving like the Malayalam *-um* and its instantiation in (16) behaving more like the *-unnu* marker. Intuitively, too, such an explanation has some appeal for (14b.) reads like a characterizing property, while (16), like an accidental one.

The core argument that Babu (2006) presents is that *-um* introduces an *intensional* operator, while *-unnu*, an *extensional* one, i.e., *-um* makes a generalization across a set of possible worlds, while *-unnu* quantifies over a set of episodes. Thus, the differences observed in the usage of the two is explained by the difference in the types of operators that quantify over the predicate.

Hany Babu claims that this could explain the observed differences in the usage of -um and -unnu (despite the fact that they both seem to be interchangeable in certain contexts):

(21) a.

*I pAtratt-il nAlu littar veLLam koLL-unnu
 this vessel-LOC four litre water hold-UNNU
 'This vessel holds four litres of water.'

b.

I pAtratt-il nAlu liTTar veLLam koLL-um
 this vessel-LOC four litre water hold-UM
 'This vessel holds four litres of water.'

Here, though the contexts are identical, (21a.) is ungrammatical due to the usage of -unnu. This makes sense if we consider -unnu to quantify over episodes, and is therefore in conflict with the stative predicate “hold” and has no variable for the extensional operator to bind. On the other hand, according to Hany Babu's claim, -um introduces a set of possible worlds which the intensional operator can bind, making (21b.) grammatical.

Another difference between -um and -unnu is in their behaviour in sentences dealing with dispositional properties, where again -unnu produces an ungrammatical structure:

(22) a. *pancasAra weLLatt-il aliy-unnu
 sugar water-LOC dissolve-UNNU

b. pancasAra weLLatt-il aliy-um
 sugar water-LOC dissolve-UM

“Sugar dissolves in water.”

It is in the nature of sugar to dissolve in water and this does not refer to any episode of sugar being dissolved in water. Therefore, -unnu cannot hold here, while -um, with its characterizing nature, can.

Similarly, Babu shows that Dahl's (1975) generalization about characterizing sentences

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supporting counterfactuals to hold for Malayalam, and that this is another case where -unnu proves to be varying from -um:

- (23)a. dakSina indiakkaar dhaaraaLam ari-bhakSaNam kazhikk-um.
 south Indians plenty rice-food eat-UM
 awan dakSina indiakkaaranaayirunn-enkil, awan
 he south Indian was-if he
 ari-bhakSaNam kazhikk-um-aayirunnu
 rice-food eat-UM-auxillary

“South Indians eat plenty of rice. If he had been a South Indian, then he would've eaten rice.”

- b. dakSina indiakkaar dhaaraaLam ari-bhakSaNam kazhikk-unnu
 south Indians plenty rice-food eat-UNNU
 #awan dakSina indiakkaaranaayirunn-enkil, awan
 he south Indian was-if he
 ari-bhakSaNam kazhikk-um-aayirunnu
 rice-food eat-UM-auxillary

“South Indians eat plenty of rice. #If he had been a South Indian, then he would've eaten rice.”

(23b.) is semantically anomalous, being an -unnu sentence—only characterizing sentences support counterfactuals, and clearly -unnu is not characterizing in nature. There is, however, one situation in which only -unnu may be used for generic interpretation, as Babu points out, and -um is not possible here, because the sentence itself appeals to an accidental property, with which the latter would be incompatible:

- (24)a. chennai-yil daivangal tingi-ppaarkk-unnu
 Chennai-LOC gods dense-dwell-UNNU
 'Gods dwell densely in Chennai'
 b. ?chennai-yil daivangal tingi-ppaarkk-um
 Chennai-LOC gods dense-dwell-UM

The accidental property of Chennai having many temples precludes the use of -um as it gives a characterizing meaning which is pragmatically anomalous.

Based on such discrepancies of usage between -um and -unnu, Hany Babu (2006) concludes that -um and -unnu have very different structures. He also notes that although -unnu is an imperfective marker, it gives rise to a generic interpretation when it is bound by the generic operator, and gives a situation argument an episodic reading if bound by the existential operator.

The Tamil data shows that in Tamil, the imperfective marker seems to be ambiguous between the two interpretations corresponding with Malayalam -um and -unnu. Hany Babu notes that even in Malayalam, the usage of present tense to convey genericity is not greatly preferred and “smacks of literariness”. Tamil, on the other hand, does not at all allow the use of a present tense marker such as -unnu to encode genericity:

- (25) a. suriyan kezhakku-la udikk-um
 sun east-LOC rise-IMPIR
 “The sun rises in the east.”
- b. *suriyan kezhakku-la udikk-idu
 sun east-LOC rises-PRES
 “The sun is rising in the east” *not* “The sun rises in the east.”

The interpretation of (25b.) does not have the flavour of an accidental generalization as in the case of Malayalam -unnu; it would only be felicitous in the case of someone observing the sun's rising and reporting it to someone else.

