

Remarks and Replies

The Puzzle of Anaphoric Bare Nouns in Mandarin: A Counterpoint to *Index!*

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Jenks (2018) argues that Mandarin bare NPs cannot be classified as definites simpliciter. Adopting the distinction between weak- and strong-article definites in Schwarz 2009, he proposes that Mandarin makes a lexical distinction between the two types of definites: bare nouns are weak definites, demonstratives are strong definites. He further proposes that their distribution is regulated by a principle called *Index!*. In this article, we first point out some problems with the empirical generalizations presented in Jenks's description of Mandarin and then sketch an alternative approach to the distinction between Mandarin demonstratives and bare nouns. We end with some comments about the kind of further empirical work that needs to be done before definitive claims can be made about the competition between demonstratives and other types of definites.

Keywords: strong and weak definite articles, bare nouns, demonstratives, Mandarin, crosslinguistic variation, competition

1 Weak and Strong Definiteness in Mandarin

Mandarin is known to lack an overt definite article, expressing definiteness via bare nouns (e.g., Chao 1968, C. Li and Thompson 1981, Cheng and Sybesma 1999, Yang 2001) (1a). The ability of bare nouns to function as definites is also illustrated by (1b), in which the linguistic context brings out their anaphoric use (e.g., Dayal 2004, 2011, Jiang 2012, 2020, X. Li 2013).

- (1) a. Hufei he-wan-le **tang**.
Hufei drink-finish-LE soup
'Hufei finished the soup.'
(Cheng and Sybesma 1999:510)

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- b. Wo kanjian yi zhi mao. **Mao** zai huayuan-li.
 I see one CL cat cat at garden-inside
 ‘I see a cat. The cat is in the garden.’
 (Dayal 2004:403)

Jenks (2018) modifies this generalization on the basis of examples like (2a–c). According to him, the anaphoric potential of bare nouns does not extend beyond the subject position. The bare nouns in (2b–c) are infelicitous in both direct object and indirect object positions, and demonstratives must be used instead.

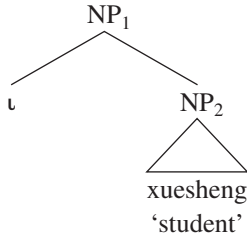
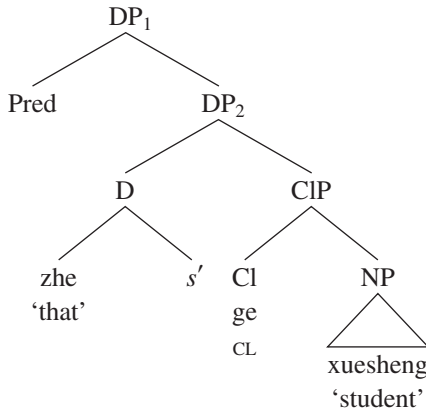
- (2) a. Jiaoshi li zuo zhe yi ge nansheng he yi ge nüsheng.
 classroom inside sit PROG one CL boy and one CL girl
 ‘A boy and a girl are sitting in the classroom.’
 b. Wo zuotian yudao #(na ge) nansheng.
 I yesterday meet that CL boy
 ‘I met the boy yesterday.’
 c. Wo dai gei #(na ge) nansheng yi ge liwu.
 I bring give that CL boy one CL gift
 ‘I’m bringing a gift for the boy.’
 (Jenks 2018:510)

Jenks further argues that only uniqueness-based definites, or weak-article definites in the sense of Schwartz 2009, are realized with bare nouns in Mandarin and that demonstratives can occur in these contexts only with contrastive interpretations. He examines three environments that require unique definites, using the classification in Hawkins 1978. In addition to bare nouns functioning as immediate-situation definites, as shown in (1a), they also function as larger-situation definites, demonstrated in (3a), and as associative definites in part-whole bridging contexts, as shown in (3b) (for more on associative anaphora, see Clark 1977, Hawkins 1978, Schwarz 2009).

- (3) a. **Yueliang** sheng shang lai le.
 moon rise up come LE
 ‘The moon has risen.’
 (Chen 2004:1165)
 b. Chezi bei jingcha lanjie le yinwei mei you tiezhi zai **paizhao** shang.
 car PASS police intercept LE because NEG have sticker at license.plate on
 ‘The car was intercepted by the police because there wasn’t a sticker on the license plate.’
 (Jenks 2018:508)

Jenks offers the following analysis to account for the contrast between Mandarin bare nouns and demonstrative expressions. First, he assumes that Mandarin bare nouns project NPs (4a), whereas demonstrative expressions project DPs, consisting of at least three distinct nominal projections: DP > CIP > NP (4b). Second, he adopts Trinh’s (2011) analysis of common nouns and numeral classifiers and treats Mandarin bare nouns as predicative; he further adopts the analysis

that Mandarin bare nouns achieve their definite interpretation via the type-shifting operator *iota* ι (e.g., Yang 2001) (5a).¹ Third, he follows Schwarz's (2009) account of weak vs. strong definites, which are distinguished by the presence of an index only on strong anaphoric definites. Specifically, he proposes that Mandarin demonstratives are like strong-article anaphoric definites in German in taking an extra semantic argument, which in most contexts is satisfied by an index ι^x (5b). He assumes that the index is interpreted as an indexical property relativized to an assignment function $\lambda x[x = g(1)]$ and that the indexical argument of ι^x is represented as a DP adjunct.²

(4) a. *Unique definites*b. *Anaphoric definites*

$$(5) \text{ a. } \llbracket \text{NP}_1 \rrbracket^g = \exists !x[\mathbf{student}(x)(s')].\iota x[\mathbf{student}(x)(s')]$$

$$\text{ b. } \llbracket \text{DP}_1 \rrbracket^g = \exists !x[\mathbf{student}(x)(s')] \wedge \text{AT}_{\text{obj}}(x) \wedge x = g(1).$$

$$\iota x[\mathbf{student}(x)(s') \wedge \text{AT}_{\text{obj}}(x) \wedge x = g(1)]$$

¹ The idea that there is a covert type shift in Mandarin, utilizing the same semantic operation as in the English overt definite determiner, is due to Chierchia (1998) and was adopted in Cheng and Sybesma 1999 and fully elaborated within Chierchia's system in Yang 2001. We have opted for mentioning only Yang 2001 in the text since that is the version that Jenks uses in building up his picture of Mandarin definiteness. On the interpretation of definite bare nouns as the extension of the kind, see Dayal 2011, in addition to Trinh 2011, mentioned by Jenks.

