

## A Six-Language Comparison of Non-Bare Proper Names

This paper is a qualitative and quantitative analysis of forms and uses of non-bare Proper Names (PN) in Dutch (D), English (E), French (F), Greek (G), White Hmong (WH), and Polish (P), focusing on the themes: (1) What categories can accompany PN in natural language (2) What is their meaning contribution? How does this meaning combine with that of proper names? Observations are also offered on selected syntactic relations involving classifiers (CLF) and place deictics (PD) (e.g. *Chris here*). The quantitative section compares the category frequencies of definite (DA) and indefinite articles (IA); demonstratives (DEM) (proximal, distal, and others); quantifiers, non-quantificational *one* and *some* and translation equivalents; *no, said; a certain* and equivalents; DEM+N *of a* PN; DEM +N +PN; DEM+PN+N; possessives POSS+PN; adjectivals; restrictive relative clauses; WH CLF; and PD. The quantitative analysis includes all tokens from 10 D, E, F, G, and P novels, and 10 WH novels and autobiographies (latter included because very few WH novels exist), reported as % normed for total words in the works. (Final counts will be given in table form). Not all the languages include all these types, and even those including the same types can differ in frequency, subtle semantics, and discourse functions. The qualitative analysis is based on all relevant examples in (a) the 10 long works; (b) a published translation of an original from each language; (c) electronic corpora; (d) TV speech for D, E, F, G, P; (e) hand recorded spontaneous speech for E, F, G; (f) newspapers, magazines, blogs, internet comments, etc., and (g) native speaker judgments.

The language choice is partly a convenience sample due to the need for discourse analysis to examine the data in context in languages I can understand, with native speaker consultation. Five are Indo-European; WH is not. Their determiner categories and determiner + PN semantics and pragmatics vary in interesting ways; e.g. (a) P and WH lack articles but are unrelated and typologically different; (b) only WH has obligatory classifiers (c) only G uses articles obligatorily with PN in certain contexts (d) F and D have archaic, regional use of definite DA+PN (e) E only allows DA+PN with plural PN (the Smiths) and with *the* pronounced with a tense high front vowel to mark a referent as the “genuine” well-known person of that name (similar to F), and more rarely, in an affectionately playful way marking the referent as different from others, or else in a negative, distancing tone. English also has the highly marked use of the F article *la* to indicate a woman distinguished negatively for her sexy and entitled behavior. However, with an adjectival modifier or restrictive relative clause, a DA or IA, is very frequent in D, E, and F. G requires a DA with DEM (*aflo to N* (this the N ‘this N)), and F does not generally distinguish proximate vs distal demonstratives without the marked addition of another morpheme (*ci, la*), while WH has a 3-way distinction.

These languages show a spread of conceptually related but varied expressions of attitude, and/or information status, and and/or focus in their non-bare PN constructions; e.g. E, F and D all have both IA + PN and “*a certain* PN” to introduce a new referent, but the latter has a stronger particularizing and focusing sense in E than in D and F. In these, the construction is frequently translated professionally into English with the IA. In P, the uses of *pewien* ‘certain’ and “*jakaś* ‘some’(non-quantificational) also serve related but distinct functions. e.g.:

1. *jakaś pani Skąpska* (some Mrs. Skąpska) [There was] ‘a Mrs. Skąpska [there].’ (P, novel)

In P, *jakaś* introduces a brand new referent. In E *some* is extremely marked and derogatory as a determiner for a singular PN. Thus distinguishing the fine points of crosslinguistic difference in such closely related constructions requires detailed study of the semantics of the words in relation to their semantic fields, with consideration of their collocations and the propositional semantics, in each language on its own, plus the language-specific pragmatic conventions. ....Also considered is POSS +PN, the use of which differs quite a bit across the languages, although the literal semantics is the same. This is frequent in Greek in both direct address and reference to others, indicating closeness, or a warm, friendly attitude, even in a class where the students and teacher have never met in person, as in 2 in email to me by a native Greek speaking teacher about a student in our synchronous online class not able to attend on a certain day:

2. *i Kristina mas* (the-Kristina our) ‘our Kristina’

Another attitudinal example is the distancing effect of the distal demonstrative, a metaphorical extension widely discussed. It frequently conveys a negative sense in English, as in (3), as a metaphorical extension of its more literal use, but it can also be used in a positive sense of distancing if the referent is held out as a praiseworthy example apart from other people. This shows that the very concept of distance can have different realizations, some of which may differ across languages, e.g., in WH (4), the distal DEM with a PN is very negative and insulting. 5 and 6 show a related type, the use of a DEM with ADJ N *of*PN.

3. That Victor! If he doesn’t straighten up... (E, novel)

4. *Rose ntawd...*(Rose that) ‘that Rose’) (H, elicited)

5. *ce damné imbécile d’Enrico* (DEM damned imbecile of E) ‘that damn imbecile E’(F, trans.)

6. *...die trut van een Dorien Jager* (D, novel) (‘that bitch of a Dorien Jager’)

Seemingly paradoxically, the use of the proximate DEM +PN also has a distancing tone in that it is a marked form which depersonalizes the referent, but on the information status level, it signals that a referent is relatively new to the discourse, as in 7:

7. I don’t know this Charlotte Hayes. (E, spontaneous speech; pointing to a brochure.)

This analysis has consequences for research on the nature of PN ranging from that of Frege (1892) to Anderson (2007), Matushansky. (e.g. 2006, 2008, 2014, 2015), McKinsey 2010, Fara (2015), Camacho 2019, Lee 2020, Arnaud 2022, and Agolli 2023, among others. That is, I argue that the semantics of the modifiers used with PN and their behavior in discourse in each language suggests that the PN category is best analyzed in terms of a prototype. I will also show that this treatment of non-bare PN has consequences for treatments of forms of NP reference in general. Finally, I argue that although some or all of the languages investigated here use non-bare PN in some language specific ways, they are linked in having conceptually similar purposes involving point of view (e.g. varied attitudes, given/new information status, focus). (cf. Anderson 2009; Author 2010, 2014, 2024; Kleiber 1992, 2005, 2006; Gary-Prieur 1994, Schnedecker 2005, 2009, Rybarczyk 2015). The level of markedness, the specifics of the component lexical and propositional semantics, and the type of metaphorical extension in each language work together to produce interconnected particularities in non-bare PN cross-linguistically.