I have claimed that -um does allow a generic reading in some contexts (as in (11)), although the definite reading is preferred. The use of adjectives seems to improve the generic interpretation of such sentences:

- (26) veri-pudicca nAi kadikk-um
 rabies-caught dog bite-IMPIR
 'A rabid dog bites'

Here, the generic reading is much stronger than in the bare NP. This is perhaps the effect of the adjective “veripudicca” which, like many Tamil adjectives, has a verbal origin and seems to form a complex predicate. (26.) thus lends itself to the generic reading more easily, and has the interpretation of a characterizing statement. This also holds true of another context where only Malayalam -um was acceptable in, i.e., dispositional properties:

- (27) cakkara taNNi-la karay-um
 sugar water-LOC dissolve-IMP
 “Sugar dissolves in water.”

I also claimed that Tamil -um gives an accidental generalization interpretation in some contexts, like the Malayalam -unnu. The context in which only -unnu can make generic statements proves that Tamil -um has this ambiguity of accidental generalizations too:

- (28) madurai-la naraya deivam irukk-um
 madurai-LOC many god be-IMP
 “Many gods live in Chennai.”

Here, the accidental generalization about Chennai, that it happens to be home to many gods, is conveyed by -um. However, compare this with (29):

- (29) kovil-la naraya deivam irukkum
 temple-LOC many god be-IMP
 “Many gods live in temples.”

It is still possible to use -um here, despite the fact that it is characteristic of temples to have gods (unlike Madurai.) Therefore, it becomes apparent that -um seems to be ambiguous between the two readings. This raises questions under Hany Babu's account—if -um and -unnu have distinct semantics, about how exactly to account for this ambiguity. I do not deal here with this question, as it is beyond the scope of this thesis, and only consider how the ambiguity of the aspect marker -um affect the interpretation of the bare NP.

If we recall (16), reproduced here as (30) the sentence that seemed to completely resist the generic reading of the bare NP, the Malayalam facts just reviewed suggest a solution to the problem:

(30) TAMIL

kozhanda kitta bomma irund-A avan sandOshamA irupp-An
 child LOC toy be-COND he happy be-IMPERF.3SM
 “If the child has a toy, he will be happy.”

The other problematic sentence was (14) ((31) here), which gave a strong preference for the definite interpretation over the generic:

- (31) a. nAi kolaikk-um
 dog bark-IMP.IR
 “The dog barks.”
 b. nAigaL kolaikk-um
 dogs bark-IMP.IR
 “The dogs bark.”

In (31), albeit less preferred, the generic reading is possible and would be much more easily available if it is supported by the discourse context. However, it still has more of an extensional flavour than an intensional one, i.e., the utterance would be more felicitous in a situation where someone is warning someone else that dogs tend to bark (in the 'actual world'), rather than as a general statement about the nature of dogs (in all possible worlds).

The sentence in (31) presents a counterfactual statement, which, according to Hany Babu, does not support -unnu-type accidental generalizations. However, the ambiguous -um of Tamil creates a situation where it is possible for the existential operator introduced by situation argument to bind the aspect marker, giving rise to an episodic interpretation that is definite. These data also suggest that there is a preference for the extensional -um (corresponding to Malayalam -unnu) over the intensional (characterizing) one.

2.2.2. Bare NP in Episodic Sentences

Another way in which the Tamil data varies from the Hindi is in the interpretation of the bare NP in episodic sentences.

- (32)a. kozhanda vilayadi-tt-irukk-an
 child play-PROG-PR-3.m
 “The kid/*a kid is playing.”
- b. kozhandaiga vilayadi-tt-irukk-aanga
 children play-PROG-PR-3.pl
 “The children/*some children are playing.”

In Hindi, the bare singular receives only a definite reading and the bare plural could be both definite and indefinite in episodic sentences. Tamil, on the other hand, gives only a definite reading to both singular and plural bare NP.

This presents a problem for Dayal's analysis, because as previously discussed, it claims that number marking plays a crucial role in the observed difference in interpretation. The explanation Dayal gives is that the interpretation of bare NPs involves the operation *nom* which maps the predicate to the corresponding kind term. However, this applies to plurals but *nom* is an operation that is undefined for the singular. As a solution, Dayal suggests imposing the atomicity constraint on the nominal through the singular number as this will rule out object-level quantification of bare singulars. The Tamil facts, however, show that even the plurals in Tamil behave like the singular in Hindi. A look at the Tamil number marking system might be relevant here because there are some unusual factors in Tamil nominal number marking.

Tamil nouns have two broad classes, rational and irrational. The rational noun class includes all nouns that refer roughly to humans or beings with human intelligence or status, while the irrational class includes all inanimate nouns, animals, gods, and in some dialects, children and women. Tamil shows variation in the singular-plural distinction across noun classes. The situation is further complicated by the fact that Tamil is diglossic—in Literary Tamil (LT), number marking is regular, with both rational and irrational classes of nouns being marked for plurals. But in Spoken Tamil (ST), only rational nouns are marked for plural and

irrational nouns have the same form for both plural and singular, including agreement on the verb:

(33) SPOKEN TAMIL

a. veLila oru nAi kattiT-rukk-u
 outside one dog shout-PROG-IR
 'There's a dog barking outside.'

b. veLila anju nAi sanDa pottut-rukk-u
 outside five dog fight do-PROG-IR
 'Five dogs are fighting outside.'

