

**(In)definiteness in Indonesian: A Case Study**  
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**Indonesian, or Bahasa Indonesia** (ISO classification: ind), belongs to the Austronesian family of languages and is a standardized form of Malay. It is the official language of Indonesia and serves as the lingua franca for the archipelago. As many as 43 million people speak Indonesian as one of their primary languages. The dialect of Indonesian described here is the “mesolectal” variety spoken in Jakarta.<sup>1</sup>

The data reported in this chapter is based on the questionnaire in chapter 3 (the references for the diagnostics used are given there). It draws on the judgments of two native speakers, the second author and Amalia Suryani, whose help we gratefully acknowledge. In presenting our results we avoid explicit comparisons with earlier studies on issues related to (in)definiteness and genericity in Indonesian. The interested reader is directed to the relevant literature where appropriate.

### **1. Setting the Baseline**

In this section we try to establish three things: does Indonesian have a definite determiner? does Indonesian have an indefinite determiner? to what extent does Indonesian encode differences between reference to singular vs. reference to plural individuals in the morpho-syntax of the noun phrase? We use explicit diagnostics to answer these questions.

#### ***1.1. Indonesian Demonstratives & Definites***

There are two types of items in Indonesian that correlate regularly with a definite interpretation, the deictic *itu* ‘that’ and its proximal counterpart *ini* ‘this,’ and a form that originates as a third person genitive pronoun, *nya*.<sup>2</sup> Our goal in this section is to determine how the semantic profiles of these various items align with that of definite determiners of the English kind. We note that there are cases in which the two seem to co-occur, the discussion of which we defer to section 5.1.

The first set of tests tries to determine the ability of a lexical item to be used deictically. Consider (1a) - (1b) in the two deictic contexts given in (i) and (ii):

- (i) spoken by a customer at a flower shop, pointing at the only rose in the set of flowers on sale.

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<sup>1</sup> We discuss issues of register and variety with regard to our data in section 5.3.

<sup>2</sup> We gloss *nya* as NYA but translate it as “the” when appropriate. See section 5.1 for more discussion of this item.

- (ii) spoken by a customer at a flower shop, pointing at one rose out of several roses on sale.

- (1) a. Aku mau ambil bunga mawar itu                    *ok in (i) and (ii)*  
 1SG want take flower rose that  
 “I’ll take that rose.”
- b. Aku mau ambil bunga mawar-nya                    *ok only in (i)*  
 1SG want take flower rose-NYA  
 “I’ll take the rose.”

Both (1a) and (1b) are acceptable in context (i), although the demonstrative in (1a) must be deaccented. This shows the compatibility of *itu* (and by extension also *ini*) with deictic reference. The infelicity of (1b) in context (ii) shows that *nya* cannot pick one element out of several in its N-set, which in this case amounts to requiring its N-set to be a singleton.<sup>3</sup> This suggests that *nya* has at least some affinity with a definite determiner.

This difference in uniqueness requirements is further established by the contrastiveness test, which involves predicates that cannot hold of a single individual at the same time:<sup>4</sup>

- (2) a. Anjing itu tidur waktu anjing itu ber-lari~lari  
 dog that sleep time dog that AV-ITER~run  
 “That dog was sleeping while that dog was running around.”
- b. # Anjing-nya tidur waktu anjing-nya ber-lari~lari  
 dog-NYA sleep time dog-NYA AV-ITER~run  
 “The dog was sleeping while the dog was running around.”
- (3) a. Gadis itu duduk dan gadis itu ber-diri  
 girl that sit and girl that AV-stand  
 “That girl was standing while that girl was sitting.”

<sup>3</sup> There is a variant of (1a) which has the relativizer *yang*: (*bunga mawar*) *yang itu*. This version is only felicitous in context (ii) where it picks out one rose out of several roses. We follow standard practice and gloss *yang* as a relativizer (RELT). See Sneddon et al (2010: 294) and section 5.2 for more discussion.

<sup>4</sup> Using a proper name brings this out clearly: *Fido<sub>i</sub> was sleeping while Fido/he<sub>i</sub> was running around* and *Mary<sub>i</sub> was standing while Mary/she<sub>i</sub> was sitting*. There may be some awkwardness that comes from repeating the name but the sentences remain unacceptable even when the second instance of the proper name is changed to a coreferential pronoun. The important point is that (2a) and (3a) do not suffer the same fate. The contrastive demonstratives in (2a) and (3a) would typically receive prosodic prominence or be accompanied by pointing, as is the case in English.

- b. # Gadis-nya            duduk dan    gadis-nya    ber-diri  
 girl-NYA                sit        and        girl-NYA    AV-stand  
 # “The girl was standing while the girl was sitting.”

Since a single entity cannot be sleeping and running around or sitting and standing at the same time, the acceptability of (2a) and (3a) shows that the sets *dog* and *girl* provide distinct individuals for each occurrence of the *itu*-marked noun phrases within these sentences, aided quite likely by accompanying pointing gestures. In keeping with what we saw earlier, the *nya*-marked nouns in (2b) and (3b) are unacceptable. This confirms that *nya* imposes a uniqueness requirement on its N-set, which then leads to a contradiction.

The contrastiveness test in (2) and (3) provides a segue to the second signature property of demonstratives, namely anti-uniqueness. While *itu* seems neutral with respect to uniqueness in the deictic contexts in (1) - (3), it is unacceptable in sentences like (4) where the nouns refer to unique entities in the wider context:<sup>5</sup>

- (4) a. # Matahari itu    terang hari    ini.  
       sun            that    bright day    this  
       “That sun is bright/shining today.”
- b. # Presiden India itu meng-ada-kan    konferensi    pers hari ini  
       president India    that AV-exist-APPL    conference    press day this  
       “That President of India held a press conference today.”

Some interesting variations emerge when we consider *nya* in these contexts. In (5a), with an adjectival predicate, *nya* is required, while in (5b), with a verbal predicate, it is infelicitous:

- (5) a. Matahari#(-nya)    terang hari    ini.  
       sun-NYA                bright day    this  
       “The sun is bright/shining today.”
- b. Matahari(#-nya)    ber-sinar  
       sun-NYA                AV-shine  
       “The sun shines.”

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible to use *itu* in such contexts in an emotive way. Without suggesting a full parallelism, we note that there are possible uses of the demonstrative in English as well, where non-uniqueness is tolerated: *That John, he’s so crazy*. See chapter 2 for more on this point.

The crucial factor here seems to be the temporal interval during which the predicate holds. If the predicate holds for only a demarcated time-interval *nya* is obligatory. If the predicate is temporally invariant, *nya* is unacceptable. This becomes particularly clear if we take variants of (5a)-(5b) with negation in the predicate, spoken on a cloudy day. While the negative variant of (5a) would be fully acceptable as a true statement, the negative variant of (5b) would be considered logically false. The sentence would convey that the sun generally does not shine and this would clash with world knowledge. One way to capture the intuition is to say that *N-nya* denotes *the N-now* (or at the time of evaluation) while the bare *N* denotes *the N-generally*.

Let us consider the second set of uniquely referring nouns like *President of India* that typically hold of an individual across a substantial time span. Do we get the same difference between *N-now* and *N-generally* with such nouns? We emphasize that the judgments below are about non-contrastive referential uses of *nya*. We defer discussion of other uses to section 5.1:

- (6) a. Presiden India-(#nya) meng-ada-kann konferensi pers  
 president India-NYA AV-exist-APPL conference press

hari ini  
 day this

“The President of India held a press conference today.”

- b. Presiden(-nya) India meng-ada-kan konferensi pers  
 president-NYA India AV-exist-APPL conference press

hari ini  
 day this

“The President of India held a press conference today.”

The unacceptability of *nya* in NP-final position suggests that the determiner-like *nya* is not acceptable with such nouns, raising the possibility of the internal *nya* functioning here as a genitive marker, another one of its common roles (see section 5.1). We therefore simplify the noun phrase and test the possibility of final *nya* in distinct contexts:

- (7) a. (Pada umumnya) insinyur-(#nya) lebih penting  
 PREP general engineer-NYA more important

daripada arsitek (#nya)  
 than architect-NYA

“(In general,) the engineer is more important than the architect.”

- b. Insinyur#(-nya) perempuan  
 engineer-NYA woman  
 “The engineer is a woman.”

Assume that (7a) is uttered in the context of a discussion about the relative importance of engineers and architects. This makes it a generic statement that holds of the two professions rather than of any two individual members of those professions. We find that the nouns cannot be marked by *nya*. An interesting nuance is provided by (7b). If we want to assert that the engineer under discussion is a woman, *nya* is obligatory. A bare noun is not ruled out, but it would convey the somewhat implausible meaning that being a woman is part of the requirements of being an engineer. This reading is facilitated by adding a modal or a phrase like *in this country*, thereby providing pragmatic grounding. This example shows that even though the predicate *be a woman* is individual level, whether or not *nya* is (un)acceptable depends on whether the statement is about *the N-now* or about *the N-generally*.

Returning to *itu/ini* in light of this discussion, we note a use of *itu* that aligns it with the bare noun as signaling *N-generally*. In this use, it seems to defy the anti-uniqueness property we noted in (4a)-(4b). The data in (9), due to Dardjowidjojo (1983: 231), mirrors the examples in (5), but with *itu* instead of the bare noun. We gloss this item NONDEM in such cases:

- (8) Pada umumnya, insinyur itu lebih penting  
 PREP general engineer NONDEM more important  
 daripada arsitek (\*itu)  
 than architect NONDEM  
 “In general, the engineer is more important than the architect.”

