THE DOG, THE MOON, THE HAGUE, AND CANADA*

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1. Introduction

In this paper we explore the syntax of proper names, ¹ including the phenomenon of coercion or recategorization, with a view to understanding what kinds of syntactic categories they constitute. The proper/common distinction functions in the same way as count/mass and concrete/abstract in that it identifies two subclasses of nouns. In addition to their semantic differences these subclasses may differ with respect to their syntactic distribution. For instance in many languages, including English, proper nouns differ from common count nouns in that they don't appear with determiners:

- (1) a. I saw *(the) needle.
 - b. I saw (*the) Pat.

While proper nouns may look like bare nouns, they nevertheless have the external syntax (distribution) of DPs rather than Ns. For example a proper noun such as *Pat* can be coordinated with a DP like *the dog* while the bare common noun *cat* cannot. Similarly, proper nouns can be coordinated with pronouns while common nouns cannot. Proper nouns and pronouns can appear in argument positions (e.g. as subjects) while common nouns cannot.²

Most detailed examinations of proper nouns include an explanation of why they function as DPs even when they appear to be bare. This may involve classifying them with other D-type elements (e.g. Anderson (2004) proposes that names, like pronouns and determiners, are 'determinatives') or positing a null determiner (e.g. Thomsen (1997) who proposes that the definite singular meaning of proper nouns is introduced at the phrasal level). The most explicit syntactic account of the behaviour of proper nouns is proposed by Longobardi (1994, 2005) who analyzes them as DPs with a null determiner and N-to-D movement. This movement may take place overtly (Romance) or at LF (English).

Actes du congrès annuel de l'Association canadienne de linguistique 2005. Proceedings of the 2005 annual conference of the Canadian Linguistic Association. © 2005 Jila Ghomeshi & Diane Massam

^{*} We are grateful to G. Longobardi, E. Mathieu and Y. Roberge for their help with this work, as well as members of the audience at the 2005 meeting of the Canadian Linguistics Association.

¹ For this paper we will use the term 'proper noun' to contrast with 'common noun' and will treat both as N⁰s: *Pat* (proper), *dog* (common). We will use the term 'proper name' to refer to both proper nouns and proper DPs. Thus while *Pat* is both a proper noun and a proper name, *Pat Smith*, *Professor Smith*, *The Hague*, *The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce*, and *Dances with wolves* are proper names but not proper nouns.

² We put aside for now the possibility that a bare common noun like *cat* can be a proper name, a fact to which we will return.

Longobardi (2005) provides a semantic motivation for the movement of proper nouns from N to D. First, based on Carlson (1977) he distinguishes between two types of entities at the N⁰-level: OBJECTS, and KINDS. Second, at the DP-level he distinguishes between two types of arguments: CONSTANTS and VARIABLES (Longobardi 2005:27.54). Constant interpretation requires a link between N and D while variable interpretation involves an empty D, i.e. an unselectively bound variable. This taxonomy of N⁰s and DPs serves as the basis for Longobardi's explanation of N-raising. He proposes that proper nouns, which are object-referring, must raise to D because they must eliminate the variable. Common nouns, because they can restrict a variable, do not move by Last Resort. This is schematized as follows:

(2) a.
$$[DP \ N_{object} \dots t]$$
 b. $*[DP \ N_{kind} \dots t]$
 $*[DP \ e \dots N_{object}]$

Longobardi's explanation of why proper nouns raise to D is essentially a semantic one drawing on the difference in meaning between proper and common nouns. The idea that proper nouns are object-referring is consistent with the view that they have reference but no sense, that they are rigid designators (Kripke 1972) or the view found within formal (Montague) semantics that proper nouns denote individuals rather than sets and are of type <e>. Under any of these views, when proper nouns receive a set-based interpretation (e.g. *There are two Pats in my class.*) they have undergone type-shifting.

Given the above, the first question we address in this paper is whether there is a *syntactic* difference between proper and common DPs, apart from their derivation. For instance, let us consider nouns that by virtue of denoting singleton sets (e.g. *sun, moon*) appear with the definite determiner in English (*Look at the*/**a moon*!). Our question is whether there is a difference between the DP that consists of *the moon* and the DP that consists of *Pat*. We note that this question has been addressed in the extensive semantics literature on proper nouns. It has been proposed, for instance, that reference is limited to proper nouns, demonstratives and personal pronouns (which are considered to be "singular terms") while definites and indefinites describe rather than refer (see Lyons 1999:166 for discussion and references). We may ask, however, whether this difference has any syntactic correlate.

