Analyzing Yorùbá Bare Nouns as DP

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Abstract
This paper examines count nouns in Yorùbá and makes the claim that such nouns are bare (cf. Ajiboye 2005). Structurally, it proposes that the nouns are to be analyzed as Noun Phrases (NPs) that are contained inside a Determiner Phrase (DP) which is headed by a null Determiner (D). The claim is supported by both empirical and theoretical evidence. The empirical support comes from the fact that most phrases in Yorùbá are Head-initial. Theoretically, the paper's claim that those bare nouns are found in exact positions where arguments are found informed the DP structure since only DPs can be arguments. As for those elements hitherto analyzed as determiners, it is demonstrated that they are specificity markers that should be treated as adjuncts. Pedagogically, the paper shows that one of the problems that Yorùbá native speakers learning English as L2 have to contend with is how to avoid the use of determiner-less singular count nouns in English where there ought to be an indefinite or a definite determiner.
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1: Introduction

Existing literature show that the internal structure of Yorùbá nominals have been extensively described (Awobuluyi 1978, Awoyale 1974, Bamgbose 1966, 1967, 1990, Yusuf 1995 among others). The widely held notion in most of the cited literature about the internal structure of Yorùbá nominal expressions is that it is a Noun Phrase (NP) with overt determiners as obtained in English. The examples in (1) support this view as according to those

sources *kan* and *nàà* are said to mark the nouns they co-occur with as indefinite and definite respectively.

(1) a. Adé rí ejò **kan**
A. see snake a
'Ade saw a snake.'

b. Ó pa ejò **nàà**
3sg kill snake the
'He killed the snake.'

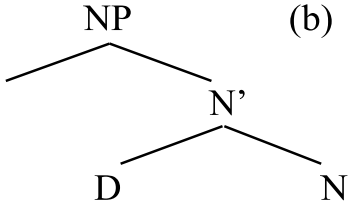
These two elements and some others that are found in Yorùbá nominal expressions are also called deictics (Bamgbose 1966:114ff). A deictic element is described as a grammatical word whose meaning refers to the extra-linguistic context in which it is used. Incidentally, in this language, those deictics occur in the exact position that determiners would occur in languages that have them. This is probably the reason they are referred to as determiners in Yorùbá. The crux of this paper therefore is to show that Yorùbá nouns are bare; as such, they can be interpreted as either indefinite or definite without the presence of the so called determiners. I also employ a more recent theory of the 'DP hypothesis' (Abney 1987, Longobardi 1994, Cinque 1993, 1994, Aboh 1999, 2000) to provide insight into the structure of the Yorùbá nominal expressions. In doing this, I try to capture the generalizations of languages like English and Hebrew where there are overt determiners with those like Yorùbá which do not have, claiming that Yorùbá nouns though lack overt determiners must be analyzed as a Determiner Phrase (henceforth to be referred to as DP) with a zero Determiner (henceforth to be referred to as a null D).

2: The DP-hypothesis

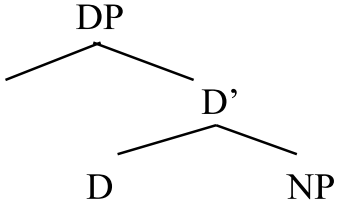
For a long time linguists have been concerned with the question of what the syntactic relation between the NP and the DP is. Two positions emerge. The first that is herein referred to as the "traditional approach" dates back to Jackendoff (1977).

In that approach, the Noun Phrase is taken to be the maximal projection of N, and N and D are generated inside the NP as sisters as represented in (2a). The second position canvassed for in this paper is championed in Abney (1987). It claims that the DP is the maximal projection of the D, and this D which heads the phrase takes the NP as its complement, i.e. the D and the NP are sisters as represented in (2b).

(2) a.



(b)



Other works along this latter approach include Aboh (1999, 2000), Longobardi (1994, 2001, 2005), Siloni (1990, 1996, 2003). Indeed, the support for the structure in (2b) follows from the idea of extending the X-bar theory to functional categories such as those that project IPs and CPs. Precisely, Abney (1987) and Aboh (1999) among others argue for the existence of an inflectional element in nominal expressions i.e. a D°, whose relationship to the noun parallels that of the relationship of Agr(eement) to the Verb.

Aboh (1999) takes a step further by demonstrating that the NP that is a sister to D° must move to Spec DP in order to meet the requirement of the Generalized Licensing Criterion (GLC), (see (10) below). Aboh's claim above is crucial to my analysis of Yorùbá DP in two ways. First, Yorùbá and Gbe belong to the same Benue-Congo language family. So, it is desirable to see how these two genetically related languages converge in terms of how to account for the internal structure of their nominal expressions. Second, as I propose herein, there is a covert internal movement of the NP within the DP as proposed for *Gbe* in Aboh's work in the same spirit. The difference however lies in the fact that determiners in Yorùbá have no phonetic representation thus they are null, unlike *Gbe* whose determiners are phonetically represented. The line I pursue herein further supports language universal as it shows

how languages that appear structurally different can be accounted for in a unified form in a principled manner.

