LingLunch

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The Semantics of Bare Nouns in Karitiana
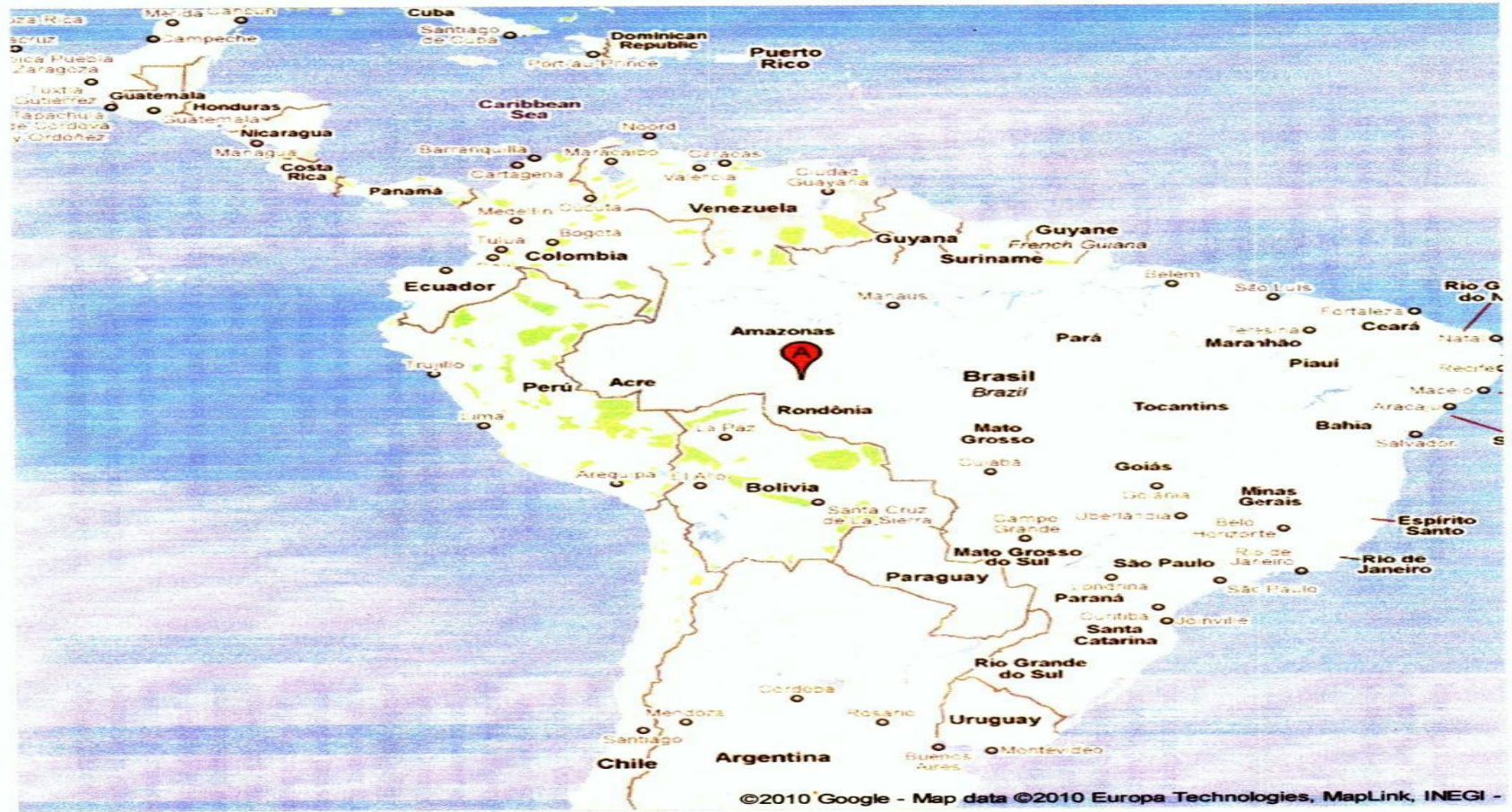
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INTRODUCTION

Karitiana

- A native Brazilian language.