(34) a. nEtikku oru peNN-a sandi-cc-En
 yesterday one girl-ACC meet-PST-1S
 'I met a girl yesterday.'

b. anga mUNu poNNu-ngal-a pA-tt-En
 there three girl-PL-ACC see-PST-1S
 'I saw three girls there.'

The NPs in (33) consist of irrational nouns and do not show number marking while (34) clearly display number morphology. Even without the numeral modifying the NP, the plural morphology shows up, as in (32).

Dayal suggests that in languages without number marking, such as Chinese, the bare NP would pattern with the plural of Hindi. This is because lack of number marking would mean that the atomicity constraint would not apply to them, leading to singular kinds also being interpreted like plurals. But in a language like Tamil, the opposite seems to (partially) be the case, with rational plurals also taking only the definite reading like the singulars in Hindi. However, Tamil also partially behaves like Chinese, but *only in the case of the irrational nouns*, whose number marking has been lost. For instance, the following test sentence:

(35) ellAr vlttu-l-ay-um nAi kolai-kk-udu
 everyone house-LOC-ACC-CONJ dog bark-PRES-IR
 'There's a dog barking in everyone's house.' (Different dogs)

But the rational nouns fail this test, attesting to the observation already made:

- (36) #kozhandai-nga arai-la vilayad-ra-nga, konzhandai-nga
 child-PL room-LOC play-PRES-PL child-PL
 tUngiTT-um iru-kk-Anga
 sleep-also COP-PRES-3PL
 #“Children are playing and (the same) children are also sleeping.”

How are these facts to be accounted for? One solution may be to abandon Dayal's bare-NPs-as-Kinds analysis, but this is hardly attractive considering that it has great success in explaining many other facts in which both Hindi and Tamil (and other languages Dayal discusses such as Russian and Chinese) deviate from English. The arguments Dayal gives against analyzing bare NPs as indefinites, as in the Kamp-Heim thesis, hold true for Tamil in many instances too. One possible way to rescue the analysis would be to suggest that in ST, the process of losing number marking in one word class has caused some unexpected behaviour in the other word class. The number-marking-less word class behaves as one would expect, but it would seem that the atomicity constraint is also imposed upon the plural of the rational word class, giving rise to a definite interpretation.

To sum up, the observed differences between the interpretation of Tamil and Hindi bare NPs can be accounted by the interaction of other factors, such as the nature of the aspectual marker or the variations in number marking. Once these are incorporated, the Dayal account works quite well for Tamil, although the nature of the number-marking issue needs to be further investigated.

Chapter Three

In this chapter, I will explore the use of the numeral one as an indefinite marker and the use of the demonstrative for definiteness, as these are the closest corresponding elements to specialized articles in Tamil.

3.1. The Numeral “One” or “Oru”

In Tamil, the numeral “one”, when it appears as a pre-nominal noun modifier, takes the form “oru”. It represents a rather special case among numerals in Tamil, as it is the only numeral that takes a different form prenominally. It often serves the same function as the indefinite article in English, with some additional functions that also convey indefiniteness. The full descriptive facts follow.

3.1.1. The Descriptive Facts

The Tamil cardinal numeral “one” is “onnu”. It takes an oblique form *oru* when it appears prenominally (35a.) However, as Lehmann (1989) notes, “when [*onnu*] occurs as transposed noun modifier in post-nominal position, it has its nominal form [*onnu*]” (35b.):

- (37) a. en-akku oru pensil vAngi kodu-tt-A
 me-DAT one/a pencil buy give-PST-f
 “She bought me a pencil.”
- b. en-akku piDicca porul onnu vAngi kodu-tt-A
 me-DAT liked thing one bought give-PST-f
 “She bought me something that I loved.”

In all prenominal contexts, however, *oru* is used, and this gives the numeral *onnu* a special status as no other numeral has this behaviour, appearing in the same form even when they modify the NP.

Oru also has an additional function in that it can modify other numeral NPs to give a meaning of indeterminacy:

- (38) anga oru pattu peru kUdi ninnu pesit-rukK-Anga
 there one ten people gather stand talk-PROG-PL
 “There about ten people standing around there and talking.”

Here, *oru* gives the meaning of “approximately” or “around”, behaving in a manner similar to the English *couple of*. As Schiffman notes, a similar function is also carried out in Tamil by the numeral four, *nalū*, to mean an approximation, ranging from “a bunch” to “a few”, depending on the context.

- (39) NAlu moLaga-ya kiLLi sAmbAr-la pod-u
 four chilli-ACC pinch sambar-LOC put-IMPER.
 “Cut up a few chillies and put them in the sambar.”

Compound numerals such as *anj-Aru* or *nAl-anju*, i.e., five-six or four-five, also signify an approximation, to mean “around four or five”. However, neither compounds nor *nalū* can modify numeral NPs, and syntactically, seem to behave like regular numerals. Therefore, the fact that *oru* can modify such NPs still makes it something of an outlier among numerals.