There are different forms that nouns can take in language. According to Longobardi (2005: 5), nouns in many languages can occur under a singular form, a plural form or in mass form. Like Romanian languages such as Italian; in Yorùbá, all the three instances of head nouns pointed out above occur without determiners. Recall that nouns which occur without determiners are called bare nouns. In a cross-linguistics study carried out by Longobardi (2001), languages divide into five groups with respect to whether or not they are bare and the degree of bareness.

(3) a. languages with no bare nouns (French)
b languages with *stricter* bare nouns (apparently the rest of Romance: Spanish, Italian…),
c. languages with *freer* bare nouns (English and perhaps most of Germanic),
d. languages with indefinite bare singulars (and only a definite lexical article: Icelandic, Celtic, Hebrew…),
e. languages with ambiguous bare singulars (i.e. articleless languages: Russian, Czech, Latin…).
(Longobardi 2001: 584)

Yorùbá belongs to (3b) but we cannot rule out the possibilities of its being re-classified as (3e) since a bare noun in the language is ambiguous between a singular and a plural interpretation (Ajiboye 2005). Such determiner-less nouns in Yorùbá divide into two in terms of their semantic connotation: determiner-less arguments (such as proper names (PNs)) that are usually interpreted as definite (4a-b) and determiner-less arguments (such as bare nouns (BNs)) that are interpreted as (in)definite or generic (4c-d). The latter is the focus of this paper.

(4) a. Òjó ‘personal name’
b. Dàda ‘personal name’

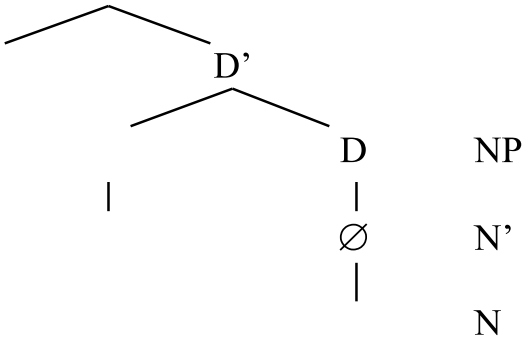
c.	àdá	‘a/the cutlass, cutlasses’
d.	eku	‘a/the rat, rats’

Before I go further, I must say that Yorùbá bare nouns can expand to accommodate elements such as modifiers (5a) and demonstratives[1] (5b).

(5)	a.	ajá pupa	‘a red dog’
	b.	ajá yìí	‘this dog’

Following the interpretations of the nouns in (4c-d) as indefinite, definite or generic, I propose the structure in (6), claiming that those nouns are full DPs that are without overt D.

(6) a.



There are two things about the structure in (5) that I must point out. First, the structure falls in line with what has been proposed for English language where the overt D precedes the NP as in *the boy*. But for Yorùbá, it raises the question of whether there is any motivation for such structure since there is no overt D in the language. However, as I show in the following sections, the structure is well motivated since those bare nouns can have exact interpretations as their counterpart in other languages with an overt D (cf. *Italian* Longobardi 1994, *Dëne Sųłiné* Wilhelm 2005). Not only this, these bare NPs occur in argument positions and according to Longobardi (1994, 2001):

(7) A “nominal expression” is an argument only if it is

introduced by a category D.
(Longobardi (2001: 582)

In other words, only DPs can be arguments, NPs or Ns cannot. So, for the purpose of interpretation, the D-position is essential for nouns that function as arguments. I go further to argue for reason as to why in Yorùbá, the covert D must precede the NP. I use language internal evidence where most phrases are head-initial to support this claim.

2.1: The Null (∅) [D]

There are three characteristics of Determiners that are worthy of note as contained in Abney's account. First, as a functional class, they belong to a closed class. Second, Determiners are typically one-morpheme element. Third, Determiners head a functional projection of the Agr-type (cf. Hungarian). One thing that stands out clearly in Abney's account is that the focus is on overt determiners. As such, of the three characteristics, only the third is crucial to my paper. As I will show in the rest of this paper, Yorùbá has no overt determiners. However, the idea of having a null morpheme for the D in languages that have no overt determiners is both syntactically and semantically motivated (cf. Longobardi 1994, 2001). As regards syntax, Longobardi (2001) claims that in Romance languages such as Italian, bare nouns appear only in object positions thus they are lexically governed. As regards semantics, Longobardi shows that: 'Romance bare nouns can only receive an *indefinite* interpretation… analogous, in the same environments, to that assigned to NPs introduced by overt determiners (p.582). Similarly, English can have the same interpretation.