- (9) a. Bulan-nya indah  
 moon-NYA beautiful  
 “The moon is beautiful (now).”  
 b. Bulan itu indah  
 moon NONDEM beautiful  
 “The moon is beautiful (in general).”

One point to note in this connection is that the use of *itu* in generic statements does not extend to the proximal variant *ini*. Another point worth noting

is that this use of *itu* seems restricted to subject position, as shown in (9b). We suggest that NONDEM *itu* may be a predication marker rather than a modifier of the NP.

Finally, let us consider bridging cases, where world knowledge establishes a functional relationship between a previously mentioned entity and a unique individual that lies in a part-whole relationship with it, as in (10a), or in a product-producer relationship, as in (10b). The unacceptability of *itu/ini* is in keeping with their consistent demonstrative-like behavior. It is unclear to us whether the *nya* in these examples is acceptable because its N-set is unique, relative to the anchor noun in the first sentence, or whether the effect is due to *nya* functioning as a genitive marker.

- (10) a. Helen        beli    mobil. Setir-nya                    / # Setir  
          Helen        buy    car    steering\_wheel-NYA / steering\_wheel
- itu   rusak.  
          that broken  
          “Helen bought a car. That/the steering wheel was broken.”
- b. Aku            mem-baca    cerita   roman yang    menarik.  
          1SG            AV-read        story   novel   RELT   interesting
- Penulis-nya /**        # **Penulis**        **itu**    orang   Indonesia  
          writer-NYA /        writer            that    person Indonesian  
          “I am reading an interesting novel. The/that author is Indonesian.”

On the basis of the diagnostics above, we conclude that the Indonesian lexical items *itu/ini* have many of the properties associated with standard demonstratives. The distal *itu*, however, also has a generic use that is not standardly associated with demonstratives. The other lexical item *nya* is clearly not a demonstrative, but its precise character is unclear. It is like a definite determiner in requiring uniqueness of its N-set but it functions as a definite in only a subset of the contexts where the English definite is used, sharing that space with bare nouns. We will discuss bare nouns in subsequent sections, making note of *nya* marked nouns as appropriate. We provide a more general assessment of *nya* in section 5.1.

### 1.2. The Indonesian markers of indefiniteness

We now explore whether Indonesian has a lexical item that can be classified as an indefinite determiner, applying three sets of tests that capture the core semantic properties of such determiners. The first involves storytelling, the second, generic readings, and the third, negation.

Let us start with a strategy that Indonesian uses to introduce entities in a discourse, which can then be referred back to as the discourse proceeds.<sup>6</sup>

- (11) a. Beberapa tahun yang lalu...  
 few year RELT ago  
 “A few years ago,”
- ada se-orang nenek tua yang tinggal di  
 EXT one-CL grandmother old RELT live LOC  
 rumah ini.  
 house this  
 “an old woman used to live in this house.”
- b. [Dia / Nenek-nya /Nenek itu] punya anak  
 3SG/grandmother-NYA /grandmother that possess child  
 yang cantik.  
 RELT beautiful  
 “She/The old woman had a beautiful daughter.”

The story starts by introducing an old woman in (11a). There are two things to note in this example. The noun is preceded by the expression *ada* which we gloss as an existential (EXT), in keeping with standard conventions, and it is followed by the relativizer *yang*. With these two items in place, the noun phrase with an overt marker of indefiniteness like ‘one-CL’ is fully acceptable. It can be followed by (11b), which has a noun phrase referring back to the woman introduced in the first sentence. It also introduces another entity, her daughter, again using *yang* preceding the modifier, but not *ada*.

The next test relates to the ability of an indefinite to take scope with respect to negation. In (12a) we use the numeral *satu* ‘one.’ This sentence has a contrastive reading, related to the number of books bought. To convey the specific indefinite reading, the existential construction in (12b) has to be used. Crucially, neither of these options yields the neutral narrow scope reading conveying that no books were bought, for which the bare noun would have to be used (see section 4.2):<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The set of expressions we consider as potential candidates for indefinite determiners are *se-CL* and *satu* in this section. There may be other possible candidates but none of them, to the best of our understanding, pass all the tests for indefinite determiners we consider here.

<sup>7</sup> To get an emphatic narrow scope meaning with a numeral, *I didn’t buy a single book*, a particle *pun* ‘even’ would need to be added at the end of (12a). Note that the interpretation of (12a) also

- (12) a. Saya tidak beli satu buku  
 1SG NEG buy one book  
 “I didn’t buy ONE book.” (I bought more.)
- b. Ada satu buku yang saya tidak beli  
 EXT one book RELT 1SG NEG buy  
 “There is a book that I didn’t buy.”

The final test relates to the expression of genericity. Like the negation test, this test too shows that noun phrases modified by *satu* or *se-CL* do not behave like indefinite noun phrases in English (cf. Dardjowidjojo 1983):<sup>8,9</sup>

- (13) a. # Se-ekor sapi termasuk mamalia  
 one-CL cow included mammal  
 “A cow is a mammal.”
- b. # Satu sapi termasuk mamalia  
 one cow included mammal  
 “A cow is a mammal.”
- (14) a. # Se-ekor anjing biasanya suka daging  
 one-CL dog usually like meat  
 “A dog usually likes meat.”
- b. # Satu anjing biasanya suka daging  
 one dog usually like meat  
 “A dog usually likes meat.”

The sentences in (13) – (14) are not statements about typical members of the species. That is, they are unacceptable under the intended generic reading about arbitrarily chosen members of the species: *a cow is a mammal/a dog usually likes meat*. To get this reading, the bare noun has to be used, as we will show in section 2.

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holds when using the indefinite classifier (*se-CL*) in more formal language instead of *satu* ‘one,’ though we do not show it here.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, numerals do lend themselves to generic readings in cases where cardinality is relevant: *two cooks can spoil the meal*.

<sup>9</sup> If the statement is about a particular individual cow, for example, the existential *ada* would have to be used along with the relativizer *yang*.



The conclusion, based on the three tests above, is that Indonesian does not have a lexical indefinite determiner.

### 1.3. Number distinctions in the nominal spine

We have so far looked at unmarked nouns in Indonesian, but the language also makes use of morphological reduplication, which has been the subject of several investigations (Chung 2000; Sato 2009; Dalrymple and Mofu 2012). In this section, we consider the status of the unmarked and the reduplicated variants with respect to semantic singularity/plurality.

Let us go back to the flower shop scenarios in section 1.1, using reduplicated nouns this time. Neither the variant with *itu* nor the variant with *nya* are acceptable in the original contexts (i) or (ii) which involve a single rose. However, once we adjust the contexts to refer to a plurality of roses, as given in (iii) and (iv), the judgments shift:

- (iii) spoken by a customer at a flower shop, pointing at the only bunch of roses among various bunches of flowers on sale
  - (iv) spoken by a customer at a flower shop, pointing at one bunch of roses out of several bunches of roses on sale
- (15) a. Akumau ambil bunga~bunga mawar itu            *OK in (iii) and (iv)*  
       1SG want take COLL~flower rose that  
       ‘I’ll take those roses.’
- b. Aku mau ambil bunga~bunga mawar-nya.            *OK only in (iii)*  
       1SG want take COLL~flower rose-NYA  
       ‘I’ll take the roses.’

The reduplicated noun, accompanied by *itu* in (15a), is acceptable in both contexts. The *nya* marked reduplicated noun is only acceptable in context (iii), where it refers to the totality of roses. That is, it involves the kind of maximality that plural definite noun phrases in English have. There is some pragmatic awkwardness in using the (reduplicated) common noun if all of the flowers on sale are roses, because it might be more natural to simply point to one set and use plain *itu* ‘those ones.’ Setting that aside, these judgments are consistent with what we had concluded about *N-itu* and *N-nya*, in section 1.1, but for the fact that there is a plurality requirement that comes with reduplication.

It may seem from the above that unmarked nouns associate with singleton sets and reduplicated nouns associate with sets with more than one member. This, however, is not quite accurate. Let us consider a predicate like *tinggal di kota-kota berbeda* ‘live in different cities.’ This predicate requires a plural subject and says

that for any arbitrarily chosen pair of individuals denoted by the subject, the cities they live in are distinct.<sup>10</sup> While the unmarked variant with *ini* in (16a), uttered out of the blue, may not lend itself to this reading, it does so in contexts that establish a plurality of individuals. The reduplicated variant with the demonstrative in (16b) is, of course, also fully acceptable:

- (16) a. Siswa        ini        tinggal di        kota~kota        berbeda  
          student    this     live    in        COLL~city        different  
          “These students live in different cities.”
- b. Siswa~siswa        ini        tinggal di        kota~kota        berbeda  
          COLL~student    this     live    in        COLL~city        different  
          “These students live in different cities.”

What we have so far, then, suggests that the unmarked noun is number neutral while the reduplicated noun is strictly plural. But even this does not give the full picture. Consider the following, without a demonstrative on the subject term, and a reciprocal in the predicate. The statement is intended to be about the behavior of lions in general. It turns out that the reduplicated bare noun is not acceptable on that reading, even though reduplication should satisfy the plurality requirement of the reciprocal:

- (17) (\*Singa~)singa        tidak    saling    menyerang  
          COLL~lion            NEG    RECIP    AV:attack  
          “Lions don’t attack each other.”