3.1.2. Heine's Taxonomy of Articles

The data so far reveals that the Tamil *oru* is not a straightforward numeral. It seems to be ambiguous between the indefinite article and the numeral, as the following short discourse indicates:

- (40) a. oru nAl oru vedan oru mAn-a ko-nnAn
 one day one hunter one deer-ACC kill-PST.M
 ‘One day, a hunter killed a deer.’

The second and third occurrences of *oru* are clearly not instances of the numeral but rather the indefinite. Heine's classification of the use of numerals as articles from the point of view of grammaticalization might be a useful point from which to address the question of what *oru* is.

As discussed in Chapter One, Heine divides the grammaticalization process of numeral into article in roughly five phases with the numeral playing the following functions: numeral, presentative, specificity, and finally non-specificity. The final stage is that of nonreferential use.

(40) reveals that *oru* functions as a numeral (*oru nAL*) and also has a presentative function, introducing the referents *hunter* and *deer* in the discourse.

Stage Three, that of nonidentifiable specific reference, also bears out, as does nonidentifiable nonspecific reference (Stage Four):

(41) a. avan pOna varsham oru vIDu vAngi-nAn
 he last year one house buy-PST.M
 “He bought a house last year.”

b. avan-ukku oru vIDu vangan-um enda vID-a irundAI-um paravaiila
 he-DAT one house buy-FUT which house-ACC be-CONJ all right
 “He wants to buy a house; any house will do.”

In the stage of non-referential use, Heine notes that the numeral becomes completely grammaticalized into an article and therefore becomes detached from its quantificational meaning. In some languages, it can attach to plural or mass nouns. This does not seem to be the case in Tamil:

(42) a. *gita oru taNNi kuDi-cca
 Gita one water drink-PST-3F
 “Gita drank water.”

b. *gita oru poNNu-ngaL-a pAr-tt-a
 Gita one girl-PL-ACC see-PST-3F
 “Gita saw some water.”

However, Heine notes that other strategies may be used, such as the use of the article with nouns that are morphologically singular but semantically have the plural or mass meaning. This seems to be the case in Tamil, as in (39) where *oru* modifies the numeral NP and gives it

a plural meaning. Therefore, it would seem that the Tamil numeral *oru* has also reached the final stage of grammaticalization. However, perhaps it may still not be considered a true indefinite article, for there is some evidence that it has not completed the grammaticalization process.

Heine stresses the fact that the stages of grammaticalizations may be considered rough tendencies rather than discrete units. He argues that each stage is shaded by several processes, namely bleaching, cliticization and phonetic erosion. Semantic bleaching leads to a very specific process that causes the loss of the original meaning of the numeral. Cliticization causes the loss of autonomy of the numeral, causing it to become morphosyntactically dependent on another element. Phonetic erosion, as typically seen in English (*one* > *an*) causes a loss of phonetic content and simplification. Chen (2003) notes that this is indeed the case in Chinese, where all three processes occur, with phonological reduction being particularly marked the further the article goes down the scale of grammaticalization. A type of cliticization also occurs, with the numeral attaching to a classifier *yi*.

In Tamil, too, these processes are in evidence. The semantic bleaching is evidenced from the inclusion of other semantic content not originally contained in the numeral, as in (37) – (39). Cliticization is also in evidence simultaneously with phonetic erosion, with the original phonetic shape of the numeral *onnu* eroding to *oru*, and taking this shape only prenominally. Postnominally, when used as a numeral or when it combines with other elements (such as the conjunctive marker *-um*, as in *onn-um*, to mean 'any'), it takes the form *onnu*.

3.2. Demonstratives *idu* and *adu*

The demonstratives *idu* and *adu* are often assumed by native speakers to encode some of the same information as the English definite determiner *the*. However, it is clear from the literature that this is not the case. Before I discuss the status of demonstratives as compared to definite articles, I will explore the behaviour of the demonstratives in Tamil.

As reviewed in the literature, Diessel considers demonstratives to be of at least four types, two of which are relevant to this discussion: the pronominal and the adnominal

demonstratives. Pronominal demonstratives behave like pronouns, i.e., they “stand in” for a noun, while adnominals demonstratives modify the noun. In most languages, this difference is not morphologically distinguished. English, for instance, has only “this/that” for both functions:

- (43) a. Give me that. (*Pronominal*)
 b. This book is extremely thrilling. (*Adnominal*)

In Tamil, however, this difference is morphologically encoded. The pronominals take the form of *idu/adu*, while the adnominal demonstratives take the form of *inda/anda*:

- (44) a. adu en-akku puDikk-Adu
 that me-DAT like-NEG
 “I don't like that.” (*Pronominal*)
 b. anda pAttu en-akku teriyum
 that song me-DAT know
 “I know that song.” (*Adnominal*)

The demonstratives *adu/idu* can also be marked for case, like any other nominal:

- (45) a. ad-a kizh-a eduttu vei
 that-ACC down-LOC take keep.IMP
 “Place that on the floor.”
 b. pona vAram tiruvizhA nadandud-e adu-kku ni pO-niy-A
 last week festival happened-EV that-DAT you go-2S-INT
 “‘There was a festival last week. Did you attend it?’”

