



**HAL**  
open science

## Demonstratives and definiteness in Babanki

Pius W. Akumbu, Peter Jenks

► **To cite this version:**

Pius W. Akumbu, Peter Jenks. Demonstratives and definiteness in Babanki. Workshop on Definiteness in the Niger-Congo Noun Phrase, Department of Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley, May 2023, Berkeley, CA, United States. hal-04155582

**HAL Id: hal-04155582**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04155582v1>**

Submitted on 7 Jul 2023

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

# Demonstratives and definiteness in Babanki<sup>1</sup>

Pius W. Akumbu (LLACAN) & Peter Jenks (UC Berkeley)

Workshop on Definiteness in the Niger-Congo Noun Phrase | UC Berkeley | May 1, 2023

## SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

- Most Bantoid languages (this includes Bantu) lack the obligatory marking of unique definiteness, and allow bare nouns in definite contexts, with some exceptions (e.g. Mokpe, A20, Becker 2018: 100-105)
- However, dedicated anaphoric definite markers are widespread:
  - Anaphoric marker *-tè* in Eton (A71, Van de Velde 2008)
  - Anaphoric demonstratives in Lingala (C30B; Meeuwis & Stroeken 2012), Limbum (Grassfields Bantu; Becker 2018: 112-114), and Nchane (Bantoid, Boutwell 2018)
  - Anaphoric definite preprefix/augment in Runyankore-Rukiga (JE13; Asimwe 2014)
- Babanki (Grassfields Bantu; Cameroon) makes a three-way distinction in definiteness:

(1) Unique definites are expressed with **bare nouns**

**chwìchwì**    **ó**    nyùʔ-ù  
**1.sun**       DJ    burn-PROG  
'The sun is intense.'

(2) Exophoric demonstratives: *-ì* 'that', *-èn* 'this'

zhís    **Bú**    y-ì  
feed    **9-dog** **9-DEM**  
'Feed [**that** dog]! [pointing]'

(3) Anaphoric demonstratives: *(n)á-ì* 'that (anaph) entity', *(n)á-èn* 'this (anaph.) entity'

a. wùwì    ā-tsén    tē    vī    kwèn    à    mò    ā-ŋgēŋ    zóyn  
1.woman    1-certain    P2    enter    enter    to    1SG.OBJ    5-house    1.yesterday  
'Yesterday, a woman walked into my house.'

b. mà    ó    kó    n-tímè    yèn    **wùwì**    **(n)á-y-ì**  
1sg    DJ    NEG    N-ever    see    1.woman    AN-1-DEM  
'I'd never seen [**that/the** woman] before.'

- The anaphoric demonstrative series in (3) is undescribed in previous work on Babanki
- We examine the Babanki definiteness marking patterns from the perspective of the comparative semantic tests in Schwarz (2013).
- The pattern of unique definiteness marking is distinct from typologically similar languages, and suggests Babanki lacks a covert unique definite marker
- The anaphoric vs. exophoric distinction is extended to given vs. new information

---

<sup>1</sup> Most of the data for this study have been provided by the first author and checked with five other native speakers of Babanki Tungo (Kejom Ketinguh) during WhatsApp conversation sessions between March and April 2023. Thanks to Vivian Ba-ah, Regina Phubong, Cornelius Wuchu, Stanley Amuh, and Benjamin Nkwenti for sharing their knowledge of Babanki with us. The four WhatsApp sessions dedicated for this purpose lasted 2 hours. Some of the data have been taken from existing literature as well as from texts collected by the first author in 2014 and 2015.

- The availability of contrastive focus on demonstratives shows that the difference cannot be described simply in terms of information structure

## SECTION 2. BABANKI NOUN PHRASES

- Babanki is a member of the Ring subgroup of Grassfields Bantu, with close relatives such as Kom, Oku, Bum and Men in Central Ring, Aghem and Isu in Western Ring, Lamnso' in Eastern Ring, and Bamessing in Southern Ring, among others (Akumbu, Hyman & Kießling 2020).
- Previous related work on the Babanki noun phrase includes studies by Hyman (1979, 1980), Akumbu (2011, 2016, 2019), Akumbu & Chibaka (2012), and Akumbu & Kießling (2022).
- Much of this work has centered around the morphology and tone of elements within the noun phrase, as Babanki has a full Bantoid-like noun class system.
- Babanki has twelve noun classes which form nine genders based on distinct agreement patterns which index noun classes by prefixes or proclitics across a full range of syntactic targets such as modifiers within the noun phrase, e.g. pronominal possessives (POSS), nominal possessives (ASS), demonstratives (DEM) and attributive adjectives (ADJ), as shown in Table 1.
- Noun class membership is, to a large extent, overtly marked by nominal affixes in the noun itself. Class 10 alone is marked by a suffix while the remaining classes have (zero) prefixes.