² Note that the condition $x = g(1)$ occurs also in the scope of *iota* in (5b). This is in line with Schwarz's (2009) account. Not including this condition would have the unwelcome result that the DP would fail to refer if there were two individuals with the NP property, even though only one of them would be identical to $g(1)$. The classic bishop or sage plant examples are relevant here (see Schwarz 2009:243–246).

Jenks follows the literature on bare nouns in interpreting the Mandarin common noun as a kind-denoting term. He posits a covert *iota* type shift in the case of bare noun arguments. Details aside, we get the expected meaning for the noun phrase in (4a): a presupposition that there is a unique student in the situation and that, when defined, the NP refers to that individual. In the case of the demonstrative in (4b), a classifier phrase intervenes.³ Again, as is standard, classifiers take a kind term and deliver a set of atomic or singular individuals (AT_{obj}). To this the demonstrative, qua strong definite, adds the indexical property. Here Jenks departs slightly from Schwarz 2009 but the essential idea is the same. Though *iota* is still implicated, its uniqueness requirement is defined on two properties, the property of being a student and that of being identical to a previously introduced individual ($x = g(1)$). As in Schwarz's original account, this distinction is meant to separate the contexts in which uniqueness of the common noun is at stake from the contexts in which uniqueness rides on indexicality. The exponent for the first type in German is the weak article and the exponent for the second type in German is the strong article.⁴ On Jenks's account, the exponent for the first type in Mandarin is the bare noun and the exponent for the second type in Mandarin is the demonstrative.

According to Jenks, then, Mandarin patterns with German in making a principled distinction between weak (unique) and strong (anaphoric) definites. It differs from English, which uses a single form for both types of definites. The resulting crosslinguistic picture is given in table 1.

Jenks's (2018) core proposal is a principle called *Index!*, which requires Mandarin to explicitly represent indices whenever possible.

(6) *Index!*

Represent and bind all possible indices.

Table 1
Definiteness marking in Mandarin, German, and English

	Mandarin	German	English
Unique definites	N	Weak article	the
Anaphoric definites	Dem Cl N	Strong article	the

Source: Jenks 2018:529

³ We follow the convention in Heim and Kratzer 1998:73–76 where the material between the colon (:) and the period (.) corresponds to the presupposition and the material after the period corresponds to the truth-conditional contribution: $\lambda P: \exists!x[\mathbf{P}(x)(s')]. \omega[\mathbf{P}(x)(s')]$. Note that once the lambda expression on the left has been satisfied, the two parts are separated by the period: $\exists!x[\mathbf{student}(x)(s')]. \omega[\mathbf{student}(x)(s')]$. $\exists!x$ is to be read as *There is exactly one x such that . . .*

⁴ The German weak and strong articles manifest themselves in the complement position of a preposition: the former contracts with the preposition, the latter remains an independent morpheme.

- (i) a. Hans ging zum Haus.
Hans went to.the_{WEAK} house
b. Hans ging zu dem Haus.
Hans went to the_{STRONG} house
'Hans went to the house.'
(Schwarz 2009:14)

Since the claim is that Mandarin demonstrative expressions include an index that is absent in definite bare nouns, *Index!* would require demonstratives to be used whenever they can. In the case of (2b–c), demonstrative expressions are available since they are anaphoric to expressions in the antecedent clause, and therefore they must be used; as a result, bare nouns become unavailable in those contexts.

Jenks makes one exception to *Index!*. As seen in (1b), subject bare nouns can be anaphorically linked to expressions in antecedent clauses. To account for this, he proposes that anaphoric bare nouns in subject position are continuing topics in Mandarin. The pragmatic function of topic marking overrides and neutralizes the effect of *Index!* in such environments since topics are salient members of the question under discussion and do not need to be indexed.

This, in brief, is Jenks's (2018) account, which combines the view that Mandarin bare nouns are kind-denoting terms with the view that definiteness is composed of a uniqueness-based subtype and an anaphora-based subtype.

2 Fault Lines in the Empirical Foundations of *Index!*

The data presented by Jenks (2018) certainly change the picture of Mandarin bare nouns that was earlier assumed in the literature. However, the conclusions that he draws are not quite supported when more facts are taken into account. In this section, we take a closer look at the two empirical generalizations on which Jenks's proposal is based: the behavior of demonstratives in contexts that favor weak-article definites and the behavior of bare nouns in contexts that favor strong-article definites. In each case, we fill in some crucial gaps in the paradigm in order to lay a more solid foundation for claims about the lexical exponents of definiteness in Mandarin.⁵ See also Bremmers et al. 2021 for similar facts related to Jenks's description of Mandarin.

2.1 Mandarin Demonstratives as Ordinary Demonstratives

Schwarz (2009, 2013) bases his division of definites on languages like German, Lakhota, and Akan that show a lexical distinction in behavior, and he argues that the distinction between strong and weak definiteness holds crosslinguistically.⁶ In English (and certain other languages) this distinction is not apparent, but Schwarz holds that this is because, in the case of English, a single definite article (*the*) ambiguously encodes both weak and strong definiteness.

Schwarz is careful to note that strong and weak definite articles do not exhaust the possibilities for expressing definiteness, and he mentions demonstratives as one example (see, in particular, Schwarz 2009:34–37). Since on Jenks's account the Mandarin demonstrative *is* the strong definite, we believe it is worth understanding what, if anything, differentiates a strong definite from a demonstrative. We can do so with reference to English, where the two are lexically distinct.

⁵ An anonymous reviewer helpfully points out that our position on Mandarin definiteness resonates with ideas in Sybesma and Sio 2008. While we cannot go into the details of that article for reasons of space, we refer the interested reader to it, pages 466–470 in particular.