At this point it is necessary to give a full account of the null realization of the determiners in Yorùbá. As I illustrate below, Yorùbá bare nouns such as *eku* 'rat' *igi* 'tree', *kìnìún* 'lion' *ajá* 'dog' can be interpreted as indefinite or definite depending on whether they are new or familiar referents (cf. Enç 1991, Mathewson 1998). First, consider the following examples.

(8) a. Adé rí [ejò] ní yàrá rẹ̀

A. see snake in room 3sg
Ade saw [a snake] in his room

b. Kí-ó-tó wo òkè, kí-ó-tó wo ilẹ̀
before look up, before look down
Within a twinkle of an eye

c. [Ejò] ti lọ

snake Asp go
[The snake] has disappeared

Looking at the examples in (8), one observes that in an out-of-the-blue-context, a Yorùbá bare noun is construed as indefinite. By out-of-the-blue-context I mean the noun is not a familiar referent. This is the situation where a noun is being mentioned in a discourse for the first time. We see this in (8a) where *ejò* appears for the first time. The same bare noun can be construed as definite when it is mentioned the second time in a discourse. In (8c) we see the second appearance of *ejò.* In this case we are already familiar with it having been previously mentioned in the discourse. Its appearance here is considered a proper discourse context. That the nouns in (8) are DPs with a null D is illustrated in the bracket structure in (9). In (9a), this null D has the interpretation of the indefinite article 'a/an', whereas in (9b) the same null D has the interpretation of the definite article 'the'.

(9) a Adé rí [$_{DP}$ [$_{D}$ Ø] [$_{NP}$ ejò]] ní yàrà rẹ̀. *Indefinite*
'Ade saw a snake in his room.' …
b [$_{DP}$ [$_{D}$ Ø] [$_{NP}$ Ejò]] ti lọ *Definite*
'The snake has disappeared'

Apart from the indefinite and definite interpretations, there is the third possible interpretation of bare NPs. This is the

generic interpretation. As demonstrated in Ajiboye (2005), genericity is obtained in one of two ways: (i) when a bare NP occurs with an individual level predicate such as *fẹ́ràn* 'like/love'; (ii) when it occurs with a stage-level predicate like *jẹ* 'eat' that is obligatorily marked by *máa-ń* 'imperfective' (cf. Carlson 1977, Chierchia 1995 among others).[2] In light of this, I propose that there is a null (∅) D that gives bare nouns the different interpretations that are obtained in the grammar of the language. The proposal makes the claim that a particular semantic function i.e. indefiniteness versus definiteness is connected with a specific syntactic element i.e. the D, hence the call for a DP structure for Yorùbá bare nouns whose D has no phonetic representation (cf. Longbardi 2005: 21).

2.2: The "movement" analysis

Having shown the need for proposing a DP structure for Yorùbá, what remains to be addressed is the linear order of the NP and the null D. Does D precede or follow the NP? I assume that all phrases in Yorùbá are head initial and claim that any head final phrase within the Yorùbá DP in particular (see (15) below) and any other phrase in the grammar of the language in general are derived through movement. The questions then arise: (i) What moves? (ii) Why the movement? (iii) What forces movement? (iv) Where is the landing site for the moved element? I address these questions below. First, I show that movement is required to be able to account for other structures such as DemP where the overt demonstratives (Dem) occur after the NP. Second, as contained in Aboh (1999, 2000) and previous works before it, one reason for movement to take place is for the purpose of feature licensing or future checking. Consequently, I propose a movement analysis for the NP D surface linear order in order for the NP to satisfy the Generalized Licensing Criterion (GLC) in the spirit of Aboh (2000).

(10) *Generalized Licensing Criterion*

a. A [+f] head must be in spec-head relationship with a [+f] XP,

b. A [+f] XP must be in a spec-head relationship with a [+f] head. (Aboh 2000: 72)

This movement account is also in the spirit of feature checking Chomsky (1995). If we assume so, then it is the case that the NP complement moves to Spec, DP to check the features [∓Definite]. The minimalist assumptions have the conditions in (11) for feature checking to apply.

(11) *Feature Checking Theory (FCT)*
a. Only the head of a chain CH enters into the operation Attract/Move
b. α can raise, leaving the trace *t* a copy of α
c. Formal features of the trace of A-movement are deleted and erased
d. The head of CH can attract or be attracted by K, but traces cannot attract and their features can be attracted only under narrow conditions reviewed (and left partially open). (Chomsky 1995: 304)

The "movement" analysis within a nominal expression either under GCL or FCT requires Head-initials structure. The claim of this hypothesis is that the D as a head occurs in the initial position in the Deep-structure. In this proposal, it is assumed that the NP is the complement of D. For a language like English where there is an overt D, the movement takes place covertly at the LF. In the case of Yorùbá, where there is a covert D, the movement also takes place covertly at the LF.

