A radically [+arg, –pred] language

1.   Bare Noun Arguments

As all Dene/Athabaskan languages, Dënes iné has SOV basic word order, highly

such restriction operates in Dëne̲s iné. For example, in (4) *nunitsële* is the subject of a transitive clause, clearly an ungoverned position.

There are two other influential views of nouns, both of which are able to handle the Dëne̲s iné facts. Baker (2003) argues that across languages, Ns and NPs denote entities, type <e>. Determiners do not shift Ns/NPs to <e>, but have other functions. This view has no problem with bare nouns in argument positions; however, it also does not make significant predictions about properties of bare noun languages. Chierchia (1998) proposes that there is parametric variation in whether nouns map to the argumental or the predicative type.[3] In languages where nouns map to the argumental type, <e>, bare noun arguments are predicted, among other properties.

I will argue in the rest of the paper that the properties of !"# make most sense if Ns and NPs are of type <e>, entities. Since I see significant typological differences between !"# and "predicative" languages, I am adopting Chierchia's parametric proposal: !"# is a [+arg, –pred] language, i.e., nouns are mapped to <e>. Moreover, I will argue that nouns remain of type <e> throughout the derivation, making !"#

(8)   [context: children riding with nuns on the back of a truck to residential school]
        … dënexare)$"   #   " # $)   #
           nun   bead   on DISTR.

(18)   *Cue: A class is doing a cooking project. Students are divided into groups. Some cook porridge, some soup, some bannock, and then I want to say, 'Some children cooked a fish that they had caught themselves.'*

the dog kind. However, in many sentences, such as (22), we do not speak about kinds but about instances of a kind. I propose, following again Carlson (1977), that Dënes iné predicates include a *realization relation* which relates a kind to instances. For example, the denotation of *nechá* is as in (23), where R is the realization relation, and letters from the beginning of the alphabet are used for variables of the kind sort.

(21) $[[\,\check{s}\,]] = \text{DOG}$

(22)

       IMPF.3S.big
       'It/she/he is big.'

(23) $[[nech\acute{a}]] = \lambda a \in D_e\,.\,R(a, x_3)\,\&\,big(x_3)$

Note that $a \in D_e$ can be of two sorts, kind or individual.[4] The realization of a kind is an individual which realizes the kind. The realization of an individual is that individual, i.e., R applies trivially. The two derivations are shown in (24) and (25).

(24) $[[\,\check{s}\,nech\acute{a}_3\,]]$
      = $[[nech\acute{a}_3]]([[\,\check{s}\,]])$
      = $[\lambda a \in D_e\,.\,R(a, x_3)\,\&\,big(x_3)](\text{DOG})$
      = 1 iff $R(\text{DOG}, x_3)\,\&\,big(x_3)$
      i.e., 'a/the dog is big'

(25) $[[Peter\ nech\acute{a}_3]]$
      = $[[nech\acute{a}_3]]([[Peter$

they denote free individual variables and thus are no different from proper names or pronouns. This is achieved in my analysis by leaving the existential quantifier ∃ out of the clausal predicate's meaning. Carlson (1977) included ∃ along with R to account for the narrow scope of English bare plurals. However, Dënesųiné bare nouns are not restricted to narrow scope interpretations, and so ∃ is not needed. For the same reason, I have departed from Chierchia's implementation of the connection between kinds and individuals. Chierchia (1998:364) introduces a semantic shifting mechanism, *Derived Kind Predication* (DKP), to get from kinds to individuals.[6]

(22)   If P applies to objects and k denotes a kind, then
         $P(k) = \exists x[{}^\cup k(x) \wedge P(x)]$

DKP shifts the noun denotation from kind to predicate, and the argument of the predicate is bound by an existential quantifier. Crucially, noun denotations resulting from DKP can only take narrowest scope, due to the way DKP works (and assuming traces are sorted,

that wide-scope indefinites are indistinguishable from definites. Ferch (2013), writing on Shona (and using choice functions), comes to the same result:

> nouns are always interpreted using choice functions, but the function variables are sometimes existentially closed (giving a nonspecific or indefinite reading) and sometimes determined by context (giving a definite or specific reading) (Ferch 2013:379)

Generic readings, as in (6) above, are derived in the standard way, by binding of the free variable through a generic operator.

Summing up my analysis, I have proposed that Dënes iné

5.   Near Absence of PPs as Noun Modifiers

That nouns are of type <e> also explains another apparently unrelated fact, namely that PPs do not modify nouns directly, but only as adjuncts in a clause. (28) and (29) were given as Dëne̲s   iné translations of English prompts. Note that in the prompts, the PPs are dependents of nouns, but in the Dëne̲s   iné sentences a verb (bolded below) and hence clause has been added, and the PP is the dependent of that verb.

(28)   *Context: There are some books on the bed and some on the table.*
        Prompt: 'The books on the table are black.'
        [%   #   " $ #
          book   table   on   DISTR.IMPF.3S.several_are.NMLZ

an overt predicate is added.[8]

The same type mismatch explains the next two properties of Dënes iné, the near absence of adjectives and the absence of relative clauses.

6.   Near Absence of Adjectives

In Dënes iné most adjectival meanings, such as colours, shapes and textures, are expressed by stative verbs. For example, *nechá* in (31) is inflected for imperfective aspect and a third person subject.

> łį̈   á
>
> łį̈   á
>
> dog TH-IMPF-3S-CL-big

Although stative verbs are often translated into English adjectives, the relationship between them and the noun could not be more different than in English. In English, the adjective is a dependent of the noun, its modifier, and the semantic mode of composition is predicate modification. In Dënes iné, the noun is the dependent of the stative verb, its argument in fact, and the mode of composition is function application. What we have in

(#   –   ' $
(#   –   ' $
old_woman   person TH-IMPF-3S-CL-good at   PERF.3S.one_arrive
'The old woman came to a nice man.'

This indirect way of modifying nouns falls out naturally if nouns are of type <e>. Again there is a type mismatch, this time between nouns and modifying adjectives, and predicate modification cannot apply. And again the language chooses a solution which

The preference for nominalizations/internally-headed relative clauses is explained if nouns are of type <e>. My analysis in fact predicts that all so-called relative clauses in Dënes iné are internally headed nominalizations, even those where there is no morphosyntactic evidence. Dënes iné nominalizations/internally-headed relative clauses are discussed in detail in Wilhelm (2014). Here I only give two new examples, which provide semantic evidence for internal heads. In (36), either *"$* or *nun#s le* can be interpreted as head. This means that *"$* must be inside the nominalization, even though it is the first element of the sentence and could theoretically be an external head. In (37), the event argument, clearly an element internal to the clause, is the head. Taken together, (36) and (37) show that any variable of the argumental type can be the head of a

nominalizations are built on finite verbs, as seen in (34)–(37) above). It would also explain why I have not been able to find sentences in which a noun has direct kind reference, and which could not also be interpreted as characterizing sentences. Finally, it would explain a semantic contrast seen in posssesive constructions with and without pronominal agreement affix. In the former, the possessor is an individual, in the latter it is a kind (see also Holden 2013:499).

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