The pronominal demonstrative can also be marked for number when it takes its reference from irrational nouns in Tamil. This is a rather curious fact because, as discussed in Chapter Two, nouns of the irrational class are not morphologically marked for number nor is there number agreement on the verb. But when the pronominal demonstrative refers to irrational nouns, it has number marking and the verb also agrees with it:

- (46) enga vlttu-la anju arai irukku anA adu-nga

our house-LOC five room is but that-PL
 onnu(t)-lay-um fan illa
 one-LOC-EMPH fan NEG.COP.

“There are five rooms in our house but not even one of them has a fan.”

Phi marking is not possible in adnominal demonstratives which have no nominal features at all. This is suggestive of the fact that adnominal demonstratives must be considered as a class of determiners. According to Diessel, there are three features of an adnominal demonstrative which would allow it to qualify as a determiner, at least two of which the demonstratives *anda* and *inda* meet:

1. They are phonologically distinguished from the pronominal demonstrative.
2. They differ in inflectional behaviour
3. They pattern syntactically with articles and possessives.

What emerges from these facts is that the two categories of demonstratives are indeed distinct, and it is possible to argue against Abney's (1987) Determiner-as-head hypothesis with this fact.

Abney's thesis is that pronouns and determiners are the same type of elements and not to be distinguished. Although he gives other justifications for this stance, the main motivation is in claiming that the structure of the NP is the same as the structure of the VP. The determiner heads its own phrase and is to be considered as corresponding to the TP, while the NP corresponds to the VP. In this context, he unifies both types of demonstratives. He treats pronominals and determiners as analogous to verbs, in that they have valency: articles such as *a*, *an* and *the* are transitive and select an NP. Pronouns behave like intransitive verbs and cannot take an NP complement. In this set-up, all demonstratives are treated as determiners, with the ability to take a complement or not.

However, this is a problematic analysis in the case of languages like Tamil, which show a clear distinction between pronominal and adnominal demonstratives. While pronominals demonstratives may still be accommodated under the pronouns-as-intransitive-verbs analysis, there is an inherent problem in treating pronominals as verbal elements because pronominals

show all the characteristics of nominals. Most importantly, they are marked for number, gender and case, as just demonstrated by the Tamil demonstratives. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that they are categorially verbs. This therefore considerably weakens if not completely disproves Abney's account of a DP headed by a determiner in languages like Tamil.

Chapter Four

The analyses of data presented so far has been based on individual utterances and limited native speaker judgements. However, considering the range and nature of the phenomena under investigation, it may be necessary to also turn our attention to the occurrence and interpretation of the various elements that contribute to conveying definiteness and indefiniteness in context, i.e., a discourse. In this chapter, I will present evidence to support my claims with extracts from short spoken texts in an attempt to situate them in an already existing discourse.

Due to the discrepancies between LT and ST that have already been discussed in Chapter Two, I have chosen a spoken text from a Tamil film. This is also appropriate because the Tamil used in cinema—the middle class and middle caste dialect—is what has come to be known as Standard Tamil. The three texts are from a 1997 Tamil feature film, *Iruvar*, a political drama based on the lives of two of the most prominent political leaders in Tamilnadu, Karunanidhi and MG Ramachandran.

The complete texts with interlinear translation may be found in the Appendix.

3.1. Analysis of Text

The first claim that was made regarding Tamil bare nominals was that a basic reading of it is of an indefinite. This is testified for in the Text No. 1:

nl	dAn	rAjA	mandiri	nl	dAn	arasiyalvAdi-nu...
you	EMPH	king	minister	you	EMPH	politician-COMP

“...that you are the king, the minister, the politician...”

This is also in evidence in the following from Text No. 2:

idu	Arambam	dAn.
this	beginning	EMPH

This is just the beginning.

However, the presence of the emphasis marker *dAn* here might be interfering with the interpretation and forcing a definite reading on the NP. Therefore, we must consider another instantiation of the bare NP, from Text No. 3:

Director:

vasanam baihArt paNNi-Ti-y-a soll-u
 dialogue memorize do-PERF-2S-INT say-IMP
 Have you memorized the lines? Say them.

Here, the bare NP gives a definite reading, as predicted.

Another claim that the analysis of the text shows evidence for is that related to the indefinite reading of the bare NP:

nan munna-yE so-nn-en-E amma-vukku oDambu seri-yilla tandi vandudu-nu
 I before-EMPH say-PST-1S-EMPH mother-DAT body well-NEG telegram came-COMP
 But I already told you that I got a telegram saying mother isn't well.

In this sentence from Text No. 4, the bare NP *tandi* or telegram takes an indefinite interpretation, as does “*arasiyal katchi*” in the following extract from Text No. 1:

nAnga innum arasiyal katci toDanga-la.
 we yet political party start-NEG
 We haven't started a political party yet.

Here, the indefinite reading is available and since it's a negative sentence, the scope facts remain: the only interpretation possible is that of “We have not started any political party yet” rather than “There is a (particular) political party that we haven't started yet.”

The lack of number marking in irrational nouns is also in evidence in Text No. 1:

adu varaikkum kanavu edukku
 that till dream why
 Why indulge in dreams before that?