The second question we address in this paper concerns proper nouns that appear with determiners. Longobardi (1994, 2005) considers such cases and shows that in Italian the position of the proper noun with respect to a modifying adjective differs depending on whether the determiner is present or absent. Indeed, this is one of the facts that his N-raising account explains:

Italian

- (3) a. Il mio Gianni ha finalmente telefonato The my Gianni finally called up
 - b. Gianni mio ha finalmente telefonato Gianni my finally called up

[Longobardi 2005:5.8a&c]

The presence or absence of determiners is stylistically governed in Italian. There are languages, however, in which proper nouns always appear with a determiner. In Catalan, one such language, the form of the definite determiner differs depending on whether the following noun is common or proper - a distinction that is made only with masculine nouns beginning with a consonant:

Catalan

(4) a. La Maria/la dona 'Mary/the woman'
b. L'Enric/l'home 'Henry/the man'
c. En Joan/ el noi 'John/the boy' [Gili 1967:26]

Longobardi argues that in these cases the determiner is an expletive and that it forms a CHAIN (an expletive-associate relation) with the proper noun. He uses the alternation shown above in Catalan as evidence that the distinction between an expletive and non-expletive definite determiner may be morphologically marked. It is also possible, however, that that the alternation in Catalan is the remnant of a common/proper distinction in the determiner system. Furthermore, as Anderson (2004) points out for Greek, proper nouns in non-argument positions (e.g. vocatives, predicates of nomination) lose their definite marking and, arguably, their definite meaning as well:³

Greek

(5) a. Aftos ine o Vasilis. This is the Basil Vasilis. b. Đen iđa to I.saw the Basil not Onomazete Vasilis Vasili. c. Ton lene he.is.called Basil him they.call Basil d. Vasili! 'Basil!' [Anderson 2004:441]

Our second question is, therefore: are these determiners really expletives? (See Vergnaud & Zubizarreta (1992) and Mathieu (2005) for discussion of expletive determiners.)

The proposal we wish to explore in this paper is that [proper] is a grammatical feature on both nouns and determiners. The presence of this feature in the syntax makes it possible to have NP_{proper} vs. NP_{common} and DP_{proper} vs. DP_{common} and combinations thereof. In arguing for this feature we will also provide an answer for the two questions posed above. That is, we will show that there *is* a proper/common distinction at the DP-level and that proper nouns do *not* occur with expletive determiners but rather regular definite determiners, whether they are overt or null.

³ It should be noted that Longobardi distinguishes argument from non-argument positions and makes it clear that his analysis holds only of proper nouns in argument positions.

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2. Exploring the proposal

2.1 Evidence for a grammatical feature

In this section we explore the proposal that [proper] is a grammatical feature on both nouns and determiners. First, we demonstrate the necessity for a grammatical feature on a par with other more familiar features, which can be grammaticalized differently in different languages, such as gender, number, count/mass etc. First, note that in some languages the proper/common distinction is overtly marked. In Niuean (Polynesian), for example, noun phrases are marked differently depending on whether they are proper or common, as can be seen in the examples in (6) and (7). The differential marking is carried across the entire case paradigm (Seiter 1980, Massam 2000, Massam and Sperlich 2000).

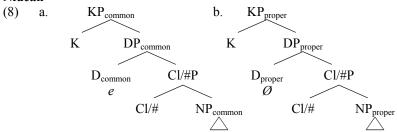
Niuean

(6)	a.	he ERG.COMMON '(the) children'	fānau children	b.	e ERG.PRO 'Sefa'	Sefa PERSefa
(7)	а	e	fale	b	а	Pulevaka

(7) a. e fale b. a Pulevaka
ABS.COMMON house ABS.PROPERPulevaka
'(the) house' 'Pulevaka'

Aside from different case markings, there is an article (e) associated with the common series, that does not occur in the proper series (Massam 2000). The proposed structures for the proper and common KP are given in (8). Note that the determiner in this system does not indicate definiteness, as the DPs in (6a) and (7a) can be either definite or indefinite.

Niuean



Other languages also overtly mark the proper/common distinction. In Kavalan (Formosan), the prefix *ti*- appears on arguments which are both proper and human.