⁶ See Owusu 2021 for a recent analysis of definiteness in Akan, expanding on our proposal about demonstratives and strong definites in section 3. The picture of Akan definites that emerges is much more nuanced than assumed in earlier literature.

The larger-situation use and part-whole bridging contexts mentioned in section 1 provide a good starting point. In both, the set denoted by the common-noun head is uniquely instantiated: world knowledge tells us that there is only one moon that we ordinarily talk about and that a given car can have only one license plate. While the English definite is acceptable in such cases, the English demonstrative is not.

- (7) a. The/#That moon has risen.
 b. The police stopped the car because the/#that license plate was not visible.
 c. DEF_{WEAK} / #DEF_{STRONG} / #DEM N

On the ambiguity view of English definites, we can analyze the situation as in (7c). The weak definite survives; the strong definite and the demonstrative are ruled out. Note that the infelicity of Mandarin demonstratives in the corresponding cases seen in (3) is equally compatible with their being analyzed as garden-variety demonstratives as with their being analyzed as strong definites. These contexts therefore provide no reason to move from the null hypothesis, which is that Mandarin demonstratives are demonstratives rather than definites.

However, there is one other case discussed by Jenks that is meant to settle the question in favor of Mandarin demonstratives being ambiguous between demonstratives and strong definites. These are associative nouns that do not involve part-whole relationships of the kind seen in (3b) and (7b). Schwarz notes that several languages differentiate between these two types of associative uses and, while prohibiting strong definites from the part-whole cases, allow them in producer-product cases.⁷ Jenks provides the example in (8a) to establish that Mandarin allows the demonstrative to be used here, aligning it with languages that allow strong definites in these cases.

- (8) a. Paul renwei na shou shi hen youmei, jishi ta bu renshi #(na wei)
 Paul think that CL poem very beautiful although he NEG know that CL
shiren.
 poet
 ‘Paul thinks that poem is very beautiful although he doesn’t know of the poet.’
 (Jenks 2018:508)
 b. Paul du-le yi ben youqu-de shu. Ta xiang jian **zuozhe.**
 Paul read-PERF one CL interesting-MOD book he want meet author
 ‘Paul read an interesting book. He wants to meet the author.’

Sentence (8a) is meant to settle the case in favor of Mandarin demonstratives being strong definites since the English translation of the associated NP *poet* is acceptable with the definite determiner (and presumably not with a demonstrative). The explanation is as follows. The ordinary demonstrative meaning of *na wei shiren* ‘that CL poet’ is ruled out analogously to the way *that poet* would be ruled out in English, but its strong definite meaning is acceptable analogously to the way *the poet* is acceptable. We believe this conclusion is too hasty.

⁷ The discussion in Schwarz 2009:52–53, 190–237, 246–253 underscores the complexity of this issue. We follow the core distinction between part-whole and producer-product types of associative anaphora that Schwarz settles on.

Note that the antecedent noun in the main clause of (8a) also has a demonstrative, *na shou shi* ‘that CI poem’. The canonical examples of bridging in the literature typically have indefinite antecedents. When we adjusted the data so that the sentence has an overt indefinite antecedent, as in (8b), the judgments changed and our consultants readily accepted the bare NP.⁸ We therefore do not see any basis for making the distinction between part-whole and producer-product subcases of associative anaphoric nouns in Mandarin. Consequently, we do not see sufficient empirical grounds to consider the Mandarin demonstrative anything other than what it appears to be: a regular demonstrative.

A theoretical issue with the way *Index!* relates to strong definites is also worth noting. Consider the sequence of English sentences in (9a–b).

- (9) a. The president was talking to a minister. The minister was asking the/#that president
 . . .
 b. The sun and the moon are part of our solar system. The earth revolves around the/
 #that sun . . .
 c. DEF_{WEAK} . . . DEF_{WEAK/STRONG} . . .

The first mention of *the president/the sun* involves a weak definite, an instance of larger-situation uniqueness. It is not so clear how the second instance of these noun phrases should be analyzed. The phrases still satisfy uniqueness, so we could use the weak definite, but they also satisfy anaphoricity, so *Index!* might tell us to use the strong definite. Again, English does not help us in this regard because the ambiguity of *the* masks the distinction, but the Mandarin anaphoric noun is transparent.

- (10) a. Zongtong zhengzai gen yi ge buzhang shuohua. Buzhang wen (#na ge)
 president PROG with one CL minister talk minister ask that CL
zongtong . . .
 president
 ‘The president was talking to a minister. The minister was asking the/#that president
 . . .’
 b. Taiyang he yueliang shi women taiyangxi de yi bufen. Diqiu weirao
 sun and moon be our solar.system MOD one part earth revolve
 (#na ge) taiyang zhuan . . .
 that CL sun turn
 ‘The sun and the moon are part of our solar system. The earth revolves around the/
 #that sun . . .’
 c. DEF_{WEAK} . . . DEF_{WEAK/STRONG} . . .

⁸ We also checked (8a) with the bare noun *shi* in the main clause, interpreted as a definite. With this change, some speakers accepted the associated bare NP *shiren* in the second clause but others still preferred the demonstrative.

Both instances of *president/sun* have to be bare; demonstratives in the second sentence are infelicitous. So, as in the other cases discussed here, the Mandarin demonstrative turns out to pattern with the English demonstrative, not with the English strong definite. We should point out that Jenks in a sense inherits this problem from Schwarz, but by proposing a principle like *Index!*, he makes a specific prediction for Mandarin that is not borne out.⁹

We will come back to the appropriate account of demonstratives in section 3. We turn now to the other side of the equation and test the generalization that nonsubject Mandarin bare nouns are infelicitous in anaphoric contexts.

2.2 Mandarin Bare NPs as Anaphoric Definites

Recall from (2) that Jenks (2018) claims that anaphoric bare nouns in direct and indirect object positions are infelicitous. However, we show on the basis of elicited and naturally occurring data that this is not always the case. We start with the elicited data. When the second sentence contains two bare nouns, one in subject position and one in object position, they can both refer anaphorically to the indefinite expressions in the first sentence.