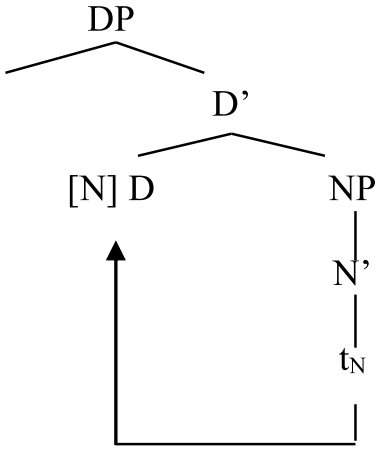
Following Abney (1987), Siloni (1996) and Aboh (1999), I adopt the hypothesis that D° is a functional category that projects its own X-bar schema and takes NP as its complement in Yorùbá. Thus in the language, a bare DP structure will look like (6) above. I propose that Yorùbá D is null (Ø) and that it is this null element that gives the bare noun indefinite or definite interpretations depending on the context. The proposed structure helps to derive the Yorùbá bare nouns as illustrated in (13). On what moves, there are two proposals in the literature. On the one hand is the one that claims that in

languages with no overt determiners, N moves to the D position. This proposal is in line with Longobardi (1994, 2000). For example, Longobardi proposes the following parameter:

(12) *Parameter*
N raises to D (by substitution) in the syntax in Italian but not in English. (Longobardi 1994:641)

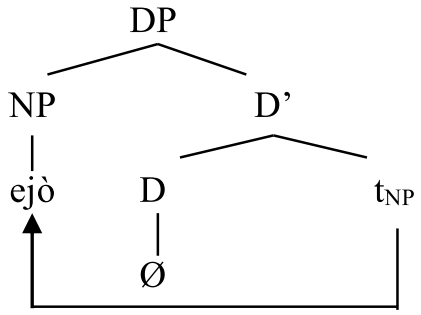
Longobardi claims that in Italian, it is N that actually moves to D. Since Yorùbá is like Italian, it must be the case that the N also moves to the D position. The structure in (13a) illustrates this.

(13) a. *Head to Head movement*: N moves to D



On the other hand is the proposal that in null determiner languages, it is the DP that moves. This is reflected in (13b) where the NP moves to the Spec DP. In either case, the movement that takes place here is covert and the essence is for the purpose of licensing or feature checking.

b. *Phrase to Specifier movement*: NP moves to Spec DP

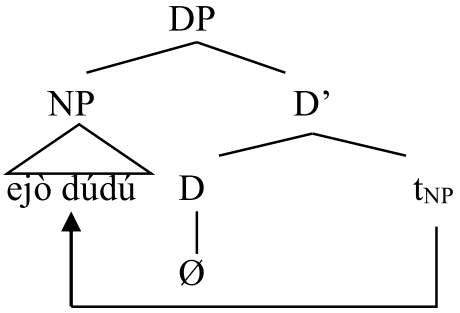


The NP movement analysis in (13b) is well motivated since the D with its [∓DEFINITE] feature attracts the NP to its Spec.

So far, I have looked at cases involving bare nouns. It remains to be shown what kind of movement that takes place when these bare nouns take modifiers. I assume that all the elements within the NP move together with the NP to the Spec, DP (cf. Aboh 2000: 74ff).

(14) a. ejò dudú 'black snake'

b.



There is one significant difference between this analysis and the previous analysis known in the literature where it is proposed that the kind of movement under review involves Head-to-Head movement especially in 'null D' languages (contra Longobardi 1994, 2003; Dehé & Samek-Lodovici 2007).

For now, I depart from Longobardi's account in the sense that it must be the case that the entire complement of D namely the NP that moves and the landing site cannot be D since only when the Head moves can the landing site be another Head position. There may be the need to modify this position when I treat the two deictic elements: *kan* and *nàà* in section 4.

3: Evidence for the linear order within DP structure

In this section, I present two pieces of evidence to support the DP structure where by a null D comes before its complement NP. First is the language empirical (internal) evidence which I present in 3.1. This is followed by theoretical support that anchors on cross-linguistic fact. I discuss this in 3.2.

3.1: Language Internal evidence for the proposed structure

One quick observation with respect to word order in Yorùbá is that the surface linear ordering is almost always head-initial i.e. the head precedes its complement. This is true of a Verb Phrase (15a), Prepositional Phrase (15b), Inflectional Phrase (15c) and Complementizer Phrase (15d). However, nominal expressions show mixed properties, (16). Some nominals have head-initial ordering (e.g. Q NP) as in (16a), while others have a head-final ordering (e.g. NP Dem) as in (16b).