Table 1: Babanki noun class system and some agreement markers (Akumbu & Kießling 2022: 4)

class <sup>2</sup>	affix	exemplar	POSS <i>óm</i> 'my'	DEM <i>èn</i> 'this'	ADJ <i>fí</i> 'new'	AM 'of the...'	gloss
1	Ø-	tsòŋ	àŋ-óm	y-èn	á-fí	à=	thief
2	və-	və-tsóŋ	əvw-óm=á	v-èn=á	və-fí=vá	vá=	thieves
3 <sup>3</sup>	ə-	ə-lyəŋ	əŋ-óm=á	y-èn=á	ə-fí=ŋá	á=	bamboo
5 <sup>4</sup>	ə-	ə-wúm	əŋ-óm=á	y-èn=á	ə-fí=ŋá	á=	egg
6	à-	à-wúm	àŋ-óm=á	y-èn=á	à-fí=ŋá	á=	eggs
6a	mə-	mə-ŋín	əmw-óm=ə	m-èn/m-èn=má <sup>5</sup>	mám-fí=mə	mə=	birds
7	kə-	kə-mbò	ək-óm(=ká)	k-èn/k-èn=ká	kə-fí=ká	ká=	bag
8	ə-	ə-mbò	əvw-óm=á	v-èn=á	ə-fí=vá	á=	bags
9	Ø-	byí	əŋ-óm	y-èn	á-fí	à=	goat
10	-sá	byí- <sup>+</sup> sá	əf-óm(=sá)	s-èn/s-èn=sá	sə-fí=sá	sá=	goats
13	tə-	tə-lyəŋ	ətŋ-óm(=tá)	t-èn/t-èn=tá	tə-fí=tá	tá=	bamboos
19	fə-	fə-ŋín	əfw-óm(=fá)	f-èn/f-èn=fá	fə-fí=fá	fá=	bird

<sup>2</sup> Standard Bantu numbering has been used since the 12 noun classes that exist in Babanki correspond to those reconstructed for Proto-Bantu (Meeussen 1967).

<sup>3</sup> A merger of classes 3 and 5 in Babanki can be seen in their identical schwa prefixes as well as various agreement markers. While it is not completely transparent, the pairing with plural classes provides a basis to distinguish between the two singular classes, i.e. a 3~5 SG which pairs with a 6 PL is categorized as 5, whereas a 3~5 SG which pairs with 13 is categorized as 3.

<sup>4</sup> The numbering of noun classes is not continuous, as 4, 11, 12, 14-18 are missing because no Babanki nouns are assigned to these classes, i.e. these classes do not exist in Babanki.

<sup>5</sup> It is puzzling that *-m* is retained after *n* in class 6a. All consultants we checked with did this consistently.

- Noun phrase syntax follows the order N- {POSS.PRO-ADJ / ADJ-POSS.PRO} -PART-QUAN-DEM-NUM-INT-REL (Akumbu & Kießling 2022: 25):

(4) Babanki noun phrase syntax (Akumbu & Kießling 2022: 25)

- a. fə-ɲín    əfw-óm    fə-ɲífə    fə-ɲí    fə-tsén    f-èn    fə-mù?  
 19-bird    19-1SG    19-white    19-new    19-certain    19-DEM    19-one  
 ‘This one other new white bird of mine.’
- b. mə-ɲín    mə-m-ɲífə    mə-wén    mə-m-ɲí    m-ì    mə-n-shə?  
 19-bird    6a-N-white    6a-3SG    6a-N-new    6a-DEM    6a-N-which  
 ‘How many of those new white birds of his?’
- c. mə-ɲín    mə-m-ɲífə    mə-wén    mə-m-ɲí    m-ì    mə-m-bò á    wù    yì    yén  
 19-bird    6a-N-white    6a-3SG    6a-N-new    6a-DEM    6a-N-two    REL    2SG    P1    see  
 ‘Those two new white birds of his that you saw.’