The interpretation of bare NP *kanavu* here is plural despite the lack of supporting morphology.

The text also shows some instantiations on *oru* being used as an indefinite marker, and the ambiguity between the indefinite and numeral reading also holds (from Text No. 1):

Uzhal oru tuLi-yum kUD-Adu
 corruption one drop-EMPH allow-NEG
 Not a bit of corruption should be allowed to exist.

Here, the usage seems to be more of a numeral kind, whereas, in the samples below, from Text No. 1 and 2 respectively, it seems more like an indefinite usage:

padavi-ng-ardu oru poruppu ayudam illa
 position-COMP-DEM a responsibility weapon NEG
 Position (of power) is a responsibility, not a weapon.

onna pOla en-akku oru paDay-E veNum.
 you.ACC like me.OBL-DAT one army-EMPH want.
 I need a whole army like you!

The ambiguity of the indefinite article therefore seems to hold in various different contexts, and in discourse too.

The pronominal demonstrative shows a lower frequency of occurrence than the adnominal one. However, this may not signify a larger trend, considering the size of the text involved. But what emerges from the text is that the adnominal demonstrative is not really comparable to the definite article. Although it incorporates some of the features of the definite article, such as the presupposition that the definite article typically encodes, there is a lot of additional information that the demonstrative has, such as proximity.

Another observation that can be made from the text that has not been discussed so far is the

role of the accusative case in conveying definiteness. The accusative case has the highest frequency of occurrence in text, and this is to be expected as it marks object NPs. But the semantics of the accusative marker is not as simple as marking the object—it seems to have some effect on the definiteness facts of the NP too.

Consider the following portion of a sentence from Text No. 1:

nejamAve sengOl-a onga kai-I-a koduttu
 truly sceptre-ACC your.HON hand-LOC-ACC give
 If you were really given a sceptre...

In the discourse, the NP *sengol* has never been introduced before. Therefore, one would expect it to be introduced with the indefinite article *oru* but in fact, it is not. It has accusative marking because it is the object of the clause and if we were to assume that the accusative case causes a definite reading, this should be infelicitous (since the discourse referent is new). So the semantics it gives is actually that of specificity, i.e., the referent is familiar to the speaker, but not to the hearer.

Thus, the text supports the arguments I have made in this thesis. It also reveals some facts not discussed before, regarding the accusative marker and its interpretation.

Conclusion

In this investigation on the ways in which (in)definiteness is encoded in Tamil in the absence of specialized articles, I have made some observations regarding the ways in which the Tamil NP varies from the accounts in existing literature on Hindi. While the differences between Tamil and Hindi did seem to pose serious problems to Dayal's kinds-based account for bare NPs, they proved to be amenable to adjustments specific to Tamil and its peculiarities.

I then examined whether the use of the numeral one could be considered an instantiation of an indefinite article in Tamil, and the broad conclusion seemed to be that Tamil is still in the process of grammaticalizing an indefinite article into existence. The ambiguity of the numeral *oru* in its interpretation as both numeral and article, and its morphological and phonological properties led me to conclude that it may not be considered a full-fledged article comparable to the English *a/an*. The demonstratives *inda/anda* were also investigated for their ability to behave like the definite article and this seemed much less probable than the numeral one as an indefinite article. The demonstratives share some features of the definite article and certainly interact syntactically with the NP in a way similar to the article, but there are also many differences, both syntactic and semantic. However, the difference between the adnominal and pronominal that emerged in the discussion of the demonstratives also developed into a useful discussion on the possibility of having a DP structure for Tamil, such as the one suggested by Abney.

The textual analysis in the final chapter supported all the arguments that went before. It showed the behaviour of bare nominals in some instances and the number marking facts in Tamil also were verified. An observation about the specificity effect of the accusative marker

also arose from the analysis of the text.

More investigation is required in the area of number morphology in Tamil as it seems to play an important role in the interpretation of bare NPs. Particularly, a more detailed explanation regarding the atomicity constraint on plurals needs to be satisfactorily arrived at.

Appendix

This appendix consists of four spoken texts, extracts from the Tamil film *Iruvar* (occurring from 00:10:32 – 00:15:56).

Text No. 1:

Context: Nanda and Selvam are two young men discussing their political aspirations.

NANDA:

matta kaTci vazhiy-ellam tappun-A anda edatt-ukku nInga vand-A enna sei-vInga
 other parties way-all wrong-if that place-DAT you come-if what do-FUT.2.HON
 If all the other (political) parties are wrong, what would you do if you were in their place?

inda nATT-a onga kiTTa koDuttu ni dAn rAjA mandiri ni dAn
 this country-ACC. you.hon near give you EMPH king minister you EMPH
 If you were given this country and told that you are the king, the minister...

arasiyalvAdi-nu oppadacc-a ni-nga enna sei-vInga
 politician-COMP given-if you-HON what do-FUT.2hon
 ...and the politician, what would you do?