(15) a. V DP
jẹ ịṣu
eat yam

b. P DP
sí Kóro
to Koro

c. I VP
yóò jẹ ịṣu
will eat yam

d. C IP
pé mo jẹ ịṣu
C 1sg eat yam
that I eat yam

(16) a. Q NP
gbogbo ọmọ
all child
'all of the children'

b. NP Dem
ọmọ yìí
child this
'this child'

The cross-category and constituency examples in above show that Yorùbá phrases are mostly head initial with the exception of the demonstratives. This immediately raises the question of the properties shared by demonstratives which other Heads do not share. I can only speculate that the reason might be because demonstratives and determiners are similar in some respects and even in some languages they are treated alike. For example, in English, the article 'the' and the demonstrative 'this' mutually excludes each other.

(17) a. *a this boy
b. *the that boy

Because determiners and demonstratives cannot co-occur in this language, they are in complimentary distribution. As such, it has been asserted that they should be treated members of the same functional category.[3] In the case of the Yorùbá example it might also be the case that, like a DP with no overt D the "DP Dem" linear order will be straightforwardly accounted for, if we assume that the DP moves to Spec, Dem. This last speculation is indeed an evidence in support of my proposal. As shown above, the NP covertly moves to Spec,DP to derive the NP D linear order. Yet, I turn to another piece of evidence namely the cross-linguistic evidence.

3.2: A Cross-linguistic evidence for the DP structure

The approach herein considered for the analysis of the DP as contained in the earlier cited works gives a better account of not only Yorùbá but also of other languages. The crucial point here however is not the projection of D to DP. After all, it is a known fact in the literature that every lexical or functional category projects to a phrasal structure within the X-bar theory i.e., every lexical category X corresponds to a phrasal category XP and the projection passes through an intermediary stage which earns the theory its name: X' (Roberts 1997). The concern however, is the order in which the NP complement in the DP follows the Head i.e the D. Taken at a face value, this might suggest that this

language is both Head-initial and Head-final as the examples in (9) show. If I do not adopt the movement analysis, then one is left with the idea of Parameterization. As I show below the parameterization proposal has been viewed as arbitrary mechanism that is driven by data. As noted by Roberts (1997: 27), if care is not taken, such idea will lead to 'just listing differences between languages.'

3.2.1: Kayne's 1994 Linear Correspondence Algorithm (LCA)

The idea of Kayne is that parameterization is not a plausible way of capturing various word order exhibited across languages. He is of the opinion that it does not take into consideration the issue of linear order and hierarchical relation. Consequent upon this view, Kayne proposes what is known in the literature as Linear Correspondence Algorithm stated below.

(18) Kayne's (1994) Linear Correspondence Algorithm
For a given phrase marker P, with *T* the set of terminals, *d*(A) is a linear ordering of *T*. (Kayne 1994: 33)

Kayne's idea is expressed in a more simplified form by Roberts:

(19) If a non-terminal node A asymmetrically c-commands another non-terminal node B then all terminals *a*… dominated by A precede all terminals *b*… dominated by B.' (Roberts 1997: 28)

The LCA assumes that all languages exhibit Specifier-Head-Complement (S-H-C) order. By this assumption it means that there is a strict order in the way elements in a phrase can combine, such that if A precedes B, the order cannot be reversed. In the case of the proposed DP structure for Yorùbá, the D must precede NP not only to conform with the fact that Yorùbá is head-initial, it is also to show that Yorùbá parallels English in terms of the linear order within their nominal

expression. In order, to arrive at the NP D linear order, Kayne proposes a leftward movement of the NP. Going by this proposal, the superficial Head-final typologies are derived structures via movement. In languages like English and Hebrew, such movement is not required. To recap, assuming the head initial for all languages, we have support for the leftward movement of the NP to the Specifier position of the DP. We now turn to Robert's proposal.

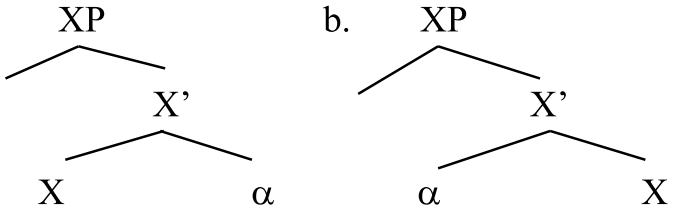
3.2.2: Robert's Principles and Parameters across Categories

One of the assumptions of X-bar theory (Jakendoff 1977, Chomsky 1980) is that there is a hierarchical structure which is the same cross-linguistically. But in the Principles and Parameters approach it is possible to have linear orders observed in languages parameterized such that we can have structures in (20) whereby if we have two constituents α and β it is possible to have one case where α precedes β and in another case where β precedes α.