- Previous work on Babanki describes three demonstratives /-èn/, /-ì/, and /-ì...á/ (Hyman (1980: 246-247, Akumbu & Kießling 2022: 5-6)
- The third demonstrative /-ì...á/ is actually the distal demonstrative with a relative operator (5c):

(5) Babanki demonstratives

- a. kə-fú    k-èn=(kə)    shè?-è    nóʔə    ɲkàyn  
 7-medicine    7-DEM=(7.ENC)    work-PROG    really    well  
 ‘This medicine (near speaker) is very effective.’
- b. kə-fú    ky-ì=(kə)    kó    bəŋ  
 7-medicine    7-DEM=(7.ENC)    NEG    be.good  
 ‘That medicine (near listener) is not good/effective.’
- c. kə-fú    ky-ì=(kə)    á    wù    tà    zén    kó    méè    lí  
 7-medicine    7-DEM=(7.ENC)    REL    2SG    P2    NEG    7-SM    finish    P0  
 ‘That medicine which you bought is finished.’

- Possessive pronouns and demonstrative pronouns can move to a prenominal position for focus – we will return to this construction in section 5.

SECTION 3. TWO TYPES OF DEFINITENESS

- Schwarz (2009, 2013) shows that languages, including German, Fering, and Lakhota distinguish unique vs. anaphoric definiteness:

- (6) a. Unique definites (aka *weak definites*, *plain definites*)  
 Reference to a contextually unique individual; does not require prior reference.
- b. Anaphoric definites (aka *strong definites*)  
 Reference to an entity which is an established discourse referent

- In (7a), *Kanzler* is assumed to be unique, so the unique article is used; in (7b), the context necessarily includes several ministers, so only the anaphoric definite is felicitous
- (7) Weak versus strong articles in German (Schwarz 2009, p. 41)
- In der Kabinettsitzung heute wird ein neuer Vorschlag vom **Kanzler** erwartet.  
In the cabinet meeting today is a new proposal by-**the<sub>weak</sub>** **chancellor** expected  
'In today's cabinet meeting, a new proposal by the chancellor is expected.'
  - In der Kabinettsitzung heute wird ein neuer Vorschlag #vo-m/von **dem Minister** erwartet.  
In the cabinet.meeting today is a new proposal by-**the<sub>weak</sub>**/ by **the<sub>strong</sub>** minister expected  
'In today's cabinet meeting, a new proposal by the minister is expected.'
- Languages without definite articles also mark this distinction, e.g. Thai (Jenks 2015) and Mandarin (Jenks 2018); see also van der Wal (2010) on Makhuwa (P.31) for an apparent instance of this pattern in Bantu
    - Bare nouns are restricted to unique definite contexts (8)
    - Demonstratives must be used for anaphoric reference (9)
- (8) Bare noun required in Mandarin unique definite (Jenks 2015)
- (#Na/#zhe ge) **Taiwan de zongtong** hen shengqi  
that/this} CLF Taiwan MOD president very angry  
'The president of Taiwan is very angry.'
- (9) Demonstrative required in Mandarin narrative sequence (Jenks 2018)
- jiaoshi l{i} zuo-zhe yi ge nansheng he yi ge nüsheng  
classroom inside sit-\textsc{prog} one \sc{clf} boy and one \sc{clf} girl,  
'There is a boy and a girl sitting in the classroom...'
  - wo zuotian yudao #(na ge) **nansheng**  
I yesterday meet that CLF boy  
'I'd met the boy yesterday.'
- Following the analysis of German in Schwarz (2009), Jenks (2018) analyzes Mandarin bare nouns as plain/unique definites (derived via a type-shift or null D), while demonstratives bear an index which can refer to a previous discourse referent, forcing them to be directly referential.
- (10)
- Mandarin bare noun:  $\iota x.PRESIDENT-OF-TAIWAN(x)$   
'the unique individual  $x$  s.t.  $x$  is the president of Taiwan'
  - Mandarin Dem-Clf-N:  $\iota x.BOY(x) \ \& \ x=g(1)$   
'the unique individual  $x$  s.t.  $x$  is a boy and the discourse referent located at index 1'
- Languages such as Akan (Owusu 2022, this workshop) and Guebie (Jenks, Sande, and Zimmermann, this workshop) have definite articles which extend into anaphoric territory, pointing to problems for this simple analysis
  - We will see that the Babanki distinction is similar to Mandarin—bare nouns are never used in anaphoric context—but also different in that there is limited evidence for the unique definite interpretation in (10a).