Kavalan

(9) p-um-ukun=ti ti-tina (*ti-)tazuNan hit-AV=Asp TI-mother TI-woman 'Mother has hit a woman.' [Chang, et al 1998:3.5a]

In these languages there are proper/common distinctions that are not purely semantic (i.e. do not mark the distinction between object-referring and kind-referring entities). In Niuean, *who, where* are proper while *what* is common (regardless of whether the answer is proper or common). Names of ships appear to be generally common, though, as are names of institutions such as schools. In Kavalan, human interrogative (*who*) and quantifier pronouns (*everyone*) are marked with *ti*- while non-human interrogative (*what*) and quantifier pronouns (*everything*) are unmarked. The use of the proper marker for *everyone* indicates that proper markers do not indicate rigid designators in the traditional sense.

In both languages we get some variation as to what is considered proper, but both follow the hierarchy of nominal deixis, where, as Longobardi puts it, properness is a scalar property. (Cf. Strang (1962:99), cited in Anderson (2004), "with proper names we have reached a stage part way between noun and pronoun."). In Niuean, the top four are marked proper, while the fifth and sixth are marked as common,

(10) Pronouns
Names of people/places
Names of days/months
Kinship/home-type nouns/local nouns (outside, front, sea, land)
Names of ships, schools, organizations
Common nouns

This shows that the feature [proper], while more semantically predictable than gender, for example, is still not entirely semantically predictable, and must be considered a grammatical feature.

2.2 Evidence that the DPs bear this feature

We have shown that there is need for a feature [proper] in grammar. Next, we argue that this feature has a role at the phrasal level. In Niuean, the proper/common feature is important for word order variation within the noun phrase. Genitive KPs appear post-nominally (11a). They may also appear in prenominal position (11b) but only if they are proper. (Seiter 1980, Kahnemuyipour and Massam, in press). Whatever analysis is proposed for this word order variation, it is clear that [proper] is a feature at the DP level that can determine the possible movements for the DP.

Niuean

(11) a. e leo ha Sione
COMMON voice GEN.PROPER Sione
'Sione's voice/voice of Sione'

b. e ha Sione a leo
COMMON GEN.PROPER Sione LIG voice
'Sione's voice' [Field Notes.97]

Another example of the salience of [proper] at the DP level is from Fijian, where the direct object position is restricted to proper DPs (used for names of people, places, for wh-words, and pronouns) (Alderete 1998). Further evidence is found in Persian, as outlined below.

In Persian bare common nouns can be kind-referring as in (12a) where *xorus* 'rooster' is used as a predicate, or definite, singular as in (12c) where *xorus* refers to the rooster introduced in (12b):⁴

Persian

(12) a. in xorus ast this rooster is 'This is a rooster.'

b. xorus-i bud donyâ-did-e ... rooster-IND be.PAST.3SG world-see.PAST-PART 'There was once a wise rooster ...'

c. xorus na-tavân-est be-goriz-ad ...
rooster NEG-be.able.PAST-3SG
'The rooster was unable to escape ...'

While there is no definite article in Persian, the colloquial (spoken) language has a suffix /-e/ (/-a/ before consonants) that appears on definite singular common nouns and that has been analyzed as occupying D⁰ (Ghomeshi 2003):

(13) a. xorus 'rooster, roosters' b. xorus-e 'the rooster'

Nouns marked with /-e/ share a number of properties with proper nouns. Both must appear with the direct object marker, which prototypically marks definite objects:

(14) a. xorus-a-*(ro) did-am rooster-DEF-OM see.PAST-1SG 'I saw the rooster.'

b. ali-*(ro) did-am
Ali-OM see.PAST-1SG
'I saw Ali.'

⁴ The data in (12b&c) are lines from a children's story entitled *rubah va xorus* 'The fox and the rooster' by Sobhi, a famous Persian story-teller.

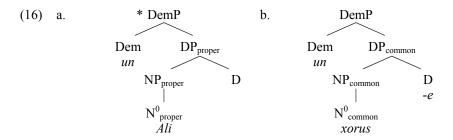
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Both render a copular construction equative and neither can be modified by adjectives nor appear with the indefinite enclitic.

Proper nouns and common nouns marked with /-e/ differ, however, in that the latter can quite naturally appear with demonstratives while the former cannot:⁵

- (15) a. un xorus-a-ro did-am that rooster-DEF-OM saw.PAST-1SG 'I saw that rooster.'
 - b. * un ali-ro did-am that Ali-OM see.PAST-1SG * 'I saw that Ali.'

If we analyze common nouns marked with /-e/ as DPs and if they can serve as complements to demonstratives, this entails that the DPs headed by proper nouns must be distinguished from definite noun phrases headed by common nouns:⁶



We conclude therefore that there is a proper/common distinction at the DP-level.