- (11) a. Jiaoshi li zuo zhe yi ge nansheng he yi ge nüsheng.
 classroom inside sit PROG one CL boy and one CL girl
 ‘A boy and a girl are sitting in the classroom.’
- b. **Nüsheng** zuo zai **nansheng** pangbian.
 girl sit DUR boy side
 ‘The girl is sitting next to the boy.’
- c. **Nüsheng** zhengzai gen **nansheng** shuohua.
 girl PROG with boy talk
 ‘The girl is talking to the boy.’

Note that the bare nouns in (11b–c) are not subject to the exception Jenks makes for bare nouns in subject position. Crucially, while demonstratives are judged to be possible in subject and object positions in these examples, all the native speakers we consulted found two bare nouns to be acceptable, several even voicing a preference for two bare nouns over a demonstrative in one or both positions.

It has been suggested to us that having two bare nouns in the second sentence may create a contrastive environment and that *Index!* can be overridden and neutralized by contrastive focus, just as it can by continuing topics (Peter Jenks, pers. comm.). If focus can also introduce an index of its own, the occurrence of bare nouns in object position in (11) is to be expected under *Index!*. Although this possibility can help maintain Jenks’s (2018) proposal, we do not find it compelling, theoretically or empirically. Naturally occurring data establish that Mandarin bare nouns can be anaphoric in nonsubject positions in sentences that are not contrastive in any identifiable way.

⁹ Schwarz (2009:44–49) discusses the possibility of weak-article definites in anaphoric contexts and indicates how noncomplementarity may arise. In discussing cases where only the weak article is possible, his example (54), Schwarz indicates how the weak article might work, but he does not elaborate on why the strong article is ruled out.

In (10), we provide examples from the Beijing Language and Culture University Contemporary Chinese Corpus (BCC Corpus).¹⁰

- (12) a. “Shenchu shou lai, bishang yanjing.” *Yi ming huanyou jingshen zhang'ai de*
 extend hand come close eye one CL have mental disorder DE
nanhai mingling Youyou. Youyou shuncongde ba shou di-gei *nanhai*.
 boy order Youyou Youyou obediently BA hand hand-to boy
 “‘Show me your hand and close your eyes,’ *one boy* who has a mental disorder
 ordered Youyou. Youyou showed his hands to *the boy* obediently.”
 (BCC Corpus, from *China Daily*, 7 December 2016)
- b. *Yi tiao gou* dagai kan chuan chang-yi lache de bu shen
 one CL dog probably see wear long-clothes pull.rickshaw DE not very
 shunyan, gen zhe ta yao. Ta tingzhu le che,
 pleasing.to.the.eye follow PROG 3SG bite 3SG stop PERF rickshaw
 dao zhuai zhe buzi, pinming de zhui zhe *gou* da.
 opposite grab PROG dusk.whisk try.very.hard DE race PROG dog beat
 ‘*One dog* probably didn’t find the rickshaw puller in the long shirt pleasing to the
 eye and was following him to bite him. He stopped the rickshaw, grabbed his dust-
 whisk by the whisk-end, and raced very hard after *the dog*.’
 (BCC Corpus, from *Rickshaw Boy*, by Lao She)

The bare nouns *nanhai* ‘boy’ and *gou* ‘dog’ appear as objects in the second clause, referring anaphorically to indefinite expressions in the antecedent clause. Note that the subjects in the second clause in (12a) and (12b) are a proper name and a pronoun, respectively.

Example (13) illustrates that bare nouns in indirect object position can also refer anaphorically to the indefinite in the antecedent clause.

- (13) *Yi waiguo nühai* kandao lubian mai de xiaogou, hen xihuan dan mei qian
 one foreign girl saw street.side sell DE puppy very like but not money
 mai, jiujiu bu ken liqu, yushi mailai shui, bian wei gougou bian luo lei.
 buy long not willing leave then buy water while feed dog while shed tear
 Mai gou dashu zuizhong ba liang zhi gougou song gei le *nühai*.
 sell dog uncle finally BA two CL puppy give to PERF girl
 ‘*One foreign girl* saw puppies being sold on the street, (she) liked them very much but
 had no money to buy (them) and didn’t want to leave; then (she) bought water, shedding
 tears while feeding the puppies. In the end, the man who was selling puppies gave two
 puppies to *the girl*.’
 (BCC Corpus, from Weibo ‘Microblog’)

¹⁰ The BCC Corpus is one of the major Chinese corpora in Mainland China. It includes diverse writing genres (newspaper, literature, *Weibo* ‘microblogs’, etc.) and contains around 15 billion characters (see Xun et al. 2016).

It is worth emphasizing that in the examples in (12) and (13), demonstrative expressions can also appear where the anaphoric bare nouns appear. *Index!* incorrectly predicts a competition between these two forms, with bare nouns losing out to demonstratives.

To make this point further, (14) illustrates that anaphoric bare nouns can appear multiple times in object (and subject) position in second and subsequent clauses.

- (14) a. Ou Weiling turan faxian yi ge zhongnian funü zai douyin yi ge
 Ou Weiling suddenly notice one CL middle.aged woman PROG teasing one CL
nühai, xiang jiao *nühai* gen ta hui jia qu, dan *nühai* wensibudong.
 girl want ask girl with 3SG return home go but girl not.move.a.single.jot
 Ou Weiling juede youdian chayi, bian shangqian wen *nühai*, “Ni zai deng
 Ou Weiling feel a.little weird then go.forward ask girl you PROG wait
 shenme ren?”

which person

‘Ou Weiling suddenly noticed one middle-aged woman was teasing *one girl*, (she) wanted to ask *the girl* to go back home with her, but *the girl* didn’t move a single jot. Ou Weiling felt a bit weird and hence stepped forward to ask *the girl*, “Who are you waiting for?”’

(BCC Corpus, from *Xiamen Daily*, 13 December 1993)

- b. Zai shuihu bangbian yi zhi cuxia-xiang de mao zai canzhuo shang
 at kettle side one CL mischievous-look DE cat on desk top
 shuizhao le. Laozuoli’en like ba *mao* xu-zou. Ta ba da limao
 sleep SFP Old-Jolyon immediately BA cat drive-away 3SG BA big hat
 pai-de pa-pa zuoxiang, yi qugan zhe *mao*.
 slap-DE bang-bang sound to chase.away PROG cat

‘Beside the kettle, *one mischievous-looking cat* fell asleep on the desk. Old Jolyon immediately drove *the cat* away. He slapped the big hat very loud in order to chase away *the cat*.’