The process involved in reduplication clearly introduces something over and above plurality into the equation. That is, unmarked and reduplicated nouns do not form a minimal pair, differing only in the dimension of number. They also seem to differ with respect to implications about existence, with the reduplicated noun requiring contexts in which there is a plurality of individuals with the relevant property. Generic statements are known to also cover contexts where the N-set is empty. Regardless of what the precise reason for the incompatibility of reduplication and genericity may be, we can safely conclude that the process of reduplication introduces aspects of meaning that bleed the possibility of generic reference.

Another tell-tale sign along the same lines is the fact that reduplication does

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<sup>10</sup> There is another predicate with a similar meaning *di kota lain* ‘in a different city,’ which does not impose a similar plurality requirement. It can say about a single individual denoted by the subject that he/she lives in a different city from some contextually salient one. This does not provide the diagnostic we are interested in here.

not lend itself to counting constructions, even when the numeral signals plurality (18a).<sup>11</sup>

- (18) dua (\*buku~)buku  
two COLL~book  
“two books”

Finally, reduplicated nouns do not lend themselves to simple narrow scope readings. The unmarked form in (19a) allows for a neutral narrow scope reading which is compatible with contexts in which the N-set is empty, as well as contexts in which there are members of the N-set. The reduplicated bare form in (19b) is not acceptable, except under a contrastive reading.<sup>12</sup>

- (19) a. Saya tidak beli buku  
1SG NEG buy book  
“I did not buy any book.”
- b. # Saya tidak beli buku~buku  
1SG NEG buy COLL~book  
Intended: “I did not buy any book.”

There is clearly more to say about reduplicated nouns, but we already have sufficient reason not to classify them as simple plural terms. Our conclusion is that the Indonesian unmarked noun is number neutral, while the reduplicated noun denotes a plurality but with additional implications.

We complete the discussion of number in the nominal spine by considering nouns such as *air* ‘water’ that are notionally mass. As expected, they require some kind of measure/container phrase in counting constructions, either before or after the noun, as seen in (20):<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Two points are worth noting here. One, there may be some counting constructions that allow reduplication. Two, counting constructions do not constitute a knock-down argument as there are languages like Turkish and Hungarian where plurals do not participate in counting (see chapter 2).

<sup>12</sup> Note that reduplicated nouns can co-occur with overt markers of definiteness, *ini/itu/nya*, in the negative (as well as the positive). A version of (19b) with *itu* or *nya* assumes the existence of books, none of which were bought. The co-occurrence with *itu/ini/nya* is not unexpected on the picture of definiteness marking and reduplication that is emerging. Reduplicated nouns in Indonesian do not lend themselves to generic construals (cf. 17 and section 2.2).

<sup>13</sup> Indonesian mass nouns like *air* ‘water’ lend themselves to packaged readings in appropriate contexts. For example, *dua air* spoken by someone at a bar will be interpreted as two glasses or bottles of water. This is similar to the way that English *two waters* is interpreted in a similar context.

- (20) a. Siti minum satu/dua \*(gelas) air  
 Siti drink one/two glass water  
 “Siti drank one/two glasses of water.”
- b. Siti minum air satu/dua \*(gelas)  
 Siti drink water one/two glass  
 “Siti drank one/two glasses of water.”

And anticipating our discussion of genericity in section 2, we note the following patterns. Kind-level predication, such as the one in (21a), and generic predication, as in (21b), require mass nouns to be bare (modulo the possibility of NONDEM *itu*). Episodic statements like (21c)-(21d) also allow bare mass nouns. We note that (21c) involves an existential construction using *ada*, which seems to be required for all indefinite subjects in episodic contexts:

- (21) a. air (itu) sangat penting untuk hidup  
 water NONDEM very important for live  
 “Water is very important for living.”
- b. air (itu) meng-alir dari atas ke bawah  
 water NONDEM AV-flow from top to bottom  
 “Water flows from high to low ground.”
- c. Ada air menetes dari keran  
 EXT water AV:drip from faucet  
 “Water was dripping from the faucet.”
- d. Rumah kita kebanjiran air  
 house 1pl ADVERSE:flood water  
 “Our house was flooded by water.”

We have stated that reduplication is a pluralization process, albeit with additional semantic effects. Mass nouns, cross-linguistically, do not undergo pluralization. As expected, then, nouns like *air* ‘water,’ when they reduplicate, introduce reference to different types, amounts or collections.

#### **1.4. Section summary**

We have identified *itu/ini* as demonstratives, as is generally assumed, rather than as definite determiners. We noted one property of *itu* that is not consistent with this characterization, namely its ability to support generic interpretations in subject position, even when the N-set is a singleton. We have noted that *nya* imposes

uniqueness/maximality on its nominal argument in the same way that the English definite determiner does, but it is only acceptable in a subset of contexts in which the English definite is acceptable. We have also established that the Indonesian numeral *satu* ‘one’ and *se-CL* ‘one-CL’ do not function like bona fide indefinite determiners. Finally, we have looked at the morphological expression of number within the noun phrase and determined that the unmarked form is semantically number neutral and that the reduplicated form, though necessarily plural in interpretation, cannot be classified as representing a simple pluralization strategy. It will be important to keep these conclusions in mind as we turn our attention to bare arguments, where there are no morphological markers of (in)definiteness.

## 2. Kind Terms and Genericity

All languages have the ability to make statements about classes of objects rather than directly about the objects themselves. Languages that make a singular-plural distinction can do so with both the singular and the plural. We also know that this distinction cross-cuts with definiteness marking, such that English singular definites and Romance singular as well as plural definites function in these capacities. The goal here is to determine whether Indonesian bare unmarked nouns, which we saw can have number neutral interpretations, function well in kind-level and generic statements. We will also note whether *nya/itu* marked nouns and reduplicated nouns can have these functions.

### 2.1. Reference to Kinds

We start with kind-level predicates, those that cannot apply to an ordinary individual or a set of ordinary individuals but only to the class they belong to. We see that Indonesian unmarked bare nouns are acceptable in such kind-level statements. In each case, *itu* ‘NONDEM’ can be added in subject position, with no perceptible change in meaning:<sup>14</sup>

- (22) a. Dinosaur (itu)                      punah  
        Dinosaur    NONDEM                extinct  
        “Dinosaurs are extinct.”
- b. Anjing        (itu)                      ber-evolusi    dari    serigala        (\*itu)  
        dog            NONDEM            AV-evolve    from    wolf                that  
        “Dogs have evolved from wolves.”

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<sup>14</sup> Note that English bare plurals as the complement of *invent* give rise to a taxonomic (sub-types of X) reading if the sentence is in active voice, but have the standard kind reading in the passive. Note that the Indonesian sentence in (22c) has patient voice, and allows for the relevant reading.

- c. Komputer (itu) di-cipta-kan oleh Babbage  
 computer NONDEM PV-create-APPL by Babbage  
 “Computers were invented by Babbage.”

Unlike the unmarked bare argument, or the version with *itu* ‘NONDEM,’ neither *nya* marked nouns nor reduplicated nouns can function as kind terms:

- (23) a. \*Dinosaurus-nya / \*Dinosaurus~dinosaurus punah  
 dinosaur-NYA / COLL~dinosaur extinct
- b. \*Anjing-nya / \*Anjing-anjing ber-evolusi dari  
 dog NYA / COLL~dog AV-evolve from
- \*serigala-serigala / \*serigala-nya  
 COLL~wolf / wolf-NYA
- c. \*Komputer-nya / \*Komputer-komputer di-cipta-kan oleh  
 computer-NYA / COLL~computer PV-create-APPL by  
 Babbage  
 Babbage

We conclude that a sentence with a bare unmarked form or with *itu* ‘NONDEM’ allows kind reference for bare unmarked subjects in Indonesian. Neither the reduplicated form nor the *nya* marked form can refer to kinds.

## 2.2. Generic Statements

We now look at predicates that can apply to ordinary individuals but when they do, the aspect supports a habitual reading. Our focus here is on generic rather than habitual statements, those that are intended to apply to typical members of the species. We revisit the examples from section 1.2 this time using bare unmarked nouns as well as an optional *itu* ‘NONDEM.’

- (24) a. Sapi (itu) termasuk mamalia  
 cow NONDEM included mammal  
 “Cows are mammals.” / “A cow is a mammal.”
- b. Anjing (itu) biasanya suka daging.  
 dog NONDEM usually like meat  
 “Dogs usually like meat.” / “A dog usually likes meat.”

- c. Komputer (itu) biasanya mahal.  
 computer NONDEM usually expensive  
 “Computers are usually expensive.” / “A computer is usually expensive.”

As in the case of kind-level predication, *nya* marked and reduplicated nouns cannot be arguments of generically interpreted predicates (cf. Dardjowidjojo 1983):

- (25) a. \* Sapi-nya / \*Sapi~sapi termasuk mamalia  
 cow-NYA /COLL~cow included mammal  
 Intended: “Cows are mammals.”/ “A cow is a mammal.”
- b. \* Anjing-nya/\*Anjing-anjing biasanya suka daging.  
 dog-NYA /COLL~dog usually like meat  
 Intended: “Dogs usually like meat.” / “A dog usually likes meat.”
- c. \* Komputer-nya/Komputer~komputer biasanya mahal.  
 computer-NYA /COLL~computer usually expensive  
 Intended: “Computers are usually expensive.”