#### SECTION 4. BARE NOUNS IN BABANKI

- Bare nouns are used in existential indefinite and predicative contexts:

(11) EXISTENTIAL INDEFINITE

*Context:* Out of the blue, identity of the exact cat is not known

**bùshí** t̀ tsòŋ nyàm è ghóm  
1.cat P2 steal 9.meat 9.AM 9.POSS  
'[A cat] stole my meat.'

(12) PREDICATIVE INDEFINITE

Shyèn dí? **ngésè** **njìsè**  
Shien COP excellent 1.teacher  
'Shien is [**an** excellent teacher].'

- Bare nouns are also used in generic and kind-level noun phrases:

(13) GENERIC CONTEXT

a. **byí-só** kí? **ndóŋ-só**  
goat-10 have horn-10  
'[Goats] have [**horns**].'

b. **bú-só** kùù **víí**  
dog-10 like 2.people  
'[Dogs] like [**people**].'

(14) KIND-LEVEL CONTEXT

a. **kè-ntsíf** kó n-zító á kējòm  
7-carving SM.7 N-start in Kejom  
'[Carving] was invented in Kejom.'

b. **fè-sés** f́ dí? á kwù tá kē-dìŋ  
19-pepper SM.19 COP in Oku very 7-much  
'There is much [**pepper**] in Oku.'

- Bare nouns are also used in unique definite contexts (15), including unique predicates (16)

(15) UNIQUE DEFINITE

**chwìchwì** ó nyà?-à  
1.sun DJ burn-PROG  
'The sun is intense.'

(16) UNIQUE PREDICATE

Shyèn dí? nó?è mbi kè-njèf kó wùwì á ̄-ŋgàŋ  
Shien COP really first 7-length 7.AM woman in 5-house  
Shien is [**the** tallest woman in the house].

- Additional examples of unique definite bare nouns will be provided in the following section, when we systematically examine definiteness contexts in Babanki.

## SECTION 5. DEFINITENESS AND DEMONSTRATIVES

- This section reviews the tests for unique definites (5.1), anaphoric definiteness (5.2), and exophoric definiteness (5.4)
- We also examine the contexts for shared knowledge definiteness (5.3), argued in some previous work to constitute a distinct definite type; we see that Babanki allows anaphoric demonstratives in such contexts.
- The sentences are based on Dawson and Jenks (to appear); labels for the different contexts are drawn from Schwarz 2009.

### SECTION 5.1 TESTS FOR UNIQUE DEFINITENESS

- **Immediate situational uniqueness** is the most basic context for unique definiteness, as it establishes a specific context where there is only one discourse referent that matches the descriptive content of the noun:

(17) *Context:* You are visiting me at my house, and you know that I only have one child. You ask me how my family is doing.

- a. # è-sóŋ      é      wāyn    **y-ì**      é      záf-é  
      5-tooth    5.AM    1.child   5-DEM   5.SM   hurt-PROG  
      The child has a toothache. (infelicitous in context)
- b. # è-sóŋ      é      wāyn    **(n)á-y-ì**      é      záf-é  
      5-tooth    5.AM    1.child   AN-5-DEM   5.SM   hurt-PROG  
      The child has a toothache. (infelicitous in context)
- c. è-sóŋ      é      wāyn      é      záf-é  
      5-tooth    5.AM    1.child   5.SM   hurt-PROG  
      ‘The child has a toothache.’

(18) *Context:* You are visiting me at my house, and you know that I only have one child. I also know that you speak very loud. I urge you:

- a. # ká      zhòm      **wāyn**    **y-ì**  
      NEG    wake up    1.child   1-DEM  
      ‘Don’t wake up the **child!**’ (also in infelicitous in the context)
- b. # ká      zhòm      **wāyn**    **(n)á-y-ì**  
      NEG    wake up    1.child   AN-1-DEM  
      ‘Don’t wake up the **child!**’ (also in infelicitous in the context)
- c. ká      zhòm      **wāyn**  
      NEG    wake up    1.child  
      ‘Don’t wake up the **child!**’

- Bare nouns must be used in contexts where this is the first mention of the child.
- The demonstrative and anaphoric definite marker cannot be used in this context.
- (18b) is fine if preceded by a sentence such as *A child is staying with us*

- **Larger situation uniqueness** describes contexts where the shared cultural knowledge of the discourse participants establishes that the referent is unique; bare nouns are required in these contexts, but demonstratives (both anaphoric and exophoric) can be used in certain contexts. We will return to such uses below.