- The only surviving language of the Arikén family, Tupi stock.

- Spoken by approximately 400 people.

- Reservation located in southwestern Amazonia.

Google maps   Address **Porto Velho - RO**

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Population	Year	Souce
64	1970	Monteiro 1984
65	1973	D.Landin & R.Landin 1973
78	1976	D.Landin 1988
109	1983	Leonel & Junqueira 1983
168	1994	Lúcio 1996
185	1997	Storto 1997
220	1999	ISA 2000
270	2003	Vander der Velden 2004
320	2005	Nelson Karitiana (pc)
420	2011	Cláudio Karitiana (pc)

Facts about NPs in Karitiana:

- No inflectional morphology on NPs: they are unmarked for any functional distinctions, such as gender or number.

- Determinerless: no functional words comparable to Romance or Germanic articles, demonstratives or determiner quantifiers.

Bare Nominals in Karitiana…

(1)   'y   **kinda'o**
         eat   fruit

         'eat the fruit(s)'   *definite*
         'eat a fruit/some fruits'   *indefinite*
         'eat fruits'   *bare indefinite*

(2)   **Õwã**   Ø-na-aka-t   i-sea-t
         child   3-decl-COP-NFT   PART-beautiful-ABS.AGR

         'Children are beautiful'   *generic*
         'The child/A child is beautiful'   *definite/indefinite*
         'The children/Some children are beautiful'   *def./indefinite*

*Translations are the ones given by consultant, and not necessarily the only possible ones.

Mass NPs vs. Count NPs are almost impossible to tease apart

(3)   Jonso   Ø-naka-ot-Ø   ese.

woman   3-DECL-fetch-NFT   water

'Women fetched water'

Demonstratives are clauses:

(4)

[Ony   sojxa.ty   aka]   kyn   Ø-naka-pon-Ø   João

DEIC   pig.big   be   at   3-DECL-shoot-NFT   João

'João shot at that/those boar(s)'

Literally: 'João shot at boars that be there.'

Universal Quantification is expressed by a clause

(5)

Sojxa.ty	aka-tyym	Ø–na-pon-pon-Ø	João
pig.big	COP-SUB	3-DECL-shoot-RDP-NFT	João

 'João shot at all the boars.'

Lit: 'João shot at boars that be.'

Pronouns & Proper Nouns are the only purely argumental nominals.

(6)   Yn   i-so'oo-t   **ombaky**-ty.
        I   PART-see-ABS.AGR   jaguar-obl
        'I saw a jaguar.'

(7)   Inácio Ø-na-manga-t   Nadia   ka'it
        I   3-DECL-lift-NFT   N   today
        'Inácio lifted Nádia today'

Questions:

- What are Bare Nominals in Karitiana?

- What is their semantics?

Thesis:

- Bare Nominals in Karitiana are predicates.

- The variables they introduce get bound by sentencial quantifiers (Heim 1982).

Structure of presentation

1. Cross-linguistic variation on the existence and interpretation of BNs.

2. Theories that account for variation.

3. Interpretations of Karitiana BNs.

4. On the existence of covert determiners in Karitiana.

5. Analysis

6. Conclusions

1. BARE NOUNS: CROSS-LINGUISTIC VARIATION

Lots of cross-linguistic variation on the distribution of BNs

- <u>French</u>: articles, number, no BNs.

- <u>Chinese</u>: no articles, no number, classifiers, BNs.

- <u>Hindi</u>: no articles, number, BSgs and BPls.

- <u>English/Spanish</u>: articles, number, BPls, no BSgs.

- <u>Hebrew</u>: only def. article, number, BSgs, BPls.

- <u>Brazilian Portuguese</u>: articles, number, BSgs and BPls.

- <u>Karitiana</u>: no articles, no number, no classifiers, BNs.