One final point is worth making here. So far we have seen that a sentence with a bare unmarked subject and one which includes *itu* ‘NONDEM’ are in free variation with respect to kind reference and genericity. However, the two part company in one context. As an answer to a question asking for the name of a mammal, both variants in (24a) are possible. However, if only a short answer is given, the form has to be bare: *Sapi* (\**itu*). We note this fact but do not go into reasons for the reliance of *itu* on the verbal spine here.

We conclude that the unmarked bare form in Indonesian can be used to make generic statements, and this is compatible with the presence of *itu* ‘NONDEM.’ Neither the *nya* marked form nor the reduplicated form can do so.

### 2.3. Section Summary

To conclude, the unmarked bare noun in Indonesian can be used to make statements that only apply to the species as a whole, not to their individual members. And it can also be used to make statements that apply more generally to (typical) members of the species. That is, unmarked forms are kind-denoting terms that can function as arguments of kind level predicates as well as arguments of predicates that express generalizations across classes of individuals. This also applies, modulo ellipsis, to versions with *itu* ‘NONDEM.’ With respect to kind-reference and genericity, *nya* marked and reduplicated nouns are unacceptable. Though reduplicated nouns are associated with plurality, they do not behave like simple plural terms in this regard.

### 3. Bare Arguments as Definites

In this section we probe the ability of bare arguments to have definite readings. In doing so, we try to separate two different aspects of definiteness that we know from studies of English definites: their requirement for uniqueness/maximality (i.e. the presupposition that  $|\max(N)| = 1$ ), and their ability to be anaphorically related to discourse antecedents. These properties hold equally of singular and plural definites.<sup>15</sup>

#### 3.1. Bare Arguments and Uniqueness/Maximality

Let us consider the bare argument's restriction to uniqueness in the singular case and maximality in the plural case. We have already seen in section 1 that nouns that necessarily denote singleton sets such as *sun* or *moon* can appear bare in Indonesian. We saw, of course, that this is sensitive to temporal specification. Bare nouns are required when the predication is temporally unconstrained, what we have informally described as *N-generally*:

- (26) Matahari      ber-sinar  
      sun            AV-shine  
      “The sun shines.”

The uniqueness/maximality effects in temporally constrained contexts are hard to test, since bare nouns are not acceptable in such contexts. For example, the contrastiveness test in (24a) is void because the contributing sentences are independently unacceptable (27b):

- (27) a. # Kuda      lagi    tidur    waktu    kuda    lagi    ber-lari~lari  
      horse      PROG sleep    time    horse    PROG AV-ITER~run  
      # “The horse was sleeping while the horse was running around.”
- b. # Kuda      lagi    tidur  
      horse      PROG sleep  
      “The horse was sleeping.”

---

<sup>15</sup> A statement with predicate P and bare argument N, presupposes (i) in the singular and (ii) in the plural. In any sentence, including negative ones, the use of a definite is infelicitous when these presuppositions are not satisfied in the context (see chapter 2 for discussion and further details):

- (i) If  $N_{\text{SING}} = \{a\}$ ,  $\text{Max}(N_{\text{SING}}) = \{a\}$       (ii) If  $N_{\text{PL}} = \{a, b, a+b\}$ , then  $\text{Max}(N_{\text{PL}}) = \{a+b\}$



Nevertheless, there are some other tests we can apply. Superlatives, by definition, impose uniqueness/maximality on their N-sets and we find that these are fully acceptable with a bare unmarked noun, as shown in (28a):

- (28) a. Siti mem-beri-kan hadiah kepada siswa (yang) ter-pintar  
 Siti AV-give-APPL present to student RELT SUPER-smart  
 “Siti gave a present to the smartest student.”
- b. Siti mem-beri-kan hadiah kepada siswa (yang) cerdas  
 Siti AV-give-APPL present to student RELT clever  
 “Siti gave a present to the smart student.”
- c. Siti mem-beri-kan hadiah kepada **suatu** / **salah\_satu**  
 Siti AV-give-APPL present to certain/ certain\_one  
 siswa (yang) cerdas  
 student RELT clever  
 “Siti gave a present to (a) certain smart student(s).”

In contrast to (28a), the noun in (28b)-(28c) *siswa cerdas* ‘smart student,’ is compatible with a singleton or a plural set of smart students. The unmarked form in (28b), out of the blue, implies that there is exactly one smart student and in contexts where there is a clear plurality of smart students, refers to the full set. The indefinite forms in (28c) are needed to pick one out of a multiplicity of smart students.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, consider a somewhat complex construction involving three scope bearing elements. We are interested in a reading where the unmarked noun takes intermediate scope, between *every physicist* and *two reports*:<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> We have abstracted away from the role of the relativizer *yang* since it holds constant across the full paradigm (see section 5.2 for more on *yang*).

<sup>17</sup> Indonesian has what is known as patient voice, given in (i), as well as agent voice, as given in (29). For present purposes (29) is relevant for testing intermediate scope because the salient reading of (i) gives wide scope to ‘two reports,’ requiring there to be exactly two reports for all physicist-employee(s) pairs:

- (i) Dua laporan di-minta oleh setiap fisikawan dari karyawan yang  
 two report PV-ask by each physicist from employee RELT

kerja untuk-nya  
 work for-3SG.GEN

“Two reports were requested by each physicist from employee(s) who worked for him.”

- (29) Setiap fisikawan minta dua laporan dari karyawan  
 each physicist ask two report from employee
- yang kerja untuk-nya  
 RELT work for-3SG.GEN  
 “Every physicist asked for two reports from employee(s) who worked for him.”

In (29), the pronoun inside the unmarked noun *karyawan yang kerja untuknya* ensures that it must take scope below the universal *setiap fisikawan*. As reflected in the translation, this example manifests the tell-tale uniqueness/maximality we are interested in. The statement as a whole allows for a multiplicity of employees, and given that the noun is semantically number neutral, each physicist could have one or more employee. The important point is that for each physicist, the two reports have to come from however many employees that the physicist has, possibly as collective team reports.

To complete the discussion, we can test these examples with reduplicated forms:

- (30) a. Siti mem-beri-kan hadiah kepada siswa~siswa ter-pintar  
 Siti AV-give-APPL present to COLL~student SUPER-smart  
 “Siti gave presents to the smartest students.”
- b. Setiap fisikawan minta dua laporan dari  
 each physicist ask two report from
- karyawan~karyawan \*(yang) kerja untuknya  
 COLL~employee RELT work for-3SG.GEN  
 “Every physicist asked for two reports from the employee/the employees who worked for him.”

The reduplicated form in (30a) requires a plurality of students who are deemed to be in the topmost set and predicates the gifting of presents to all of them. The same holds for (30b), where each physicist is expected to have a plurality of employees and each of these physicists expects two reports from the totality of his/her employees. We note, again, that there is no effect of voice: (30b) is in agent voice but a variant in patient voice would convey the same maximality implicature.<sup>18</sup>

Our conclusion, therefore, is that there are restrictions on where

<sup>18</sup> The reduplicated form of the word *karyawan* is somewhat awkward. We believe this is due to phonological length and does not affect the point under discussion.

Indonesian bare nouns, unmarked or reduplicated, can be used. But in contexts where they are allowed, they convey uniqueness/maximality.

### 3.2. *Bare Arguments and Deixis*

Deictic contexts are among those where bare nouns are not possible. For example, (31a) cannot be used in any of the flower shop scenarios we discussed in section 1. Those are all contexts in which the desired rose/roses are visible to discourse participants. If roses were not visible, the utterance of (31a) would be felicitous and would convey the desire of the speaker for a non-specific rose or set of roses:

(31) a. Minta      bunga mawar,      pak  
          request   flower rose      sir  
          “I’d like a rose, sir.”

b. Minta      bunga~bunga mawar,      pak  
          request   COLL~flower rose      sir  
          “I’d like roses, sir.”

The reduplicated form, which we have previously identified as having two properties, plurality and some implication of a salient N-set, is acceptable in deictic contexts involving a plurality of roses. Interestingly, however, (31b) seems to require something more than just a plurality of roses. It suggests that the collection of roses include more than one variety and/or color. This adds further support to our claim that reduplication does not represent simple pluralization.

To conclude, unmarked bare nouns cannot be used deictically. For an unmarked noun to pick out one rose or a bunch of roses among a set of other roses/flowers *nya* or *itu* is required, as we saw in section 1.1. The reduplicated form can be used in the deictic context, albeit with some additional interpretive connotations.

### 3.3. *Bare Arguments and Anaphoricity*

The final diagnostic regarding the definiteness of bare arguments is based on their ability to be used anaphorically. We test unmarked nouns first, in a context that establishes singular reference for the antecedents, starting with generic statements about nouns that denote globally unique entities. The discourse in (32) establishes that such bare unmarked nouns can be used anaphorically:

(32) a. Di bumi ada satu matahari dan satu bulan.  
          PREP earth EXT one sun and one moon  
          “Earth has one sun and one moon.”

- b. Bumi            mengeliling-i            matahari(\*-nya)            di  
 earth            AV:revolve-APPL            sun-NYA            PREP
- dalam            365    hari.  
 inside            365    day  
 “The earth revolves around the sun within 365 days.”