(20) X' [$_{parameter}$ precedes/follows] α
X [$_{parameter}$ precedes/follows] β

Roberts' idea gives either of the two structures in (21). Assuming the XP structure which is a category neutral representation, if X is the head, then this X precede its complement which in this case is represented as α. This is what is shown in (21a). Similarly it is also possible for the complement i.e. α to precede its Head as in (21b). If we relate the category neutral representation to the DP, it predicts that it is possible for D to precede NP or the NP to precede D.

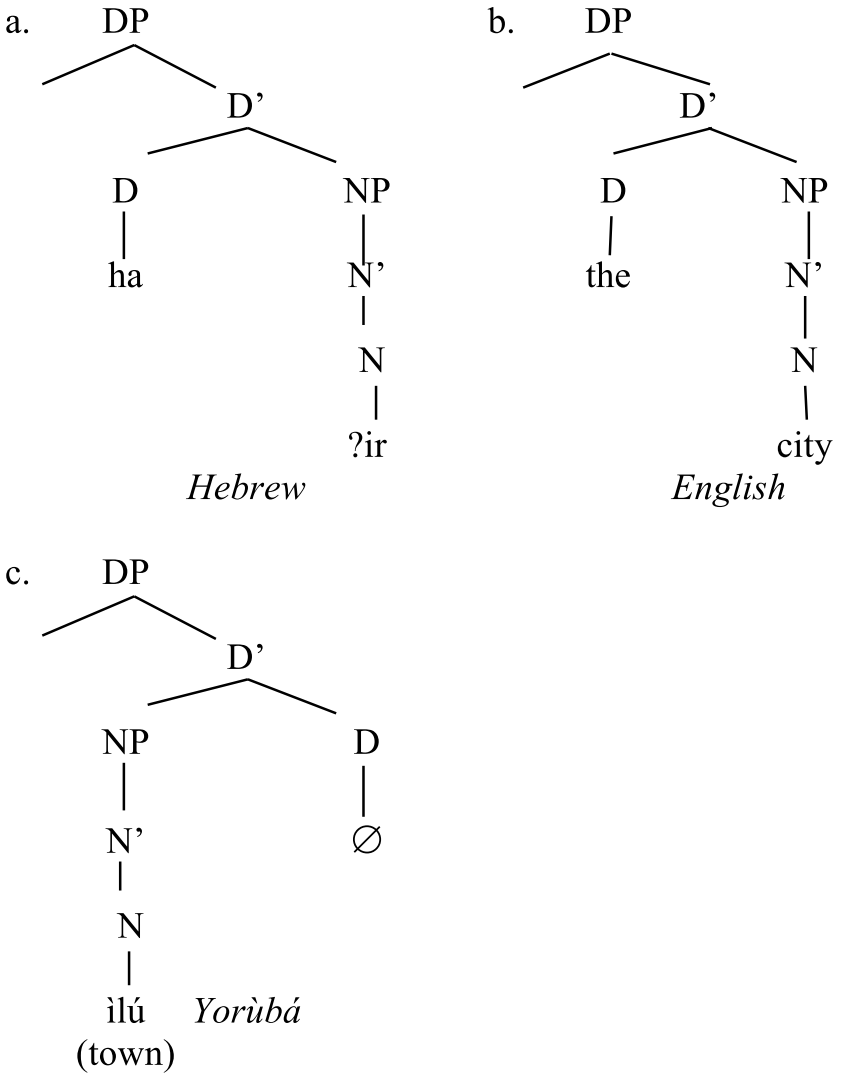
(21)a. b.



Siloni has already given an account of Hebrew in line with the

structure in (21a). English also has the same structure type. The phrase 'the city' in the two languages is as represented in (22). Note that Roberts' proposal involves no movement. The structures of Hebrew and English, on the one hand and Yorùbá and Gungbe (among others) on the other prove Roberts' prediction right with respect to the position of X to α, namely that the head may precede (22a & b) or follow its complement in the surface structure (22c).

(22)



Two problems arise with the parameterization account. First, it creates problems for language acquisition where as L1 or L2,

learners will be confronted with the problem of when to choose Head-initial and Head-final parameter. Second, the approach where you have to have both Head-initial and Head-final representation within or across language is not economical. With Kayne's LCA, only one structure is required for all languages. Any difference that is observed can be accounted for via movement.

With this, I conclude that despite appearances, Yorùbá is consistently Head-initial. Theoretically, this accords with Kayne's (1994) proposal that all languages have a Specifier-Head-Complement (S-H-C) order. As shown in this paper, Yorùbá's departure from this order arises from movement of the NP/DP to a higher Specifier position. Further, the C-H order witnessed in Yorùbá as in the case of NP-D has been supported from language internal evidence as it is that linear order that we in find in DemP i.e. [DP Dem]. As proposed herein, this linear order is obtained through the movement of the NP as in the case of the DP or the movement of the DP as in the case of the DemP. What remains to be addressed is the account of the two elements: *kan* and *nàà,* hitherto analyzed as determiners.