- Possible readings for BNs vary cross-linguistically.

Kind readings

(8)   Dogs are extinct.   *English*

(9)   *Perros   están   extinguidos.
        dogs   are   extinct
        'Dogs   are   extinct'   *Spanish*

(10)   Gou   juezhong   le.   *Chinese*
        dog   extinct   Asp
        'Dogs are extinct.'

Generic quantification:

(11)   a. Dogs bark.   *English*
        (≅'Generally, if it is a dog, it barks')

   b.   Cachorro   late.   *BrPortuguese*
         dog   bark
         'Dogs bark'

   c.   *Perros   ladran   *Spanish*
         dogs   bark

Existential - indefinite:

(12)

a. Dogs are barking.   *English*

($\cong$ 'Some dogs are barking')

b.   *Cachorro está latindo.   *BrP*

     dog   is   barking

Existential - definite:

(13)

a.   *Watermelons are on the table.   *English*

    (≅ 'The watermelons are on the table')

b.   *Melancia   está   na   mesa.   *Brazilian Portuguese*

    watermelon   is   on.the   table

c.   Xigua   fang   zai   zhuozi   shang.   *Chinese*

    wtrmelon   put   locate   table   on

    'The watermelon is on the table'

2. HOW CAN WE ACCOUNT FOR VARIATION?

Theories of variation:

o BNs always denote predicates – extra structure or movement 'lifts' predicates into arguments (Longobardi 2001).

o BNs may denote individuals (kinds) from the start (Chierchia 1998).

Syntactic parameterization

Longobardi 2001:

- Reference to individuals is tied exclusively to the Det node:

  - $[D_{iexpl} [NP_i]]$ *kind readings*

  - $[\exists_i [NP_i]]$ *existential readings*

- Parametrization will have to do with the licensing of empty Ds.

Semantic parametrization

o Chierchia 1998:

- Languages vary on the syntactic level at which reference to individuals is located (N or D).
  - Ns may be argumental without the need of extra structure.

➢ Parametrization will have to do with whether a language allows Ns as arguments, and on the availability of type-shifting operations.

3.INTERPRETATIONS OF KARITIANA BNS

Karitiana NPs are always bare, they are not marked for …

* (in)definiteness;
* number;
* classification;
* gender;
* proximity;
* specificity;
* universal/existential quantification.

(Müller et al. 2005)

On the other hand...

- Karitiana NPs allow for definite, indefinite and generic interpretations in all argument positions.

OBJECT POSITION

Object position – definite interpretations

(14)

a.

Koot	y-ta-'amy-t	yn	mynhin-t	**livro**-ty.
ytday	1s-DECL-buy-NFT	I	one-OBL	book-OBL

'Yesterday I bought one book'

b. Yn   ∅-na-ta-tarak<a>-t   **livro**   ambip.

I   3p-DECL-bring-VT-NFT   book   house

'I brought the book home'

Object position – indefinite interpretations

Context:

- One Karitiana says that Inácio has returned from hunting. Another Karitiana asks:

(15) I-so'oot-t   Inácio   **sojxa.**ty?

3p-see-NFT   Inácio   pig.large

'Has Inácio seen boars?'

Object position – generic/kind interpretations

(16)

Maria	na-aka-t	i-pasa-t	**gok**-ty
Maria	DECL-COP-NFT	PART-like-ABS.AGR	manioc-OBL

'Maria likes manioc'

SUBJECT POSITION

Subject position –
definite interpretations

(17) **Ombakyby'edna** – Juli   Gigante

dog   – Juli   Gigante -

Ø-na-aka-t   honghong   i-a-tyka-t

3p-DECL-COP-NFT   arf.arf   PART-make-IMPF-ABS.AGR

'The dogs – Juli & Gigante – are barking'

Subject position –
indefinite interpretations

(18) Ø-Pyry-hyryp-yn   tysyp-yn   **ombaky**

3P-ASST-cry-NFT   IMPF-NFT   jaguar

'Jaguars are roaring'

Subject position – generic (quantificational) interpretations

(19)

Jonso	∅-na-aka-t	i-sondy-t.
woman	3P-DECL-COP-NFT	PART-know-NFT

kinda.haraj-ty

thing.good-OBL

    'Women know about the good things.'