When we turn to episodic contexts, the facts are quite different. The first sentence in (33a) introduces a teacher and a nurse in the context of a reception. The sentences in (33b) or (33c) are intended as separate follow-ups to (33a). We see that bare unmarked nouns cannot refer back to the teacher and nurse introduced in (33a), either *itu* or *nya* is needed to establish the anaphoric link.<sup>19</sup>

- (33) Context: Kemarin    di    Universitas    Trisakti    ada resepsi.  
 yesterday    in    University    Trisakti    EXT reception  
 “Yesterday there was a reception at Trisakti University.”

- a. Diantara    tamu~tamu    ada    (se-orang)    guru    dan perawat  
 among    COLL~guest    EXT    one-CLteacher and nurse  
 “Among the guests, there was a teacher and nurse.”

- b. Guru#(-nya/itu)    pake    baju    biru,    perawat-#(nya/itu)  
 teacher-NYA/that    wear    dress    blue,    nurse-NYA/that

baju            merah  
 dress            red

“The teacher wore a blue dress, the nurse a red dress.”

- c. Guru#(-nya/itu)    ber-bicara    dengan perawat    #(itu)  
 teacher-NYA/that    AV-speak    with    nurse    that  
 “The teacher spoke with the nurse.”

This, in and of itself, is not surprising since we know that bare unmarked nouns mean something like *the-N-generally*, which is at odds with the episodic context in (33).

The facts are more nuanced when pluralities are involved. Consider two possible follow-ups to the introductory sentence in (34a), which establishes plural reference for the antecedents. We use reduplicated nouns in (34b) and (34c):

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<sup>19</sup> Speakers prefer a combination of the *itu* and *nya* when there are two anaphoric elements. We take this to be a preference rather than a hard constraint. We therefore do not focus on it in our discussion here.

- (34) Context: *Kemarin di Universitas Trisakti ada resepsi.*  
*yesterday in University Trisakti EXT reception*  
 “Yesterday there was a reception at Trisakti University.”
- a. *Diantara tamu~tamu ada banyak guru dan perawat*  
*among COLL~guest EXT many teacher and nurse*  
 “Among guests, there were many teachers and nurses.”
- b. *Guru~guru\*(-nya/itu) ber-bicara dengan perawat~perawat*  
*COLL~teacher-NYA/that AV-speak with COLL~nurse*  
 “The teachers spoke with the nurses.”
- c. *Guru~guru(-nya/ itu) duduk di belakang*  
*COLL~teacher-NYA/that sit LOC behind*
- perawat~perawat (itu)*  
*COLL~nurse that*  
 “The teachers sat behind the nurses.”

We now find an interesting difference between the two follow up sentences. Before we discuss this difference, it is worth noting that the predicate in (34b), ‘talk-to,’ most naturally lends itself to a distributive reading, indicating that separate teacher-nurse pairs are in conversation. The predicate in (34c), ‘sit behind,’ very naturally lends itself to a collective reading where the group of teachers is sitting behind the group of nurses. The distributive reading, however, is not completely ruled out where every teacher sits behind some nurse.

Let us now consider the anaphoric potential of the reduplicated forms in (34b) and (34c). In (34b), the subject term requires *itu* or *nya*, while this is merely an option in (34c). Turning to the object reduplicated noun, the demonstrative is optional in (34c) but there is a preference for the bare reduplicated form in (34b). There is clearly more to be said on this issue but we restrict ourselves to making the rather modest claim that the bare reduplicated noun in Indonesian can have anaphoric readings, even if such readings are not always available.

Let us consider one further example to bring out the anaphoric potential of bare unmarked nouns:<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Note that NYA occurs on the verb in (35c). Here it serves as a nominalizer, a use that we discuss in section 5.1.

- (35) a. Kemarin di pesta menteri kebudayaan ada  
yesterday LOC celebration minister culture EXT  
  
banyak artis.  
many celebrity  
“Yesterday, at the minister of culture’s celebration there were many celebrities.”
- b. Terang aja! Kan menteri kebudayaan  
clear only TAG minister culture  
  
ber-gaul-nya dengan artis (itu)  
AV-socialize-NYA with celebrity DEM  
“Of course! The minister of culture socializes with celebrities/those celebrities.”

The sentence in (35a) introduces a plurality of celebrities at an event. The follow-up sentence in (35b), without the demonstrative, makes a statement about the minister’s activities with celebrities in general. The follow-up sentence with the demonstrative makes a statement about the minister’s activity with the group of celebrities at the event.

We have so far discussed episodic contexts using nouns that denote animate, specifically human, entities. The restrictions we observed also apply to the inanimate domain, although we do not give examples here.

We therefore conclude that bare nouns can be anaphoric in generic statements when the antecedent refers to globally unique entities. They cannot be anaphoric to a singular or a plural antecedent in episodic contexts. While bare reduplicated forms also share this property, in their case it is a tendency to require demonstratives rather than a hard fact. We have left it open under what conditions they can or cannot be used anaphorically.

### ***3.4. Section Summary***

Our overall assessment is that Indonesian bare arguments have definite-like properties but the picture is not a simple one. The complexity arises from distinctions in the temporal specification of noun phrases that both unmarked and reduplicated variants are sensitive to, albeit in different ways. Once those aspects are factored in, their status as definites with respect to the core properties of uniqueness/maximality and anaphoricity becomes easier to pin down.

Bare unmarked as well as reduplicated forms induce uniqueness/maximality effects and can be categorically identified as definite along this dimension. In anaphoric contexts, bare unmarked nouns can be used anaphorically in generic

statements about globally unique nouns. They cannot be used anaphorically in episodic contexts with singular or plural antecedents. They also cannot be used deictically to refer to contextually salient entity/entities. Bare reduplicated nouns can be used anaphorically in episodic contexts with plural antecedents but such cases are restricted. This is consistent with their ability to refer deictically, though in doing so, they introduce a requirement of variation at the sub-type level.

We therefore classify Indonesian bare nouns as bona-fide definites with respect to uniqueness/maximality effects and as restricted definites with respect to anaphora.

#### 4. Bare Arguments as Indefinites

In this section we consider the status of Indonesian bare arguments as indefinites. There are multiple facets to indefiniteness and our discussion will involve several categories without necessarily exhausting the full range of distinctions that have been made in the literature on this topic. One important distinction we have to be mindful of, when we talk about scope interactions in particular, is between a definite and a wide scope indefinite. A key factor in separating them is the size of the N-set. A singular definite presupposes that  $|N| = 1$ , while a singular indefinite does not impose any requirements on the size of the N-set.<sup>21</sup> The reader is asked to keep this in mind.

##### 4.1. Bare Arguments and Storytelling

The first diagnostic has to do with the bare arguments' ability to introduce discourse referents, thus providing the "novelty" counterpart to the "familiarity" associated with definite expressions. Storytelling contexts provide a classic frame to test this property. We return to an example from section 1.2 as a starting point, repeated here with bare arguments. We note that the bare argument in (36), which requires the existential expression *ada* is fully acceptable:

(36) Beberapa        tahun    yang    lalu...  
       few                year    RELT   ago

\*(ada) nenek            tua        yang    tinggal di        rumah ini.  
       EXT grandmother old        RELT live    LOC    house this  
 "Once upon a time, an old woman used to live in this house."

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<sup>21</sup> In any sentence, including negative ones, a definite is undefined when the context does not satisfy the presupposition that there is a unique maximal entity in the N-set. An indefinite, on the other hand, is always felicitous -- it will lead to a judgment of truth or falsity depending on the facts on the ground (see chapter 2 for discussion):

(i) If  $N_{SING} = \{a\}$ ,  $Max(N_{SING}) = \{a\}$                       (ii) If  $N_{PL} = \{a, b, a+b\}$ ,  $Max(N_{PL}) = \{a+b+c\}$

The requirement that novel bare arguments must co-occur with *ada*, however, is a fact about indefinite subjects in Indonesian. We can see this by considering a question like (37a) and the answer in (37b), which clearly introduces two new entities into the discourse, a toy and a big dog, but not in subject position:

- (37) a. Lihat apa di luar?  
 see what LOC outside  
 “What do you see outside?”
- b. Siti ng-asih mainan ke anjing besar  
 Siti AV-give toy to dog big  
 “Siti is giving a toy to a big dog.”

We have noted earlier that Indonesian bare unmarked nouns are not good with temporally bounded contexts but it turns out that certain modified nouns are exempt from this restriction. We do not have a clear sense of what the governing factors are. For example, if *anak tinggi* ‘tall child’ instead of *anjing besar* ‘big dog’ is used, the relativizer *yang* has to be added to make it acceptable. Setting these complications aside, we can see that the direct object and the indirect object position in (37b) both have unmarked bare nouns.

We can draw a similar conclusion from the following, where the unmarked bare noun *pulitikus* ‘politician’ can be interpreted as a novel discourse entity:

- (38) a. Habis ceramah, guru itu mengenal-kann  
 after lecture teacher that AV:know-APPL  
 pulitikus kepada murid-nya.  
 politician to student-NYA  
 “After the talk, the teacher introduced a politician to the/his student.”
- b. Habis ceramah, guru itu mengenal-kan salah  
 after lecture teacher that AV:know-APPL among  
 satu murid-nya kepada pulitikus  
 one student-NYA to politician  
 “After the talk, the teacher introduced one of his students to a politician.”