2.3 Evidence that NPs bear this feature

Having shown that there is a proper/common distinction at the DP-level, we now turn to consider whether this distinction is relevant at the NP-level as well. As Thomsen (1997) points out, the following examples suggest that it is:

⁵ Lyons (1999:122) notes that proper nouns in English can occur with demonstratives and possessives (*this Alex, our Alex*) for affective value. This is less common in Persian, though (15b) is possible with a contrastive reading for the demonstrative ('I saw THAT Ali.'). The point is that the demonstrative in (15a) need not be used for affective value nor used contrastively to sound grammatical.

⁶ The argument is the same regardless of what is assumed about demonstratives. If, for example, demonstratives are not heads taking DPs as their complements but are in the specifier of DP instead (Haegeman & Gueron 1999) proper DPs must still be distinguished from common DPs such that demonstratives can't appear within them.

- (17) a. There are two Susannes in my class.
 - b. The Kellys I have known are tall.
 - c. We had a Larry and an Earl working on reception and the Larry looked like an Earl and the Earl looked like a Larry. [Salon Manager, *Toni & Guy*]

These examples show that proper nouns may appear with numerals, the indefinite article and restrictive relative clauses but still function as names. This phenomenon is pervasive not only in English but in other languages as well. In Kavalan, for example, a proper noun that is modified by a restrictive relative clause cannot appear with the marker *ti*- (see (9) above):

Kavalan

(18) a. pukun-an-ku=ti siqulus-ay tu baRi-ay hit-PV-1SG.GEN=ASP wear-COMP ACC red-COMP

(*ti)-abas TI-Abas

'An Abas who wears red clothes has been hit by me.'

b. pukun-an-ku=ti siqulus tu baRi-ay hit-PV-1SG.GEN=ASP wear ACC red-COMP

> *(ti)-abas TI-Abas

'Abas, who wears red clothes, has been hit by me.'

[Chang, et al 1998:4.9&10]

Similarly, Longobardi notes that in Catalan proper nouns that appear with numerals or restrictive relative clauses must take the common rather than the proper determiner (see (4) above). And in Persian, proper nouns that are modified by restrictive relative clauses are marked with -i-a marker that usually only appears with common nouns.

Thomsen (1997) notes that under the view that the semantic value of a proper noun is an individual, such examples necessitate type-shifting. As an alternative, he proposes a set-based analysis for proper nouns. That is, he takes the semantic value of a proper noun to be a set of elements in the same way that common nouns denote sets. He attributes the individual-denoting property of proper nouns to a null definite singular determiner with which they combine at the phrasal level. The difference between proper and common nouns (N⁰s), for Thomsen, lies in the kinds of sets they pick out. While the extension of common nouns is the set of individuals bearing the propertie(s) expressed by that noun, the extension of a proper noun is the set of individuals bearing a common *name*. He formalizes this as follows (example adapted from Thomsen 1997:103.35):

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(19) a. Kelly: {x: is-named (x, Kelly)} b. dog: {x: dog (x)}
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More generally, we take the proper/common distinction at the N⁰-level to be represented as follows:

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 \begin{array}{ccc} \text{(20)} & \text{a.} & \text{$N_{proper}$:} & \{x\text{: }\textbf{is-named} \ (x, \ N_{proper})\} \\ \text{b.} & \text{$N_{common}$:} & \{x\text{: }\textbf{$N_{common}$} \ (x)\} \\ \end{array}
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One of the virtures of Thomsen's analysis of proper names is that it captures the difference between examples like those in (17) and those in (21):

- (21) a. The museum has bought a Picasso.
 - b. She's a baby Einstein.
 - c. Sidney Crosby is the next Wayne Gretzky.

In examples such as those above, which Thomsen argues involve true type-shifting from proper to common, the set denoted by the noun is based on a property other than bearing a particular name. He suggests that the extension of the noun in these cases is based on an ad hoc property which must be deduced from context and real-world knowledge. It is not an accident, therefore, that this sort of type-shifting typically involves the names of famous people.

2.4 Mismatches

We have seen that [proper] is relevant for syntax at the DP level. Our first hypothesis might be that the feature percolates to the DP from the NP. But we saw above that a proper NP can be embedded under a non-proper determiner or number head, in which case the whole DP has the property of the determiner (common), not of the noun, as in (22).