Subject position –
generic (kind?) interpretations

(20)   ∅-Pyry-pyky-n   **ombaky**.

3P-ASST-disappear-NFT jaguar

'Jaguars are extinct.'/ 'Jaguars have disappered.'

Summing up...

➢ Bare Nouns in argumental positions in Karitiana have:

  o definite interpretations;

  o indefinite interpretations;

  o generic interpretations.

4. COVERT DETERMINERS IN KARITIANA?

o Many languages of the world do not have articles: Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Croatian, Russian, Hindi, Karitiana, … .

Questions:

- Could a language do without article semantics?

- Could a language do without uniqueness and/or existence presuppositions/ entailments?

Goal:

- Present extra evidence that NPs in Karitiana are unmarked for the definite (specific or generic definites) VS indefinite (existentially or generically quantified) distinction.

- And therefore provide evidence that languages can do without articles (overt or covert).

EXTRA EVIDENCE

Indefinites:

- Do not entail or presuppose uniqueness or familiarity.

- Introduce novel entities into the common ground of discourse.

(Heim 1982, 1991)

Definites:

- Entail or presuppose uniqueness or familiarity.

- Do not introduce novel entities into the common ground of discourse.

(Heim 1982, 1991)

Evidence 1:

➢ Pairs of co-referential BNs:

○ the same NP is used to refer both to novel and to familiar entities of the common ground of discourse.

Familiarity VS non familiarity

(21)a.

Professor   **enfermera**   ∅-na-aka-t
teacher   nurse   ∅-DECL-COP-NFT

koot   i-ambyk-t   y-ambip.
ystday   PART-come-ABS.AGR   1p-house

'A teacher and a nurse came to my house yesterday.'

b. **Professor** ∅-na-aka-t i-le-t
teacher 3-DECL-COP-NFT PART-read-ABS.AGR

livro-ty y-'iti hot.
book-OBL 1p-daughter to

'The teacher read a book to my daughter.'

c. **Enfermera** ∅-na-aka-t i-so'kyn-∅ y-'tiita.
nurse 3-DECL-COP-NFT PART-take.care-ABS.AGR 1p-mother

'The nurse took care of my mother.'

Literally:

'**Teacher** and **nurse** came to house of mine yesterday. **Teacher** read **book** to my daughter. **Nurse** took care of mother of mine.'

Evidence 2:

➢ BNs in Karitiana are used both in situations in which the referent is unique and in situations in which the referent is not necessarily unique.

Non-uniqueness:

(22)

∅-Pyry-kii-n **geladera** akan pip.

3-ASST-COP.PL-NFT frige village POS

'There are refrigerators in the village.'

Uniqueness:

(23)

a. Yn   i-so'oot-t   **ombaky**-ty.
    I   PART-see-ABS.AGR   jaguar-OBL

    'I saw a jaguar.'

b. Yn i-so'oot-t   sojxa **ombaky**   i-'y.
   I   PART-see-ABS.AGR   pig   jaguar   3p-eat

'I saw that the jaguar was eating a pig.'

Evidence 3:

- Definites force anaphoric readings, whereas indefinites force disjoint readings.

➢ Both anaphoric and disjoint interpretations are possible for Karitiana BNs.

Anaphoric interpretation:

(24)

a.   Yn   i-so'oot-t   **ombaky**-ty.
           I   3p-see-NFT   jaguar-OBL

           'I saw a jaguar.'

b.   Yn   i-so'oot-t   sojxa.ty   **ombaky**   i-'y.
           I   3p-see-NFT   pig.large   jaguar   3-eat

           'I saw that the jaguar was eating a boar.'

c.   Y-pon   tykiri   ∅-naka-pyky-t   **i.**
           1s-shoot   when   3-DECL-disappear-NFT   it

           'It ran away when I fired.'