SELVAM:

nAnga innum arasiyal katci toDanga-la. tonDangina piragu id-a kELu.
 we yet political party start-NEG start after this-ACC ask-IMP
 We haven't started a political party yet. Ask me this after we do.

adu varaikkum kanavu edukku
 that till dream why
 Why indulge in dreams before that?

NANDA:

nejamAve sengOl-a onga kai-la koduttu ALu-nu sonn-a enna sei-vInga
 truly sceptre-ACC your.HON hand-LOC-ACC give rule-that tell-if what do-2hon.

If you were really given the sceptre and asked to rule, what would you do?

SELVAM:

ella-tai-um mAttu-vom
 all-ACC-CONJ change-FUT.1.pl.
 We will change everything.

NANDA:

enna-tta
 what-ACC
 What?

SELVAM:

modalla arasiyal-la yAru oda-num-nu veLipaDayA varaN-um
 first politics-LOC who run-should-COMP explicitly come-should
 We should first decide who should participate in politics.

paNa-kAran vara-kUdAdu.
 rich man come-should.not
 The rich should not.

veLLa-kAran-um paNa-kAran-um Atci senju ezhainga vAzhndadu pOdum
 white-man-CONJ rich-man-CONJ rule do poor lived enough
 The whites (British) and the rich have ruled the poor long enough.

NANDA:

paNa-karan-a veLLa torati-TT-A pOdum-A
 rich-man-ACC outside chase-PERF-if enough-INT
 Is getting rid of the rich enough?

SELVAM:

sAdi. kIL sAdi-nu toD-Ama aDima madiri ittana varusam-A iru-nda-vanga
 caste. low caste-COMP touch-NEG slave like these many year-ACC be-PERF-people
 Caste. Those who have been labelled low-caste and lived as untouchables, like slaves, for so many..

mandirisabai-kku vara-Num. mudalALittuvam ozhiya-Num. arasiyalvAdi poliskAran-a
 assembly come-should capitalism disappear-should politician policeman-ACC
 ...years should be in the assembly. Capitalism should disappear. Politicians...

kaitaDi-ya nada-ttardu nirutta-num. Uzhal oru tuLi-yum kUD-Adu
 walkingstick-ACC treat-NONF stop-should corruption one drop-EMPH allow-NEG
 ...should stop using the police as a weapon. Not a bit of corruption should be allowed to exist.

adigAram Atci padavi-ng-ardu oru poruppu ayudam illa
 authority power position-COMP-DEM a responsibility weapon NEG
 Authority, power, position—these things are a responsibility, not a weapon.

NANDA:

varumai ozhiya-num illAmai ozhiya-num sAppADu illAmai yAr-um paTTini
 poverty disappear-should deprivation food not-having who-CONJ starve
 Poverty should disappear. Deprivation should disappear. Nobody should starve...

irukka kUD-Adu. ellAr-um nalla irukkan-um.
 be allow-NEG all-CONJ well be-should
 ...for want of food. Everyone should be happy.

SELVAM:

tamizh mudalmaya irukka-num. tamizhnadu mudalmaya irukka-num.
 Tamil great be-should Tamilnadu great be-should
 The Tamil language and nation should achieve greatness.

NANDA:

en naNban-a pAtt-A perumaiya irukk-u. inda kanav-ellAm nijam AgaN-um.
 my friend-ACC see-if proud be-NEUT this dream-all true become-should
 I feel proud of you, my friend. These dreams must come true.

nijam Agara varaikkum viDa-kkUDAdu. nAn-um iru-kk-En.
 true become till leave-must not I-CONJ be-PRES-1pS
 You mustn't let go of them till they come true. I will be with you till they do.

Text No. 2:

Context: While running the press known to give political criticism, Selvam has been attacked and injured by members of the ruling political party. He is recuperating at home when he is visited by the leader of his party, respectfully known as *Ayya*.

FRIEND:

ayyA vandu-rukk-Anga
sir come-PROG-3.HON
Ayya is here.

AYYA:

ippo dAn ni unmayAna toNDan. paDaivIran-a ay-irukk-a.
now EMPH you true cadre warrior-ACC become-PERF-2S
You are now a true cadre! You have become a warrior.

ni sikkarama guNam-A-yittu veLI-la vA. idu Arambam dAn.
you quickly well-become-PERF out-LOC come.IMP this beginning EMPH
Recover quickly and return. This is just the beginning.

ida-vida periya aDiGaL raNangaL siraiDaippugaL eIlAm namm-a kAttu-kitrukku
this-leave big beatings injuries imprisonments all us-ACC wait-PROG
More beatings and injuries and imprisonments await us.

ad-eIlAm tAngikkara sakti-yoda udal-um uLLata-yum tayArnela paNNi-TTu vA.
that-all bearing strength-ABL body-CONJ mind-CONJ prepare do-PERF come.IMP
Make yourself strong enough, mentally and physically, to bear all of that and come back.

onna pOla en-akku oru paDay-E veNum. namba Ekkatt-ukkAga koLgai-kkAga
you.ACC like me.OBL-DAT one army-EMPH want. our cause-for goals-for
I need a whole army like you! We need many more brothers...

ratta-ttai sinda kUDiya uyir-ai kUDa viDa kUDiya tambi-gal naraya peru
blood-ACC spill possible life-ACC EMPH leave possible brother-PL many people
...who would be willing to spill their blood and give their lives for...

nama-kku vENum selvam ezhundu vA
 we-DAT want. selvam rise come.IMP
 our cause and goals! Selvam! Rise and return!