For completeness we note that bare nouns can also be used to introduce novel plural entities. The examples in (39) have the same noun, *anjing* ‘dog,’ as in



(37b) but can be interpreted as referring to a plurality of dogs: <sup>22</sup>

(39) Di kampung itu, ada anjing di jalan  
PREP village that EXT dog PREP street  
“In that village, there is a dog/are dogs in the street.”

Di kampung itu, anjing lari-lari di jalan.  
PREP village that dog iter~run PREP street  
“In that village, dogs run around in the street.”

We note however that this is not always possible. For example, (36) requires reduplication for a plural interpretation of ‘old woman.’ We leave for further work the restrictions on when a bare noun or a reduplicated noun is required for plural reference.

We conclude that Indonesian unmarked bare nouns can introduce discourse referents and in this respect display a characteristic property of indefinites. Whether reference can be to pluralities is subject to some variation. We know from section 1.2 that overt indefinites also have this property. An interesting question is whether there is a systematic preference for one over the other in such contexts. We do not try to settle this issue here.

#### ***4.2. Bare Arguments and Negation***

We now turn to negative sentences where the regular English indefinite potentially has two readings, one where it takes scope over negation (A:  $\exists\neg$ ) and one where the negation takes scope over it (B:  $\neg\exists$ ). Given a plurality of individuals denoted by the common noun, the first requires that the predicate P not hold of at least some individual or individuals but nothing prevents P from applying to some others. The second requires that P not apply to any individual in the set denoted by the common noun. This reading is compatible with the N-set being empty, while the wide scope reading is obviously not. Both indefinite readings are compatible with uniqueness of the N-set, but unlike definites, do not require that the N-set be a singleton.

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<sup>22</sup> The possibility of generic interpretation also facilitates plural reference for bare nouns, as shown below:

(ii) Siti suka ng-asih mainan ke anjing  
Siti like AV-give toy to dog  
“Siti likes giving toys to dogs.”

(iii) Siti suka ng-asih buku ke siswa  
Siti like AV-give book to student  
“Siti likes giving books to students.”

Let us consider where Indonesian bare unmarked nouns stand with respect to the wide scope existential reading ( $\exists\neg$ ). To make things concrete, consider the following set of sentences that elaborate on the reason an employee gives for being fired from their job in a laundry service:

- (40) Aku di-pecat karena ...  
 1SG PV-fire because  
 “I was fired because...”
- a. Aku gak lihat noda di baju-nya  
 1SG NEG see stain LOC shirt-3SG.GEN  
 “I didn’t see any stain on his/her shirt.”
- b. Ada noda di baju-nya yang aku gak lihat  
 EXT stain LOC shirt-3SG.GEN RELT 1SG NEG see  
 “There was a stain on the shirt that I didn’t see.”

The unmarked noun in (40a) implies that the speaker did not see any stains, the  $\neg\exists$  reading. This would be a situation in which the firing would be justified, from anyone’s perspective, unless there were no stains to begin with – a logical possibility that this sentence allows for. The unmarked noun in (40b) is accompanied by the existential expression *ada*. This says that there was a stain and that the worker missed it. It is consistent with there being other stains that were taken care of and implies that this was a boss with a zero tolerance policy. It is also consistent with there being no other stains than the one the employee did not see. These facts show that *noda* ‘stain’ in Indonesian can be an argument of an existential predicate like *ada* and when it does, it can then have a wide scope indefinite reading.<sup>23</sup>

To drive home the point that Indonesian bare unmarked nouns cannot take scope over negation without the existential construction, we can add a phrase that makes explicit that the predicate does not hold of some N but does hold of some others. The intended reading  $\exists x$  [multiplication-problem(x)  $\wedge$   $\neg$ solve(speaker, x)  $\wedge$   $\exists y$ [multiplication-problem(y)  $\wedge$  solve(speaker, y)]] requires the presence of an overt indefinite like *satu* ‘one’:

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<sup>23</sup> In order to get a wide scope  $\exists\neg$  reading for unmarked nouns without *ada*, *salah satu N* ‘one of N’ has to be used, at least in certain cases.

- (41) # Aku belum menyelesaikan masalah perkalian  
 1SG not\_yet AV:finish-APPL problem multiplication
- di ujian (itu). Aku tidak khawatir. Kan aku  
 LOC test that 1SG NEG nervous PRT 1SG
- menyelesai-kan semua masalah perbagian dan  
 AV:finish-APPL all problem division and
- masalah~masalah perkalian yang lain  
 COLL~problem multiplication RELT other
- Intended: “I didn’t finish a multiplication problem on the test. I think I’ll do well – after all, I did all the division problems and all the other multiplication problems.”

We conclude that the unmarked bare noun in Indonesian allows for the B reading ( $\neg\exists$ ) but not the A reading ( $\exists\neg$ ), and that they are unlike regular indefinites of the English kind in this respect. Reduplicated nouns also only allow the B reading ( $\neg\exists$ ) but they have the additional requirement that the N-set not be empty.

#### 4.3. Bare Arguments and Partitive Specificity

We now test to see if it is possible to use a bare noun to refer to a subset of individuals from a previously mentioned set:<sup>24</sup>

- (42) Siti beli sepuluh buku dan tiga majalah.  
 Siti buy ten book and three magazine
- # Dia kasih teman-nya buku dan kepada saudara-nya  
 3SG give friend-3SG.GEN book and to sibling-3SG.GEN
- majalah. Sisa-nya dia simpan untuk diri-nya sendiri.  
 magazine rest-NYA 3SG keep for self-3SG.GEN self
- Intended: “Siti bought ten books and three magazines. She gave a book to her friend and a magazine to her sister. The rest she kept for herself.”

Bare arguments lead to an inconsistent discourse. To make it consistent, the numeral *satu* ‘one,’ or possibly *se-buah* ‘one-CL’ has to be used. That is, bare unmarked nouns do not allow for the partitive specificity that is needed in the given

<sup>24</sup> We structured these examples to avoid the awkwardness of repeating the noun, instead of using a pronoun, in the second sentence by having two objects that were bought.

context. The same resistance to partitive specificity can be seen in the following discourse, which has animate nouns:

- (43) a. Aku lihat ada            banyak guru    dan perawat    di            ruangan.  
           1SG see    EXT            many teacher and nurses    LOC    room
- b. # Aku            minta tolong sama guru  
       1SG            ask    help    with    teacher  
       Intended: “I saw many teachers and nurses in the room. I asked for help from a teacher.”

The context sets up a plurality of teachers/nurses and the intended reading refers to one of them. As indicated, this is not possible with the bare unmarked noun. An overt indefinite like *salah satu guru/perawat* ‘one of the teachers/nurses’ would have to be used in (43b).<sup>25</sup>

Now let’s consider a minimal variant where the reduplicated forms are used in the follow-up. The reduplicated forms in (44c), *guru-guru* and *perawat-perawat*, refer to the full set of teachers and nurses mentioned in the previous sentence (44a):

- (44) a. Aku lihat ada            banyak guru    dan perawat    di            ruangan.  
           1SG see    EXT            many teacher and nurses    LOC    room
- b. # Aku            minta tolong sama guru~guru  
       1SG            ask    help    with    COLL~teacher  
       Intended: “I saw many teachers and nurses in the room. I asked for help from some teachers.”

We conclude that Indonesian bare arguments, unmarked or reduplicated, are not compatible with contexts that require partitive specificity and are, in this respect, unlike English indefinites.

#### 4.4. Bare Arguments and Referential Specificity

Indefinite terms are known to interact with opaque contexts created by intensional verbs like *want*. Here we test to see if Indonesian bare arguments show the same interaction. Consider a context in which Bambang is planning a visit to Los Angeles. He has never been there before and is excited at the prospect. He is particularly interested in movies and it is natural for him to want to meet movie stars during his visit. Starting with the unmarked noun we can imagine two distinct

<sup>25</sup> The indefinite marker *seorang* ‘one’ could also be used to make the same point but it is part of the formal register.

scenarios in which (45a) could be used. In one, Bambang is indifferent about which actor he meets, any will do. This is the narrow scope reading of the indefinite (want >  $\exists$ ) given in (45b). In another scenario, Bambang wants to meet a particular movie star but he hasn't told anyone who that is. This is the wide scope/specific reading of an indefinite ( $\exists$  > want) given in (45c). The test crucially relies on the speaker knowing that it is clear to both interlocutors that there are many actors in Los Angeles and the context is such that it does not make any particular actor salient:

(45) Context: Bambang is planning a trip to Los Angeles, a city known to have many movie stars.

a. Bambang pingin ketemu sama bintang filem.  
 Bambang want meet with star film  
 "Bambang wants to meet a movie star."

b. Dia gak peduli yang mana  
 3SG NEG care RELT which  
 "He doesn't care which one."

Available: *Want* >  $\exists$

c. Aku gak tau yang mana  
 1SG NEG know RELT which  
 "I can't tell you which one it is."

Unavailable:  $\exists$  > *want*

In order to get the wide scope indefinite reading given in (45c), the noun phrase has to have a determiner like *satu N* 'one N.' The same effect is seen with bare unmarked nouns in the indirect object position (46a):

(46) a. Bambang pingin kasih duit kepada pengemis  
 Bambang want give money to beggar  
 "Bambang wants to give money to a beggar/beggars."

b. Bambang pingin kasih duit kepada pengemis~pengemis  
 Bambang want give money to COLL~beggar  
 "Bambang wants to give money to the beggars/a particular group of beggars."