4: Yorùbá kan and nàà are not determiners

In this section, I account for how *kan* and *nàà* are to be interpreted in the language within the current proposal if indeed they are not determiners. Let me emphasize once again that contrary to the interpretation given in (1) above repeated as (23), it has been demonstrated in Ajiboye (2005) that without those two elements, Yorùbá nouns can still be interpreted as either indefinite or definite.

(23) a. Adé rí ejò kan
A. see snake a
Ade saw a snake

b. Ó pa ejò nàà
3sg kill snake the
He killed the snake.

The question that arises is this: if nouns in Yorùbá need no determiners then, how are they to be interpreted as indefinite or definite as we know in other languages like English? In what follows, I show that indeed, a bare noun can be construed as either definite or indefinite without the presence of those elements. Consider the examples in (24).

(24) a. Adé rí [ejò] ní yàrá rẹ̀
A. see snake in room 3sg
Ade saw [a snake] in his room

b. Kí-ó-tó wo òkè, kí-ó-tó wo ilẹ̀
before look up, before look down
Within a twinkle of an eye

c. [Ejò] ti lọ
snake Asp go
[The snake] has disappeared (cf. Ajíbóyè 2005)

The fact that *ejò* can been interpreted as indefinite (24a) and as definite in (24c) shows that the function that *kan* and *náà* perform in Yorùbá nominal expressions is not that of marking indefiniteness and definiteness respectively. This goes on to establish that Yorùbá nouns are indeed bare and their interpretation as definite or indefinite can be contextually determined. To be precise, in out-of-the-blue-context bare nouns may be construed as indefinite. By out-of-the-blue-context I mean a context whereby we do not have a previous knowledge of the referent noun. This is what is found in (24a). In order to interpret a bare noun as definite, a proper discourse context is required. This is what is obtained in (24c) where *ejò* is no longer a new referent as we already have a previous knowledge of it early in the discourse. In order words, *ejò* in (24c) is now a familiar referent. On the status of those two elements within the Yorùbá nominal expression, consider the examples in (25). What I show in those examples is that those elements are specificity markers. Whenever a noun that is in out-of-the-blue-context

takes the element *kan*, that noun has the interpretation of being indefinite and specific. This is what is illustrated in (25a). Similarly, when a noun that has been previously referred to in a discourse takes *nàà*, in addition to being definite, it is also marked as being specific as shown in (25b).

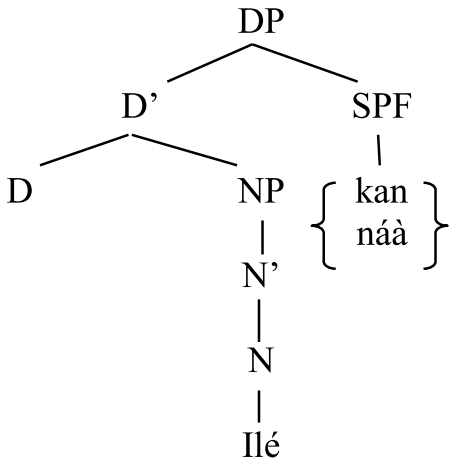
(25) a. Mo rí [eku kan] *specific indefinite*
1sg see rat SPF
'I saw certain a rat'

b. [Eku nàà] tóbi *specific definite*
rat SPF be-big
'The VERY rat is big'

Yorùbá is slightly different from some other languages where a definite noun is necessarily inherently specific. As demonstrated in the above examples, there is no contradiction to the claim that Yorùbá nouns can be definite without the presence of *nàà* and that the specificity of such nouns depends on the presence of this element. For details on specificity and (in)definiteness in Yorùbá see Ajíbóyè (2005) and for other languages see, Enc's (1991) account of *Moroccan Arabic*, Aboh's (1999) account of *Gbe* among others.