Disjoint interpretation:

(25)

a.   ∅-Pyry-'a   tyka-n   **irip**   akan.

   ASS-have   IMPF–NFT   tapir   village

   'There is a tapir in the village.'

b.

∅-Pyry- 'a   tyka-n   **irip**   akan   gooto   pip   tyym.

ASS-have   IMPF–NFT   tapir   village new   in   too

'There is a tapir in the new village too.'

Therefore…

- Based on grammar, one cannot tell apart definite from indefinite readings in Karitiana .

- Can we tell apart generic/kind readings from existential - definite or indefinite - readings?

Generic VS existential readings

(26)
    Ombaky   i-pykyn<a>t.
    jaguar   PART-run<TV>ABS.AGR
    'Jaguars run'   *generic*
    'The jaguar'/ 'A jaguar/Some jaguars ran.'   *existential*

(27)   **Ombaky**   i-pykyn<a>t   tyka-t.
        jaguar   PART-run<TV>ABS.AGR   IMPF-NFT
    'The jaguar/a jaguar/jaguars is/are running/have been running.'

                                                  existential

So...

o Aspect may favor one or the other interpretation.

➢But:

o There is nothing in the morphosyntax or in the distribution of the BN that can do that.

o Are Bare Nominals full DPs with ambiguous empty determiners?

Longobardi – variation lies in D

o Problems:

- A three-way ambiguous determiner.

- Impossible to test since the three readings are always available.

Chierchia:

o BNs denote kinds in Karitiana.

➢ Problems:

▪Three type-shifters possible in all argument positions (no blocking).

▪Impossible to test since the three readings are always available.

5. ANALYSIS

Claim:

➤ BNs in Karitiana are predicates.

• They get bound by sentencial quantifiers (Krifka et al 1995, Heim 1982).
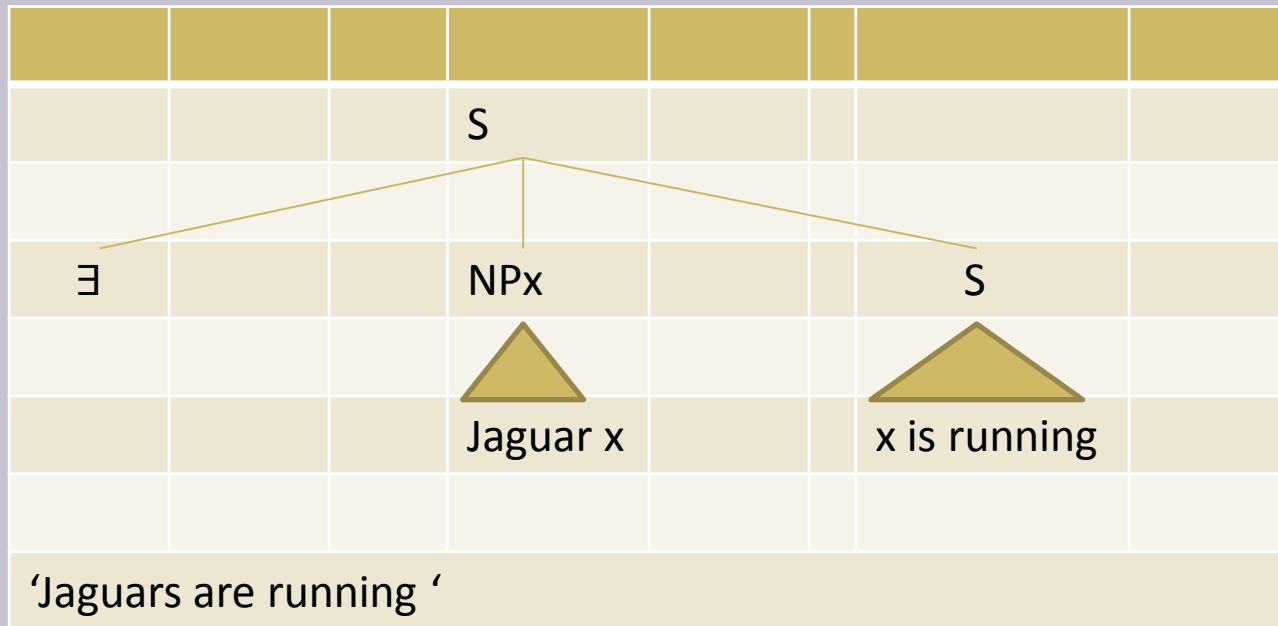
Generic subjects