NANDA:

enna idu mUnji oDanji kaDakkara NI pozhai-pp-iy-A-nu kUDa kEkka-la
 what this face broken lying you survive-FUT-2S-INT-COMP EMPH ask-NEG
 What! Here you are, lying with your face bashed in and he doesn't even ask if you will live!

endir-iccu vA aDutta kAl-a oDaccu-ko ngu-rAru periyavar
 rise-PERF come other leg-ACC break-IMP COMP.say-3.HON elder
 Instead, the old man is telling you to come back and break the other leg as well!

SELVAM:

adu seri nALai-kku poNNU pAkka po-rom-E ava enna solluvALo
 that right tomorrow-DAT girl see go-2.PL.FUT-EMPH she what say-3S.FUT.FEM
 Never mind that . . . We are going girl-seeing tomorrow. I wonder what she'll say...

NANDA:

inda mUnji-yoda kalyANam-A
 this face-GEN marriage-INT
 And he wants to get married in this state!

Text No. 3:

Context: Nanda, an actor by profession, is waiting to audition for a role.

Director:

vasanam baihArt paNNi-Ti-y-a soll-u
 dialogue memorize do-PERF-2S-INT say-IMP
 Have you memorized your lines? Say them.

Nanda (reciting in LT):

avan-A nallavan en kuDumbatt-ai kedutt-avan en tanday-ai sAgaDitt-avan
 he-INT good man my family-ACC ruined-NOM my father-ACC kill-NOM
 He, a good man? He was the one who brought my family to ruin, caused my father's death!

aDa pAvi aDa pAdagA
 oh sinner oh scoundrel
 Oh, you scoundrel!

(stumbles on his words and the director moves on to the next actor.)

Assistant (to actor):

asoga diyalog teriyum illa appo soll-u
 Ashoka dialogue know NEG the say-IMP
 Ashoka! You know the lines, right? Say them then...

Text No.4:

Context: Nanda has returned home from the city upon receiving a telegram from his village. His uncle has come to receive him and the following conversations ensues on their way home.

NANDA'S UNCLE:

nandA ni unma-ya collu edu-kkAga vandu-rukk-a

nanda you true-ACC tell what-DAT come-PERF-2S

Nanda, tell me the truth. Why have you come?

NANDA:

nan munna-yE so-nn-en-E amma-vukku oDambu seri-yilla tandi vandudu-nu

I before-EMPH say-PST-1S-EMPH mother-DAT body well-NEG telegram came-COMP

But I already told you that I got a telegram saying mother isn't well.

UNCLE:

ona-kku appidi vandud-A en-akku ippidi vand-irukk-u

you-DAT like that came-INT me-DAT like this come-PERF-IR

Is that what you got? This is what I got.

(Shows a telegram that says Nanda's marriage has been fixed and inviting him to attend the wedding.)

NANDA:

nA po-r-En. adutta vandi-kku Ur-ukku pO-r-en.

I go-PROG-1S next train-DAT city-DAT go-PROG-1S

I'm going. I'm going back to the city by the next train.

UNCLE:

kAl-a oDa-ccuDv-En

leg-ACC break-PERF-FUT-1S

I'll break your legs!

NANDA:

enna idu ellar-um sEndu nADagam Ad-r-Inga

what this everyone-CONJ together drama play-PRES-2PL

All of you have banded together and are playing a farce!

UNCLE:

id-a pAr onn-a amma-ta konD-u poi sEkk-ardu en poruppu

this-ACC see you-ACC mother-LOC take-CPTL go-CPTL join-INF my responsibility

Look. It's just my responsibility to take you to your mother.

NANDA:

illa muDiy-Adu saTTa-ya viDu-nga periyavar-nu pAkka mAtt-en enna idu
 no can-NEG shirt-ACC leave.IMP-HON elder-COMP see won't-IS what this
 No. I can't. Let go of my shirt. I won't even consider that you're old. What is this!

kalyANam enna viLayATT-A
 marriage what game-INT
 Is marriage a game to you!

(On reaching his house.)

AUNT to Nanda's mother:

on puLLa vandu-TT-an Di
 your son come-PERF-3S.M familiar address marker
 Your son has arrived.

NANDA:

nA inga yArai-yum kalyANam paNNika pord-illa aDutta vanD-ikku Uru-kku pO-r-en
 I here whom-CONJ marriage do going.INF-NEG next train-DAT city-DAT go-PROG-IS
 I'm not going to marry anybody here! I'm catching the next train to the city.

podum podum enna Avesama pU katt-ari-nga kalyANam edu-vum illa
 enough enough what furiously flowers tie-PROG-3PL marriage what-CONJ NEG
 That's enough. Why are you making garlands so fast? There's going to be no wedding.

end-rIn-ga

rise-PROG-3PL.IMP

Get up.

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