

Title: Bare NPs in Russian

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In article-less languages, such as Russian, bare nominals are often said to play the roles that in languages with articles are played by definites, indefinites and (in some languages) bare plurals. We investigate which of the commonly recognized functions of such NPs can be attributed to Russian bare nominals. In languages like English, one variant of a reasonably complete analysis of definites, indefinites and bare plurals involves discourse referents in the style of DRT, with the familiarity condition for definites and the non-familiarity condition for indefinites (for example, [Heim 1982]); choice functions, to account for abnormally wide scope of some indefinite NPs (for example, [Kratzer 1998]). kind-referring expressions ([Carlson 1980]). Recently, [Dayal 2004] argued that in languages like Hindi and Russian, singular NPs are ambiguous between definite interpretation and kind reference. Thus we add kind-based analysis as an option for both singular and plural NPs. Let us see which of these analyses have to be employed.

There is no doubt that bare NPs can denote familiar discourse referents, so the definite interpretation is unquestionable: (1) *U nas dve sobaki i koshka. Koshka ljubit rybu.* We have two dogs and a cat. The cat likes fish. Indefinite uses of bare NPs behave in many respects just like indefinites in languages with articles (contra [Dayal 2004]). In particular, they give rise to new discourse referents: (2) *Ja poznamilsja s devushkoj. Ee zovut Sveta.* I made friends with a girl. Her name is Sveta. They can take scope over operators like negation: (3) *Molodoj chelovek v uglu ne skazal ni slova za ves' vecher.* A young man in the corner did not say a word the whole evening. Unlike English, bare plurals also have this true indefinite meaning. In (4), adapted from a Hebrew example in [Dayal 2004], the bare plural NP *milicionerov* scopes out of an opacity-inducing operator, creating a *de re* reading: (4) *Vasja hochet prigrasit' k sebe domoj milicionerov.* (On, pravda, ne znaet, chto oni milicionery; on s nimi poznamilsja na rybalke.) Vasya wants to invite some policemen to his house. (He does not know they are policemen, though; he met them on a fishing trip.) Bare nouns combine with predicates that require kinds as arguments, for example in (5) or (6): (5) *Dinozavry vymyeli.* Dinosaurs are extinct. (6) *Galilej izobrel teleskop.* Galileo invented the telescope. Therefore kind reference should be considered as one of the options for the meaning of bare NPs. It is not clear, however, whether the kind reading should be considered a feature of the bare NP construction or to the meaning of the common noun itself (as suggested by [Dayal 2004]). Dayal's argument that singular bare nouns can denote kinds in contexts that lead to a quasi-existential meaning, however, is hard to prove, since all her examples involve absence of certain readings that should be present if the NPs in question are interpreted as true existential quantifiers.¹ These readings are in fact present (see, for example, (2, 3)), so even if the kind-based analysis of the sort Dayal proposes is available, it is masked by the true indefinite reading. One property of English indefinites that Russian bare nominals lack is ability to take abnormally wide scope. It is this kind of uses that the theory of choice functions was designed to solve. In (7), the bare noun phrase *devushka* can only get definite or non-specific interpretations. (7) *Jesli k Vase v gosti pridet devushka, on obraduetjsja. Ee zovut Sveta.* If a girl comes to visit Vasya, he will be glad. Her name is Sveta. One can conclude that choice functions are not an option in the analysis of bare NPs in Russian.

To summarize our results, the use of bare nominals in Russian supports the standard DRT view with no familiarity conditions imposed. Bare nouns can denote kinds, but this is most probably due to a regular polysemy of common nouns themselves (as suggested by [Dayal 2004]), not to some syntactic or semantic characteristics of bare nominals as such. Also, choice functions are not needed in the analysis of bare NPs in Russia.