- *Ombaky na-aka-t i-pykyn<a>t.*

			S				
Gen			NPx			S	
			Jaguar x			x runs	
'Jaguars run'							
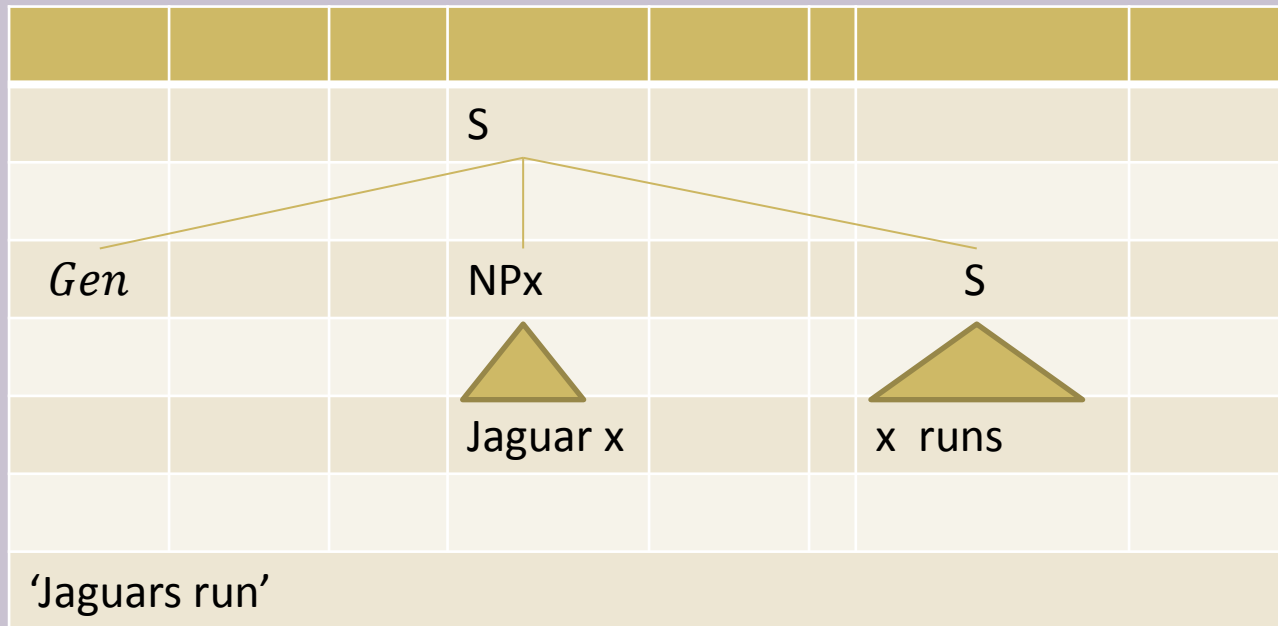
Generic subjects

(28) Ombaky   ∅ -na-aka-t   i-pykyn<a>t

     jaguar   3-DECL-cop-NFT   PART-run<VT>ABS

     'Jaguars run'

- Genx,e [jaguar x & Cx,e] [runx,e]

"Generically, if x is a jaguar and x is in C, x runs in C."