The sentence in (46a) says that Bambang's desire is to give money to a beggar, any beggar. Not unexpectedly, *salah satu N* 'a certain N' is needed if his desire is to help a particular beggar. The reduplicated form in (46b) introduces the

requirement of a plurality; it can imply that there is a salient group of beggars and Bambang wants to help all of them. This is not a wide scope indefinite reading ( $\exists > want$ ) but a definite reading of the reduplicated noun. However, (46b) can also be about Bambang's desire to leave money to a particular group of beggars. This counts as a specific indefinite reading of the bare reduplicated form since there are several groups of beggars in the context, but only one group is the likely beneficiary. The bare noun in (46a), if it refers to a plurality, does not have this reading.

One final extension of the paradigm is worth noting. The following examples with a bare unmarked noun *orang geblek* 'idiot' has the implausible reading that it is part of the daughter's desire to be married to an idiot, not that it is the parent's characterization of the person the daughter wants to marry:

- (47) Anak perempuan-ku            pingin kawin sama orang geblek  
 child woman-1SG.GEN            want marry with person stupid
- terus aku gak tahu gimana            nge-larang-nya  
 then 1SG NEG know how            AV-forbid-3SG.GEN
- “My daughter wants to marry an idiot (any idiot) and I don't know how to stop her.”

For the more plausible reading *orang geblek itu* 'that idiot' is needed. Note that this is not the kind of overt indefinite we have been talking about in relation to wide scope existential readings. We set this issue aside, referring the reader to emotive readings, especially in connection with demonstratives, discussed in chapter 2.

Our conclusion is that Indonesian unmarked nouns cannot have referential wide scope readings, but reduplicated forms can.

#### **4.5. Bare Arguments and Scopal Specificity**

So far we have looked at contexts where there were no scopal elements at play (sections 4.1 and 4.3) or only one other such element (sections 4.2 and 4.4). We did not see any clear evidence of the  $\exists$  force of the bare argument taking wide scope, though we did see some evidence of the uniqueness associated with bare arguments project beyond the other scope bearing element. In this section, we further test possibilities for the  $\exists$  force of bare arguments to scope out by considering a sentence with two scopal elements and embedding the bare argument inside one of them, i.e. inside a potential syntactic island. We should state at the outset that our findings here are very tentative but we present them nevertheless in order to provide a starting point for further investigations.

To make things concrete, let us assume that there are three students taking a journalism class, Dewi, Bambang and Annisa. There are three important topics being discussed in class: tax reform, health care, and voting rights. There are a total of nine articles assigned: 3 articles on tax reform, 4 articles on health care, and 2 articles on voting rights. Against this background consider the following sentence, where the X is intended as a placeholder that can be either filled with an overt determiner or left blank in the case of bare noun phrase corresponding to “an important topic”:

- (48) Untuk reset ini, tiap mahasiswa baca  
 for research this each student read
- tiap artikel tentang [X] topik (yang) penting]  
 every article about topic RELT important
- Intended: “For this research, every student read every article about an important topic.”

We now provide three readings that are available for the English noun phrase “an important topic” in contexts of this kind and try to determine the form of the corresponding noun phrase in Indonesian. Our goal is to see whether the Indonesian bare noun can have the readings available to the English indefinite.

The first reading we test is given in (49a):

- (49) a. Narrow scope reading:  $\forall$ student  $\forall$ article  $\exists$ important-topic

The narrow scope reading requires every student to read every article on any important topic. That is, (48) will be true on this reading if Dewi, Bambang and Annisa all read all nine articles. Our finding is that this reading is only possible if [semua topik (yang) penting] ‘all important topics’ is used. Specifically, the bare [topic (yang) penting] is unacceptable as a description of this situation. Interestingly, neither of the indefinite forms, *satu/salah satu* is acceptable either.

The second reading of interest is the intermediate scope reading:

- (49) b. Intermediate scope reading:  $\forall$ student  $\exists$  important-topic  $\forall$ article

The intermediate scope reading requires that for each student, there be a possibly different topic, such that the student read all the articles on that topic. That is, (48) will be true if Dewi read all 3 articles on tax reform, Bambang read all four articles on health care, and Annisa read the two articles on voting rights. That is, no student needs to have read all nine articles for (48) to be true. The sentence will be false on the intermediate scope reading if Dewi only read 2 of the articles on tax

reform, even if Bambang read the four articles on health care and Annisa read both articles on voting rights. Once again, we find that the bare [topic (yang) penting] is unacceptable. The indefinite noun phrase [*salah satu* topic (yang) penting] is needed for the intermediate scope reading.

Finally, we look at the wide scope  $\exists$  reading:

(49) c. Wide scope reading:  $\exists$  important-topic  $\forall$  student  $\forall$  article

The wide scope reading requires that there be at least one topic such that all the students read all the articles on it. That is, (48) will be true on this reading if Dewi, Bambang and Annisa all read the 4 articles on health care. This reading requires the noun phrase to have the indefinite *satu*, it is unacceptable with the bare form [topic (yang) penting].

We conclude that Indonesian bare unmarked arguments, with or without *yang*, do not support intermediate or wide scope  $\exists$  readings (see section 5.2 for further discussion of scope effects related to *yang*). Somewhat unexpectedly, they also do not support the narrow scope  $\exists$  reading. As we said at the start, these conclusions should be subjected to further testing but we feel confident in asserting that Indonesian bare unmarked nouns do not show the scopal flexibility that is associated with indefinite noun phrases in English. We have not tested reduplicated forms systematically but our initial findings suggest that they show some flexibility in this regard and may allow for intermediate and wide  $\exists$  readings.

#### **4.6. Bare Arguments and Differentiated Scope Readings**

In the last four sub-sections we looked at readings potentially available to indefinites and tried to determine whether Indonesian bare arguments had the same set of readings. We now look at a diagnostic that tests for the availability of a reading for bare arguments that is not available to overt indefinites. This is important in determining whether bare arguments, when they have indefinite readings, can be categorized as a sub-type of regular indefinites.

Consider (50), which has a one-time predicate *kill* with the adverb *repeatedly*, the combination of which is only plausible if distinct individuals can occur as the theme of each killing. We see in (50a) that overt indefinites lead to the implausible reading that the same rabbit or set of rabbits participate in multiple events of being killed. In contrast, the unmarked bare arguments allow the plausible reading. We also test this in subject position, where the sentence in (50b) is intended to describe the effects of a particularly harsh winter. And in (50c) we add another variant of (50a) with fish being fried during a period of time that would not make sense for any single (set of) fish. All three examples show that unmarked nouns have the plausible differentiated scope reading that is not available to ordinary indefinites:



- (50) a. Bambang ber-ulang~ulang mem-bunuh (#se-ekor) kelinci  
 Bambang AV-ITER~repeat AV-kill one-CL rabbit  
 “Bambang kills rabbits repeatedly.”
- b. (#se-ekor) kelinci mati terus waktu musim dingin  
 one-CL rabbit die continue when season cold  
 “Rabbits kept dying all winter.”
- c. Bambang meng-goreng (#se-buah/#satu) ikan selama  
 Bambang AV-fry one-CL/one fish for  
 dua hari  
 two day  
 “Bambang fried fish for two days.”

To complete the picture, we add variants with the reduplicated form, which shows an interesting subject-object asymmetry. Let us consider (51a) vs. (51b) first. The possibly weak requirement of existence is enough to rule out the differentiated scope reading for the reduplicated direct object in (51a) but the status of the subject reduplicated form in (51b) is sensitive to the presence or absence of the particle *pada*. Without it, the reduplicated form implies the existence of a group of rabbits such that they died one by one. With *pada* something akin to the intended reading emerges:

- (51) a. # Bambang ber-ulang~ulang mem-bunuh kelinci~kelinci  
 Bambang AV-ITER~repeat AV-kill COLL~rabbit  
 “Bambang kills/was killing the rabbits repeatedly.”
- b. Kelinci~kelinci (pada) mati waktu musim dingin  
 COLL~rabbit PL die time season cold  
 “(The) rabbits kept dying all winter.”
- c. Bambang meng-goreng ikan~ikan selama dua hari  
 Bambang AV-fry COLL~fish for two day  
 “Bambang fried (different types of) fish for two days.”

We do not try to investigate the role of the verbal element *pada* in bringing out the generic-like reading of (51b) but note that (51c), which is structurally similar to (51a), does allow a plausible differentiated scope reading. Why should this be the case? The only difference we can put our finger on is that (51c) is only

acceptable if different types of fish are being fried, a context that is easy to imagine. On the other hand, our normal understanding of rabbits does not allow us to access different types of rabbits, or at least not in the context of the effects of a harsh winter. Based on these facts, we take the bare reduplicated form to allow differentiated scope readings, with some additional restrictions.

The differentiated scope readings of bare arguments, unmarked and reduplicated, are important because they establish that bare arguments cannot be considered a sub-type of regular indefinites in Indonesian. Rather, the indefinite readings associated with them need to be recognized as having independent status.