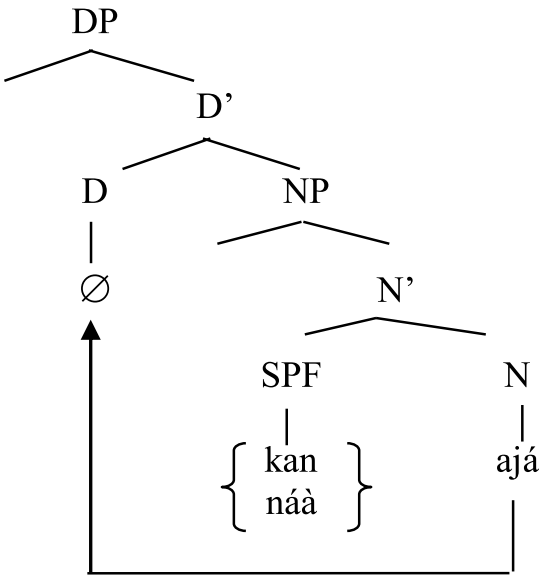
Finally, it is desirable to be able to account for the syntax of these two elements. Having established that they are not determiners, I propose that these elements must be analyzed as adjuncts. The next question is that of the exact position where they are adjoined to. Looking at the surface linear order, it is possible to assume that they are right adjoined to the Spec, DP (26); as such, there will be no movement of any kind since the surface linear order is [DP *kan/nàà*].

(26)



However, the claim in the literature is that right-adjoined analysis is illicit (cf. Cinque 1994 among others). The next option is to assume that they are left adjoined to N. This however requires movement of the N to D in the spirit of Longobardi (1994).

(27)



Note however, that this movement goes contrary to the earlier proposal which involves phrasal movement. This area needs further research to be able to know which of the two movements is correct. Finally I turn to the implication of the absence of overt determiners in Yorùbá and the presence of overt determiners in English from the pedagogical perspective.

5: Pedagogical Implication

There is no doubt that where there are two languages in contact, there will be some interference. What is more challenging is the case where one of the two languages dominates the other. In such a case, it is either the domineering language forces its rule on the other, as such, speakers of the dominated language will have to struggle to succeed in proficiency in the second language (L2) as a result of the heavy influence of the mother tongue (L1). In this section, I focus on the aspect that has been discussed in this paper. In particular, I address the issue of absence of determiners in Yorùbá and the effects of this absence on Yorùbá speakers learning or using English as their L2. Count nouns take an obligatory determiner which can either be definite or indefinite. However, it is a common occurrence for Yorùbá native speakers to ignore this rule when they speak English language. We observe that this is done unconsciously as the following examples show.

(28)a. i. *There is [arrest]
ii. There is [an arrest]

b. i. *[Teacher] sees it as bad
ii. [A/The teacher] sees it as bad

c. i. *This is not [good player]
ii. This is not [a good player]

d. i. *We still have to go back to [drawing board]
ii. We still have to go back to [the drawing board]

The asterisked sentences in the first pair of sentences in (28) are unconsciously recorded from some undergraduate students in the University of Lagos and discussants on Television Continental. The second pair of sentences shows the correct form for each of the sentences. However, the error relating to the avoidance of determiners is not limited to the university community. Note that the only condition that can make the use of determiners optional

in English count nouns is when they are in the plural form.

(29) a. There are arrests
b. Teachers see it as bad
c. These are no good players
d. We still have to go back to the drawing boards

Again, if indeed decitics such as *nàà* and *kan* are indeed true determiners, the unconscious omission of them in sentences will not arise. It is the duty of teachers of English language right from the primary school to take note of this difference and make additional efforts to let pupils/students know that the use of determiners with singular nouns is not optional in the language.

6: Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that Yorùbá nouns are bare. Structurally, these bare nouns have been analyzed as NPs that are contained inside a DP headed by a null D. The claim has both empirical (language internal) and theoretical supports. The proposed DP structure where the bare NP serves as the complement of the null D is supported by empirical evidence: (most phrases in Yorùbá are Head-initial). Theoretically, the fact that those bare nouns are found in exact positions where arguments are found informed the DP structure since only DPs can be arguments. And for those elements that have been erroneously analyzed as determiners, it is demonstrated that they are specificity markers that should be treated as adjuncts to the Ns that are so marked for specificity. Pedagogically, the paper shows that one of the problems that Yorùbá native speakers learning English as L2 have to contend with is how to avoid the use of ordinary bare nouns in English where there ought to be the presence of a determiner.

Endnotes

1. Note that in some literature, demonstratives are a kind of modifiers. In some others, they are treated as determiners. In this study, I treat them as modifiers.
2. The examples of this reading is given in (i)

(i) a. Adé fẹ́ràn ajá *Generic*
A. like dog
'Ade likes dogs.'

b. Adé máa-ń jẹ egungun *Generic*
A. IMP eat bone
'Ade eats bones'

This last construal is not orthogonal to the purview of this paper and it will not be further discussed.

3. However, there are languages in which both demonstratives and determiners can co-occur. Among such languages are Greek, Javanese, Hungarian, Macedonian, Gothic and Rumanian (Aboh 2000: 78).

(i) a. autòs ó aner 'this the boy' *Greek*
b. toj čovek-ot 'this man-the' *Macedonian*
c. omul acesta 'man-the this' *Rumanian*

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