(BCC Corpus, from *The Man of Property*, by John Galsworthy)

In (14a), the anaphoric bare noun *nühai* ‘girl’ first appears in object position in the second clause and then appears in subject position in the third clause and object position in the fourth clause. In (14b), the anaphoric bare noun *mao* ‘cat’ first appears in the *ba*-construction in the second clause, leading to SOV (as opposed to SVO) word order, and appears again in object position in the third clause.

We have provided evidence based on elicitation from six native speakers of Mandarin and from naturally occurring sentences from a major corpus against the empirical generalizations in Jenks 2018. We have more such examples, which for reasons of space we do not include here. This suggests to us that *Index!* cannot explain the distribution of demonstratives and bare nouns in Mandarin and that an alternative is worth exploring. We show next what an account with the potential to capture the full range of facts might look like.

3 An Alternative to *Index!*

In this section, we suggest a way of analyzing Mandarin demonstratives that aligns them with demonstratives crosslinguistically, while delivering the apparent strong definite behavior noted in Jenks 2018. We also speculate on an alternative way of capturing the crucial contrasts in the anaphoric behavior of Mandarin bare nouns—that is, between the examples on which Jenks bases his claims for their nonanaphoricity and the examples we have provided that *do* show their anaphoricity.

3.1 *The Nonuniqueness of Demonstratives*

Let us step back a bit from the specifics of Mandarin and ask what is known about demonstratives generally. One observation in the literature is that most, perhaps all, languages have demonstratives, while a large number of languages lack definite articles. Another is that demonstratives are the historical source for definite articles. There is a rich literature on the semantics of demonstratives, of course, but we will take our inspiration from Robinson 2005, as it bears most closely on the issue of interest here (see also Roberts 2002, Wolter 2006). Drawing on Löbner 1985, Robinson notes that demonstratives differ from definites in their ability to tolerate lack of uniqueness.

- (15) a. This dog is awake and this dog is asleep.
 b. #The dog is awake and the dog is asleep.

In fact, Robinson argues, a demonstrative not only tolerates nonuniqueness, it requires it.

- (16) a. #That sun is hot.
 b. Helen bought a car. #That steering wheel is dangerous.
 c. The match was interesting. #That umpire was unfair.

Given these facts, she suggests that although demonstratives refer to a unique entity, they have a presupposition of nonuniqueness. We can represent it as in (17), and given that these facts hold crosslinguistically, we can take (17) to hold in Mandarin as well.

- (17) *Initial proposal*
 $\llbracket \text{Dem} \rrbracket = \lambda P: |P| > 1. \iota x [P(x) \wedge x = y]$

That is, each instance of a demonstrative picks out a unique entity that satisfies two properties, the common-noun property and the intended-referent property, here represented by the free variable y , in line with the convention in Schwarz 2009. The crucial difference lies in the presuppositional piece of the demonstrative's meaning. It requires that the intended referent not be the sole member of the common-noun set. The demonstrative thus differs from the definite, where the common-noun set bears a presupposition of uniqueness: $|P| = 1$.

Let us illustrate how this explains the contrasts in (15) and (16). Since $|\text{dog}| = 2$ in (15), each conjunct satisfies the nonuniqueness presupposition as well as the entailment of uniqueness: there are two dogs in the context, but the demonstratives in the two conjuncts have distinct indices,

ensuring uniqueness calibrated to those indices. The problem with (16) lies with the presupposition of nonuniqueness. For (16a), normal world knowledge tells us that there is only one sun in our conceptual universe, and for (16b–c), it tells us that there is only one steering wheel/umpire per car or match.¹¹

Given what we have said so far, one may expect demonstratives and definites to be in complementary distribution, but this is not the case. Most relevant to present concerns are anaphoric contexts where both options seem possible in English.

- (18) a. A woman and a man came into the room. The woman sat down.
 b. A woman and a man came into the room. That woman sat down.

Robinson (2005) notes, and we agree, that the version with the definite seems unmarked, while the version with the demonstrative suggests a slight sense of contrast. Setting that aside, how can we explain the difference between cases like (18b) and (16a–c), given the proposed semantics in (17)? To do so, we minimally modify the nonuniqueness presupposition in (17) as in (19a), to allow its satisfaction in a larger situation.¹²

- (19) a. *Final proposal*
 $\llbracket \text{Dem} \rrbracket = \lambda s \lambda P: \exists s' s \leq s' |P_{s'}| > 1. \omega[P_{s'}(x) \wedge x = y]$
 b. *Strong definite*
 $\llbracket \text{the}_{\text{STRONG}} \rrbracket = \lambda s \lambda P: |P_s \cap \lambda x[x = y]| = 1. \omega[P_s(x) \wedge x = y]$
 c. *Weak definite*
 $\llbracket \text{the}_{\text{WEAK}} \rrbracket = \lambda s \lambda P: |P_s| = 1. \omega[P_s(x)]$

We are importing the notion of widening, proposed by Kadmon and Landman (1993) to explain the polarity item *any*, for the satisfaction of the nonuniqueness condition in (19a). Domain widening has also been used by Dayal (2013) to explain the indefiniteness typically associated with bare plurals in episodic contexts. On the opposite side of the spectrum, D-linked expressions like *each* are thought to resist such widening (Kadmon and Landman 1993:378–379, Dayal 2016: 122–124). Here, we suggest that the initial situation invoked by the first sentence in (18b), with a unique woman and a unique man, is extended to include a larger situation that opens up the possibility of having other women in it, even if no such woman is salient. This is what licenses the demonstrative in the second sentence of (18b). The strong definite in (18a) is also felicitous, since its uniqueness presupposition is satisfied in the situation in which the first sentence is interpreted. For completeness, we include the weak definite. In this situation, it also happens to be satisfied since there is a unique element not only in the intersection of P and the set of

¹¹ In the case of *president*, in most contexts of use the anchor is a specific country so that the nonuniqueness requirement rules out the demonstrative. In contexts such as a meeting of world leaders, this anchoring is removed, nonuniqueness is satisfied, and demonstratives predictably become acceptable. Similarly, if the conversation is about several solar systems, *that/this sun* may be acceptable too. Thus, there is a significant pragmatic component to the phenomenon in terms of fixing what types of contexts are evoked, but the requirement itself is a presupposition.