- (22) a. * There is Susanne in my class.
 - b. There are two Susannes in my class.
 - c. There is a Susanne at the door.

From this, it seems that the definiteness and proper features of the DP come from the determiner, not the NP, since the DP in (22c) patterns like an indefinite common DP in being able to appear in an existential *there* construction.

So far we have seen only non-proper determiners contributing features to DP, over proper names, and it has never been claimed that non-proper determiners are expletives. Now, we argue that the null proper determiner can appear over a common noun to yield a definite proper DP, which contains a common NP. The argument is based on data in (23).

- (23) a. ... that suddenly reached Mole in the darkness, ...
 - b. ... too far to hear clearly what the Mole was calling, ...

(The Wind in the Willows, by Kenneth Grahame)

These examples show a conventional way to name characters where a common noun is treated as a proper noun. Interestingly, the name of the character shifts from proper to common across a single page within the story (23a vs b), but crucially, the properties of being a mole hold identically of both uses. The name does not become truly proper, but still retains the property-denoting character of a common noun.

This is true in other languages as well. In Niuean (24), we find the same literary alternation in stories between proper and common uses of name DPs, where, as in English, the properties denoted by the noun hold of the referent in both cases.

Niuean (from Loeb (1926))

(24) a. Pehe a Kiu ka ...
Said ABS.PROPER kiu if ...
'Kiu said "if ..." (From a story about a Kiu (a plover) and two other characters)

b. Ti pehe e Kule kehe then said ABS.COMMON kule GOAL.COMMON

Veka "..." Veka "..."

'Then the kule said to the veka "..." (From a story about a kule (a purple swamphen) and a veka (a crane).)

As noted above, Niuean DPs are not marked for definiteness but can be freely definite or indefinite. But in (24a), the DP must be definite. The definiteness feature must come from the proper determiner, along with the feature [proper], thus arguing that it is not an expletive.

Similar examples can be found in other languages too. For example, in many languages, including Kavalan, *mother* can be used as a proper or common noun. Arguably, the value for [proper] comes from the determiner rather than the noun in such cases.

Kavalan

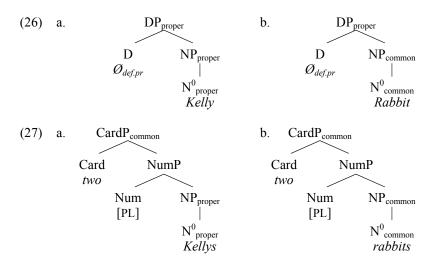
(25) a. p-um-ukun=ti ti-tina (*ti-)tazuNan hit-AV=Asp TI-mother TI-woman 'Mother has hit a woman.'

b. p-um-ukun=ti ti-abas (*ti-)tina-na hit-AV=Asp TI-Abas TI-mother-3S.GEN 'Abas has hit his mother.' [Chang, et al 1998:3.5]

It seems clear from the examples above, that it is possible to have a common NP embedded under a proper determiner, and that the entire DP in such cases acts

like a proper DP. Thus our answer to Question 2 above, as to whether the proper determiner is an expletive, is *no*, since it clearly has properties of [definite] and [proper] which it contributes to the sentence.

These proposals are schematized in (26) and (27). (26a) shows a match between proper determiner and proper NP. (26b) shows a mismatch of a proper determiner and a common NP, where the resulting DP is proper. (27a) shows a mismatch of a common indefinite determiner and a proper NP, where the resulting DP is common and indefinite. (27b) shows a match, where both determiner and NP are common.



These mismatches show that the proper/common distinction is like other semantically-based grammatical distinctions which have canonical forms, but which can be merged with non-matching functional projections to yield a variety of meanings. Thus, proper/common recategorization is like count/mass recategorization, e.g. an apple/apple vs. a wine/wine (Ghomeshi 2003).

4.0 Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that there is need for a grammatical feature [proper] and that this feature has relevance at both the DP and the NP levels. Following Longobardi, we posited a null proper determiner to parallel the familiar common determiner. We argued further, that since it is possible for there to be mismatch at the two levels, so that a common NP can be topped with a proper determiner, and a proper NP can be topped with a common determiner, it is clear that the null proper determiner, contra Longobardi, is not an expletive, but instead contributes distinct semantic information to the DP.

Interestingly, our analysis predicts that proper names with common determiners, such as The Hague and The U.N. (Harley 2003), are common at the DP level, a prediction that is hard to test given the absence of independent tests for [proper] values in English. We leave this issue for further research.

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