#### **4.7. Section Summary**

Storytelling contexts tell us that Indonesian unmarked bare arguments do not have a familiarity requirement and can be used to introduce novel discourse entities. Contexts supporting differentiated scope also tell us that Indonesian bare arguments can have narrow indefinite readings of a kind that indefinite noun phrases do not have. The other contexts we looked at, those where regular indefinites can have several scopal readings, show that Indonesian bare arguments do not fit the profile of indefinites in this respect. The conclusions for reduplicated nouns are more nuanced. While they seem to display a presupposition of existence and sometimes also maximality, they often do not behave like simple indefinites with an additional plurality dimension. They further show that they have additional aspects to their meaning, such as reference to sub-types, that restrict their narrow scope behavior in comparison to unmarked nouns. This section therefore argues against a simple-minded description of Indonesian bare arguments as indefinites.

### **5. Further Considerations**

In this section we consider some factors that affect the interpretation of noun phrases in Indonesian. We list two that surfaced as we applied the diagnostics in the questionnaire on (in)definiteness, the particle *-nya* and the relativizer *yang*. The discussion below should shed some light on the choices we made in drawing the conclusions that we did in sections 1–4 but we hasten to add that we do not intend this to be an exhaustive list of such factors. We end the section with a brief discussion of the relation between the Indonesian we have reported on and other related languages.

#### **5.1. *NYA* vs. the Definite Determiner**

We have noted several respects in which *nya* has properties very similar to that of definite determiners. And yet we did not classify it as a definite determiner (pace Sneddon et al. 2010; Winarto 2016; Little and Winarto 2019, for example), choosing to gloss it simply as *NYA*. We now provide some of the reasons behind our decision.

It is well-established in the literature that *nya* has developed from the historical third singular possessor *nya*, and retains that reading even in the modern language. We saw an example of this earlier, which we repeat in (52a), and another example in (52b):

- (52) a. Presiden(-nya)      India    meng-ada-kan konferensi      pers  
           president-NYA      India    AV-exist-APPL conference      press

hari ini  
 day this

“The President of India held a press conference today.”

- b. Aku ketemu            sama    keluarga-nya Dewi    kemarin.  
    1SG meet            with    family-3S.GEN Dewi    yesterday

“I met with Dewi’s family yesterday.”

An interesting point to note here is that *nya* occurs on the possessed noun rather than on the possessor as in the more familiar genitive marking of the English kind. That said, there is no obstacle in a language developing a definite marker from a genitive morpheme and the two co-existing side by side.

Taking that hypothesis, we see first of all that *nya* goes not only with common nouns like engineer etc., it also goes with proper names and pronouns:

- (53) Selamat            malam.            Venny-nya      ada?  
       [good            evening]            Venny-nya      EXT

“Good evening. Is Venny in?”

(Sneddon 2006, 38)

Although English does not typically allow definite determiners with proper names, this pattern is attested in a wide range of languages, Greek and Catalan to name two. A uniform semantics for the two cases have been proposed for such languages. Our hesitation in applying this approach to Indonesian is that the combination of proper name + *nya* is subject to various pragmatic factors. Consider, for example, (54), where speaker B cannot respond to speaker A’s statement using *Dewi-nya*, even though Dewi is clearly known to speaker and addressee:<sup>26</sup>

- (54) a. A: Aku            ketemu            sama    Dewi(#-nya)    kemarin.  
           1SG    meet            with    Dewi-NYA      yesterday

“I met with Dewi yesterday.”

<sup>26</sup> Proprial determiners across languages, of course, do not behave the same. Our point here is to show that Indonesian does not follow any of the well-known patterns for proprial determiners (see Matushansky 2008, for details).



We refer the reader to Kaufman (this volume) for a discussion of *nya* and *itu* from a typological perspective.

### 5.2. The relativizer *YANG*

In many of our examples we have used *yang*, glossing it as a relativizer, and indicating that it is either optional or obligatory. We see it occurring with nouns in various positions, including subjects, objects and other positions. We have not directly imputed any particular semantic contribution to the presence or absence of *yang* but focused on whether the noun phrase as a whole can be interpreted as definite or indefinite with respect to the specific diagnostic under discussion. In this section, we try to connect it to what has been noted in the rather substantial literature on this expression (Van Minde 2008; Yap 2011, among others).<sup>27</sup> We elaborate briefly on two points here, its obligatoriness in some contexts and its semantic and pragmatic contributions in some.

One context where *yang* is obligatory are noun phrases where the head noun is modified by a verbal element, as in (58a). This contrasts with its optionality when the modifier is adjectival, as in (58b). It is also obligatory in noun phrases lacking a head noun (58c):

- (58) a. mobil            \*(yang)            jalan  
           car                RELT                go  
           Intended: “car that runs”
- b. mobil            (yang) biru  
           car                RELT    blue  
           “blue car/car that is blue”
- c. \*(yang)        besar  
           RELT            big  
           Intended: “the big (one).”

Let us now consider a few contexts where its presence or absence has an impact on meaning. When a set of options is explicitly given, as in (59), the question and its possible answers have to employ *yang*. That is, a D-linked context in the sense of Pesetsky (1987), requires *yang*:

- (59) A: Ada            nasi    putih    dan    nasi    kuning.            Kamu mau  
           EXT            rice    white    and    rice    yellow.            2SG    want

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<sup>27</sup> See also Kaufman (2018) for a discussion of similar expressions in Indonesian languages more broadly. For a historical perspective see Adelaar (1992) and Yap (2011).

yang mana?  
RELT which

“There’s white rice and yellow rice. Which one do you want?”

B: Aku mau \*(yang) kuning  
1SG want RELT yellow  
“I want the yellow (rice).”

There is also a semantic effect that *yang* has on questions that are not D-linked:

(60) Siapa (yang) datang?  
who RELT arrive  
without *yang*: “Who arrived?”  
with *yang*: “Who is it who arrived?”

Without *yang*, an answer denying the presupposition that someone arrived is possible: *no one arrived*. With *yang*, this seems difficult.

We note further that *yang* can occur with demonstratives:

(61) (yang) itu dia  
RELT that him  
“(the one that is) that is him”

Consider a situation where we are looking for a suspect. If you happen to see the person on the street, you can only use the version without *yang*. If, however, you are viewing a number of suspects in a line-up, you can point to an individual and say (61) with *yang*.

Finally, consider a bare modified noun, with and without *yang*, in object position:

(62) a. Dia mau pelihara anjing yang besar  
3SG want keep dog RELT big  
“He wants to keep a/the big dog.”

b. Dia mau pelihara anjing besar  
3SG want keep dog big  
“He wants to keep a big dog.”

As we can see from (62a), *yang* itself does not determine whether the noun phrase can be interpreted as definite or indefinite.<sup>28</sup> Its absence in (62b), however, results in an obligatory narrow scope indefinite reading, consistent with our conclusions about referential non-specificity of bare arguments in section 4.4. The presence of *yang* does not take away from the non-specificity. For example, suppose Bambang goes to a shelter, decides to adopt one of the many dogs there and that dog happens to be big. He tells his friend about this and later the friend wants to relate this to someone else. This would be a specific indefinite reading. The speaker cannot use (62a). The context that supports the indefinite reading of (62a) is one where the speaker contrasts Bambang's desire for a big as opposed to a small or medium size dog. That is, the meaning remains non-specific but *yang* emphasizes size as an important aspect of the sort of dog that is the object of desire.

To sum up this section, although we have followed the convention in glossing *yang* as a relativizer, we recognize that this is an imperfect description and our brief discussion is only intended to convey some idea of its rich and varied character.

### 5.3. *The broader language context*

At the outset of this chapter we described the language variety under examination as “mesolectal Jakartan” (a variety which is between the formal standard and the daily informal language used between native-born working class Jakartan peers). “Mesolectal Jakartan,” although it has never been carefully delineated, is a term commonly employed by linguists navigating the complexities of Indonesian diglossia (see Abas 1987; Moeliono and Grimes 1995; Steinhauer 1994, for good introductions). It must be noted, however, that there is variation in register across our examples. Certain scenarios lend themselves more naturally to a more formal style while others are perfectly acceptable in the more colloquial variety. The differences can often appear large, as seen in the comparison between the formal (28a), repeated here as (63a), and a possible colloquial Jakartan equivalent, shown in (63b).

- (63) a. Siti mem-beri-kan hadiah kepada siswa yang ter-pintar  
       Siti AV-give-APPL gift to student RELT SUPER-smart  
       “Siti gave a gift to the smartest student.”
- b. Siti kasih kado sama mahasiswa yang paling pintar.  
       Siti give gift with student RELT SUPER smart  
       “Siti gave a gift to the smartest student.”

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<sup>28</sup> If the head noun is dropped from (62a), as in *dia mau pelihara yang besar* ‘he wants to keep the big one,’ the indefinite reading is lost.

First of all, almost every content word, including the prepositions introducing the indirect object, employ a different lexeme. There is also morphological simplification in the colloquial language such that the mesolectal correlates of the formal actor voice prefix, among other affixes, may be null. We have noted in several places that certain markers associated with indefiniteness (e.g. *se-CL*) are associated with the standard language. There are also differences in the use of the demonstratives and *nya* across registers, some of which are discussed by Sneddon (2006). For instance, *nya* may be used on definite NPs in the mesolectal variety where *itu* is used in the more formal language. Despite these considerable differences, we have tried here to make our claims as general as possible and believe that most, if not all, our points hold across both the Jakartan mesolectal and standard varieties, once lexical differences are accounted for. Further study should reveal the full extent of these register differences with regard to the phenomena investigated here.

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