¹² We remain neutral here on whether contextually salient entities (like the sun) are represented in the domain of discourse, since it does not affect the interpretation of demonstratives that we are concerned with.

individuals anchored to the indefinite in the first sentence, but in P itself. To anticipate, we propose that the Mandarin demonstrative is to be represented in terms of (19a), and the Mandarin bare noun in terms of (19b) and (19c).¹³ The choice between the strong and the weak definite is not trivial; we will return to it in the following sections but continue to focus on the demonstrative for now.

Our account of demonstratives rests on the view that domain widening in anaphoric cases such as (18b) involves a relatively smooth transition from a more restricted situation to a larger situation. One might ask why it is not similarly possible to license a demonstrative on a widened domain in larger-situation uses of the kind illustrated in (16a). The answer seems to be this. To allow the possibility of other suns, we would need to adjust our context to incorporate other solar systems. While such adjustments are certainly possible, it seems that speakers do not make the rather serious adjustments that would be required. And in the case of associative readings such as those in (16b–c), the demonstrative remains anchored to a single entity through a relationship defined on uniqueness. No matter how many other cars or matches there may be in the widened domain, there will still be only one steering wheel and one umpire anchored to the car and match referred to in the first sentence. To jump to the steering wheels of other possible cars or the umpires of other possible matches seems to be a bridge too far for the average speaker.¹⁴ However, note that immediate-situation uses involving ordinary common nouns, as in *That boy is tall*, would be acceptable under what would be described as a deictic use of the demonstrative.

Let us take stock. We have drawn on Robinson's (2005) insight about the difference between definites and demonstratives to argue for the role of a nonuniqueness condition on the use of demonstratives and suggested a way in which their distribution can be differentiated from that of the definite determiner. Given that the behavior of demonstratives in core cases is relatively stable across English and Mandarin (and, as far as we know, most languages), we have suggested that Mandarin demonstratives are really just regular demonstratives. One might even argue that this is the null hypothesis, for, as we demonstrated in section 2.1, there is no empirical imperative to treat Mandarin demonstratives as ambiguous between demonstratives and strong definites.

3.2 Anaphoric Bare Nouns, Situations, and Individuals

While we presented ample evidence in section 2.2 against the generality of Jenks's (2018) conclusion that Mandarin bare nouns cannot be anaphoric definites, we do not challenge his core data. We repeat a near-minimal pair as a reminder of the contrast at issue and to highlight the nature of the puzzle posed by anaphoric bare nouns in Mandarin.

- (20) a. Jiaoshi li zuo zhe yi ge nansheng he yi ge nüsheng.
 classroom inside sit PROG one CL boy and one CL girl
 'A boy and a girl are sitting in the classroom.'

¹³ We do not identify the definite meaning of the Mandarin bare noun with that of the English definite, since there are potential technical differences due to the fact that Mandarin bare nouns are also kind terms.

¹⁴ See Schwarz's (2009) discussion of bridging in part-whole cases.

- b. **Nüsheng** zuo zai **nansheng** pangbian.
 girl sit DUR boy side
 ‘The girl is sitting next to the boy.’ (= (11b))
- c. Wo zuotian yudao #(na ge) **nansheng**.
 I yesterday meet that CL boy
 ‘I met the boy yesterday.’ (= (2b), from Jenks 2018:510)

There are two things to note about these examples. The first is that the syntactic position of the anaphoric definite does not determine its shape; there are nonsubject anaphoric nouns (*nansheng* ‘boy’) in both sentences and yet one is a bare noun while the other is a demonstrative. The second is that we are talking about preferences, not judgments of absolute (un)grammaticality. There is a preference for a demonstrative in cases like (20c), but the bare noun is not exactly ruled out for all speakers. The bare noun is fully acceptable for all speakers in (20b), but the demonstrative would not be deemed ungrammatical. One conclusion we can safely draw is that *Index!* does not provide the right level of granularity to capture the nuances of this paradigm. The challenge, then, is to find a different angle from which to approach the problem. Here we will build on a suggestion made by Gita Martohardjono (pers. comm.) to see if it can shed light on the observed contrast.

Let us start by asking how the context-setting sentence in (20a) would be interpreted. On a situation-semantics approach, we might posit something like (21a), taking *s* to be the minimal situation that has a boy and a girl in it.

- (21) a. $\exists s \exists x \exists y [\text{boy}(x, s) \wedge \text{girl}(y, s) \wedge \text{in-classroom}(x, s) \wedge \text{in-classroom}(y, s)]$
 b. $\exists !y[\text{girl}(y, s')] \wedge \exists !x[\text{boy}(x, s')]$.
 $\exists s' [\text{sitting-next-to}(\iota y[\text{girl}(y, s')], \iota x[\text{boy}(x, s')]) (s')]$
 c. $\exists s'' s' \leq s'' \mid |\text{boy}_{s''}| > 1$.
 $\exists s' \exists u [\text{speaker}(u, s') \wedge \text{met-yesterday}(u, \iota z[\text{boy}(z, s') \wedge z = x]) (s')]$

Now let us consider the two follow-up sentences in (20b) and (20c), in isolation for the moment. Sentence (20b) has two bare nouns, *nüsheng* ‘girl’ and *nansheng* ‘boy’, each of which can be considered to be an immediate-situation unique definite. This is derivable via the *iota* type shift (e.g., Chierchia 1998, Cheng and Sybesma 1999, Yang 2001, Dayal 2004, Jiang 2012, 2020, Jenks 2018). For perspicuity, we include the presupposition on a separate line at the top. In (21b), we have the presupposition that there is a unique boy and a unique girl in the situation of evaluation and the assertion that the unique girl is sitting next to the unique boy. Interpreted in isolation, (20b) exemplifies immediate-situation definites in Hawkins’s (1978) classification and falls under Schwarz’s (2009) definition of weak-article definites. Note that this is how the bare noun *tang* ‘soup’ in (1a) is interpreted as a definite, on our account as in Jenks’s. The same explanation also covers larger-situation uses of bare nouns like *yueliang* ‘moon’ in (3a), where the situation of evaluation *s'* would be identified with the world w_s .