Existential subjects

- *Ombaky na-aka-t i-pykyn<a>t.*

			S				
∃			NPx			S	
			Jaguar x			x is running	
'Jaguars are running '							

Existential subjects

(29)

Ombaky   na-aka-t   i-pykyn<a>t.

jaguar   3-DECL-cop-NFT   PART-run<VT>ABS

'Jaguars are running'

- $\exists e, \exists x$ [jaguar x & running x, e]

"There are jaguars and they are running"

Predictions

Karitiana Bare Nouns…

✓ should be able to occur in both definite and indefinite contexts without restrictions.

✓ should be able to occur with both existential and generic (universal) interpretations with no restrictions.

➢ should not behave as kind-denoting NPs.

Evidence of non kind-denoting behavior:

(i) Bare Nouns in Karitiana have both narrow and wide scope readings.

Wide & narrow scope

(30)

Enfermera   otãm tykiri   ∅-na-osedna-j   Luiz.
nurse   arrive when 3-DECL-be.happy-FUT   Luiz

- ✓ 'Luiz will be happy if any nurse arrives.'
- ✓ 'Luiz will be happy if a certain nurse arrives.'

(ii) Narrowest scope possible, but not obligatory.

(31)

Onibus	∅-na-aka-t	i-ampip\<o>-t
bus	3-DECL-COP-NFT	PART-burn-\<VT>ABS.AGR

São.Paulo	Rio.de.Janeiro	pip
São.Paulo	Rio de Janeiro	in

- 'Buses were burnt in São Paulo and in RJ'
- #'The same buses were burnt in SP and RJ'

(32)

Onibus	∅-na-aka-t	i-pykyn<a>-t
bus	3-DECL-COP-NFT	PART-run-<VT>ABS.AGR

São.Paulo	Rio.de.Janeiro	pip.
São.Paulo	Rio de Janeiro	in

- 'Buses run in São Paulo and in RJ.'
- 'The same buses run in SP and RJ.'

(iii) Generic interpretation not necessarily favored or unfavored

(33)

Him.bi	na-aka-t	i-akyno-t
meat.place	DECL-COP-NFT	PART-close-ABS.AGR NFT

domingo	pip
Sunday	on

- ✓ 'BBQ places close on Sundays'   *generic*
- ✓ 'Some BBQ places close on Sundays'   *existential*

Since…

Karitiana BNs…

- occur in both definite and indefinite contexts;

- have both existential and universal interpretations;

- do not behave like kind-denoting terms; …

I conclude that:

Karitiana BNs:

- are unmarked for the definite VS indefinite distinction;

Therefore:

- Their quantified readings (existential or generic) must come from the sentence (e.g. aspect, adverbials, incorporation).

• How does one account for the definite readings?

Argument (Matthewson 1996):

o   Familiarity/uniqueness are properties of definite NPs.

But:

o Non-familiarity and non-uniqueness are not properties of indefinite NPs.

$\Rightarrow$ Indefinite (existential)NPs are neutral in this respect.

➢Non-familiarity and non-uniqueness are implicatures of indefinite NPs, which are raised by the existence of definite determiners in languages that have them.

➢ These implicatures are not expected in languages that do not mark the definite vs. indefinite distinction.

6. Conclusions

Conclusions:

➤ Karitiana BNs are unmarked for the definite VS indefinite distinction.

➤ Karitiana BNs are best analyzed as predicates.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations:

- 1s = 1st person singular agreement, 2s = 2nd person singular agreement, 3 = 3rd person agreement;
- ANAPH = anaphoric ;
- ABS.AGR = absolutive agreement;
- ASST=assertive;
- COP = copula;
- DECL = declarative;
- DEIC=deictic;
- FUT = future;
- IMPF = imperfective;
- NEG = negation
- NFT = non future;
- OBL = oblique;
- PART = participle;
- POS = postposition;
- SUB= subordinator
- TV = thematic vowel.

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Thanks to:

Thank you!

MERCI!!!