In (20c), instead of a bare noun we have *na-ge-nansheng* ‘Dem Cl noun’. The truth-conditional contribution of the demonstrative is the same as that of a strong definite, but on the account sketched in section 3.1 it has a presupposition of nonuniqueness on the set of boys, satisfiable on

a widened domain. Again, taking (20c) by itself, we predict it to be acceptable. And, indeed, it is. In immediate-situation uses, it would translate into a deictic use of the demonstrative ('I met that boy yesterday'), a use that Jenks's account recognizes, as would any account of demonstratives. Our account also has the advantage of indicating why demonstratives cannot function as larger-situation definites: *yueliang* 'that CI moon' will not satisfy the nonuniqueness presupposition of demonstratives, as it is unique in the widest situation available, the world of the situation w_s . Note that the unacceptability of the demonstrative in larger-situation uses (e.g., (3a)) is categorical, not just a preference for the bare noun. This is expected since the unacceptability is due to presupposition failure.

With the basics in place, we return to anaphoric contexts. The contrast between (20b) and (20c) emerges when they are seen as continuations of (20a) in a narrative sequence. In (22), we illustrate what happens when (21b–c) are treated as follow-ups to (21a).

- (22) a. $\exists s \exists x \exists y$ [boy(x, s) \wedge girl(y, s) \wedge in-classroom(x, s) \wedge in-classroom(y, s)
 $\wedge \exists s' s \leq s'$ [sitting-next-to (ιy [girl(y, s')], ιz [boy(z, s')])] (s')]
 b. $\exists s \exists x \exists y$ [boy(x, s) \wedge girl(y, s) \wedge in-classroom(x, s) \wedge in-classroom(y, s)
 $\wedge \exists s' s \leq s' \exists u$ [speaker(u, s') \wedge met-yesterday ($u, \iota z$ [boy($z, s')$] $\wedge z = x$)] (s')]

As the logical representations make explicit, both the bare noun and the demonstrative are defined in this context and end up referring to the same individual; that is, our account shows why both discourses are possible. However, we need to identify what could explain the preference for a bare noun in the first case and for a demonstrative in the second. The key, we believe, is in the relation between the initial situation s and the subsequent situation s' . In the version of situation semantics in which Schwarz couches his account of strong- and weak-article definites, there is no ontological difference between situations and individuals (Schwarz 2009:223). Given that, there is nothing substantive to the condition $s \leq s'$ in (22a) but there is in (22b): s is defined on two individuals and although the same two individuals define s' in (22a), the individuals in s are a proper part of the individuals in s' in (22b). We can therefore rewrite the formulas as in (23).

- (23) a. $\exists s \exists x \exists y$ [boy(x, s) \wedge girl(y, s) \wedge in-classroom(x, s) \wedge in-classroom(y, s)
 \wedge sitting-next-to (ιy [girl(y, s)], ιz [boy(z, s)])] (s)
 b. $\exists s \exists x \exists y$ [boy(x, s) \wedge girl(y, s) \wedge in-classroom(x, s) \wedge in-classroom(y, s)
 $\wedge \exists s' s \leq s' \exists u$ [speaker(u, s') \wedge met-yesterday ($u, \iota z$ [boy(z, s)] $\wedge z = x$)] (s')]

One might argue that since the initial situation extends across the whole discourse in (23a), the simplest type of definite would be one that employs the simple type-shift *iota*, which in the case of Mandarin is the bare noun. And, given that there are two distinct situations in (23b), a deictic definite might have an advantage. While there is no reason to doubt that there is still only the unique boy in s' , we can see that there are now potentially two situations in play, a situation s defined by a boy and a girl, and a situation s' that presumably expands the original situation to include another individual. Though there is no indication that there are other boys in s' , the demonstrative can refer unambiguously to the unique boy in the initial situation s . We might represent this schematically, as in (24). While we have linguistic evidence only for the distinction

in (24a) and (24b), we speculate that once the possibility of a distinct s' arises, it brings with it the possibility of an extension such as (24c): namely, one in which *iota* (the operation that the definite bare noun taps into) is infelicitous but the demonstrative remains felicitous.

- | | | |
|---------|---|---------------------------|
| (24) a. | $\{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1\} \Rightarrow \{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1\}$ | Iota: felicitous |
| | $s \qquad \qquad \qquad s'$ | Demonstrative: felicitous |
| b. | $\{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1\} \Rightarrow \{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1, \text{speaker}\}$ | Iota: felicitous |
| | $s \qquad \qquad \qquad s'$ | Demonstrative: felicitous |
| c. | $\{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1\} \Rightarrow \{\text{boy}_1, \text{girl}_1, \text{speaker}, \text{boy}_2\}$ | Iota: infelicitous |
| | $s \qquad \qquad \qquad s'$ | Demonstrative: felicitous |

Looking at the contrast in terms of situations and the entities that constitute them provides us with a fresh angle from which to address this puzzle. We no longer predict complementary distribution, but we do allow for the possibility of a preference. If speakers feel confident that the initial situation remains unchanged, they have a choice between two felicitous options and they choose the simpler one—namely, the bare noun encoding the simple type-shift *iota*. Once the original situation is extended, however, speakers may play it safe and choose the demonstrative (which would remain felicitous even if the extension was drastic) over the definite (which could become infelicitous).

If this line of thinking has any merit, it predicts that anaphoric bare nouns should improve in (25), where the first sentence itself sets up a minimal situation with all three individuals, a boy, a girl, and (a woman) Mali. This prediction is indeed borne out, as the bare noun in (25b) is judged acceptable.

- (25) a. Mali gen *yi ge nanhai* he *yi ge nühai* zai jiaoshi li.
 Mali with one CL boy and one CL girl at classroom inside
 ‘Mali is in the classroom with a boy and a girl.’
- b. Ta zhengzai gen *nanhai* shuohua.
 3SG PROG with boy talk
 ‘She is talking to *the boy*.’

Interestingly, it is apparently even possible to have anaphoric bare nouns when the initial context is expanded incrementally to include additional participants.¹⁵

- (26) a. Jiaoshi li zuo zhe *yi ge nanhai* he *yi ge nühai*.
 classroom inside sit PROG one CL boy and one CL girl
 ‘A boy and a girl were sitting in the classroom.’
- b. Turan *yi ge xiaohai* pao jin jiaoshi jiao *nanhai* gen ta chuqu.
 suddenly one CL kid run in classroom ask boy with him go.out
 ‘Suddenly, a kid ran into the classroom and asked *the boy* to go out with him.’

¹⁵ One of our consultants finds (25)–(26) to be better than (2b–c), but not fully acceptable; another finds (2c) to be acceptable but finds the contrast between (2b) and (25)–(26) as reported here. However, it is worth noting that even the first consultant considers (11b–c) fully grammatical.

Table 2
Updated definiteness marking in Mandarin, German, and English

	Mandarin	German	English
Unique definites	Bare nouns *Dem Cl N	Weak article *Strong article *Demonstrative	Definite article *Demonstrative
Anaphoric definites	Bare nouns Dem Cl N	*Weak article Strong article Demonstrative	Definite article Demonstrative
Contrastive deictic definites	*Bare nouns Dem Cl N	*Weak article Strong article Demonstrative	*Definite article Demonstrative

Schwarz emphasizes that the strong article is not synonymous with the demonstrative, because (27) is only acceptable with prosodic focus on the two definites. His discussion nevertheless underscores the point we have tried to highlight in our discussion of Mandarin, that determining whether a particular form should be aligned with a strong-article definite or with a demonstrative is not straightforward.

Here, we should also point to yet another distinction that needs to be included in the picture of crosslinguistic variation given in table 2. Languages can also use structural options to express definiteness. Cantonese, closely related to Mandarin, includes bare classifier phrases in its inventory of definite structures. The following example, where superscripts indicate tones, shows one type of definite use:¹⁸

- (28) Lei⁵sei³ fong²man⁶ zo² jat¹ go³ zok³gaa¹ tung⁴maai⁴ jat¹ go³ zing³zi⁶gaa¹. Keoi⁵
 Lei-sei interview PERF one CL writer and one CL politician 3SG
 m⁴ jing⁶wai⁴ (#go²) go³ zing³zi⁶gaa¹ hou² jau⁵ceoi³.
 NOT think that CL politician very interesting
 ‘Lei-sei interviewed a writer and a politician. He didn’t think that the politician was
 very interesting.’
 (Jenks 2018:527)

On the basis of examples like (28), Jenks (2018) proposes that Cantonese bare classifier phrases, rather than bare nouns, function canonically as anaphoric definites. However, Jenks’s view of

¹⁸ Another language worth mentioning here is Bangla, where definiteness is marked by fronting of the noun to a position before the classifier (see Dayal 2014 and references there). See Jiang 2012, 2020 for more on possible variations among classifier languages.

Cantonese bare nouns is not uncontroversial (e.g., Sybesma and Sio 2008, Simpson, Soh, and Nomoto 2011, Cheng and Sybesma 2012). While we cannot go further into the facts here, the point that such sequences need to be factored into mapping out the full crosslinguistic typology of definiteness is well-taken.¹⁹

Returning to table 2, we note that it raises the issue of deciding how to map a two-way lexical distinction to a three-way conceptual distinction. Highlighting the importance of this issue is part of what we hope to have achieved in our discussion of Mandarin. A second question, and one that applies to all languages, is how to capture the distribution of different types of definites within a language. If lexically distinct items were in complementary distribution, it would be clear what research strategy one should pursue. The requirement would be to define the meanings of individual items such that only one of the meanings would survive in any given context. However, the reality is that there are overlaps, so any account must include ancillary assumptions to distinguish between the contexts that allow only one definite and those that allow more than one.²⁰

Focusing on Mandarin, we can safely take bare NPs to function as unique definites and demonstratives to function as deictic expressions. The question that remains is the status of anaphoric definites. We have shown that both types of NPs can function in canonical anaphoric contexts. We have suggested looking at situations in terms of the individuals that define them as a way of capturing overlaps in distribution. Once we recognize overlaps, however, the question of preference enters the picture. Focusing on demonstratives vs. strong-article definites, do speakers systematically accept one particular form over the other or is there individual variation on this score? Do all languages show the same preference for demonstratives vs. definites or does the preference depend on the nature of the definite—a lexical definite as in English vs. a bare NP as in Mandarin? At this point, not enough is known about the preferences related to demonstratives to answer this question responsibly.

To sum up, we see Jenks's (2018) discussion of the choice between Mandarin demonstratives and bare nouns as a much-needed push to expand the study of definiteness to include demonstratives and bare nouns.²¹ We believe more fine-grained and sophisticated tests conducted on a statistically significant sample size are needed to empirically define the problem before a theory of competition between demonstratives and other exponents of definiteness can be clearly formulated.

¹⁹ An anonymous reviewer asks how our proposed line of inquiry would apply to Cantonese. As our brief comment indicates, the empirical generalizations need more careful evaluation. We emphasize, however, that any crosslinguistic extension designed on the basis of Mandarin, ours as well as Jenks's *Index!*, would have to be parameterized if individual languages differ in their preference for demonstratives over bare NPs, as Ahn (2019) has claimed. Our own position, as we emphasize in this conclusion, is that further theorizing must wait till we have more data on which to formulate sound empirical generalizations.

²⁰ See, for example, Schwarz 2009:281–286 on the overlaps in distribution of the two articles and Schwarz 2009:290–292 on the distribution of demonstratives, pronouns, and definites.

²¹ Ahn (2019) also looks at the distribution of bare nouns vs. demonstratives in a number of languages. However, her account is based on a small number of speakers, and for at least one language she notes variation among the few speakers she consulted.

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