(19) LARGER SITUATION DEFINITE

- a. Amstòŋ è n-diʔí mbi wiʔ ó-<sup>+</sup>kúʔ á sàŋ (\*y-i)  
 Armstrong DJ N-be first 1.person INF-climb to 1.moon (1-DEM)  
 ‘Armstrong was the first person to fly to the moon.’
- b. **chwìchwì** ó nyùʔ-ù  
 1.sun DJ burn-PROG  
 ‘The sun is intense.’

- Bare nouns express uniqueness as the default case (19a-b)
- We will see in section 5.3 that demonstratives can occur on these unique definites in ‘affective’ contexts

- **Part-whole bridging:** Babanki requires exophoric demonstratives in part-whole bridging contexts, despite the fact that they require a bare noun in other languages, e.g., Mandarin (Jenks 2018)

(20) PART-WHOLE BRIDGING

- a. yès t̄ yèn chós á k̄-nt̄int̄in kó ā-lóʔ  
 1P.EXCL P2 see 1.church in 7-middle 7.AM 5-village  
 We found a church in the middle of the village.
- b. **k̄-tú** **ky-í(=k̄)** zh̄èŋk̄ò  
 7-head 7-DEM(=7.ENC) bend  
 [The roof] was a little crooked.
- c. \***k̄-tú** kó zh̄èŋk̄ò  
 7-head 7 bend  
 [The roof] was a little crooked.
- d. \***k̄-tú** (n)á-ky-í(=k̄) zh̄èŋk̄ò  
 7-head AN-7-DEM(=7.ENC)bend  
 [The roof] was a little crooked.

- (20b) can be used in a context where one is not pointing.
- Bare noun (20c) and anaphoric demonstrative (19d) are impossible in such contexts

- This difference carries over to contexts of **situation-dependent covariation**, where again Babanki requires exophoric demonstratives (21a-c) and prohibits bare nouns (21d) and anaphoric demonstratives (21e); Mandarin requires bare nouns (Jenks 2018)

(21) SITUATION-DEPENDENT COVARIATION

- a. n̄óʔá á-ŋgáŋ k̄ó yès t̄ lyě **k̄-tú** **ky-í(=k̄)**  
 really 5-house 9.all 1P.EXCL P2 look 7-head 7-DEM(=7.ENC)  
 In every house, we looked up [**the** roof].
- b. n̄óʔá ā-lóʔ è-k̄ò yès t̄ gh̄àynt̄á f̄òyn ày-í  
 really 5-village 5-all 1P.EXCL P2 visit 1.fon 5-DEM  
 In every village, we visited [**the** chief/mayor].



- c. nóʔó ch̀i klās kóó **njìʔsə** y-í η-gàʔ-à  
 really inside 1.class 1.all 1.teacher 1-DEM N-talk-PROG  
 In every classroom, [**the** teacher] was talking.
- d. \*nóʔó é-ηgéh kóó yès t̀è lyě **kə-tú** kó  
 really 5-house 9.all 1P.EXCL P2 look 7-head 7  
 \*In every house, we looked up [**the** roof].
- e. \*nóʔó é-ηgéh kóó yès t̀è lyě kə-tú **ná-ky-ì(=kə)**  
 really 5-house 9.all 1P.EXCL P2 look 7-head AN-7-DEM(=7.ENC)  
 \*In every house, we looked up [**the** roof].

- (21a-c) allow readings with different roof/chief/teacher for each house/village/classroom.

- The unavailability of bare nouns in (20) and (21) suggests bare nouns do not have access to a unique definite reading at all (cf. 10a)
- Babanki may resort to some other interpretation for bare nouns (such as an existential interpretation); exophoric demonstratives must be able to facilitate covariation in these cases, perhaps via indexing a location (as in deferred ostension contexts, cf. Nunberg 1993).

## SECTION 5.2 ANAPHORIC DEFINITENESS

- The **consistency test** distinguishes unique and anaphoric definites from demonstratives (Löbner 1985, Dayal 2004, Maroney 2019)

(22) *Context:* We are in a room with several sleeping children. One child is clearly asleep, and one child is clearly not asleep. Pointing at each of these, I say:

- a. wàyn y-í bínè ká wàyn y-í bínè  
 1.child 1-DEM sleep.PROG NEG 1.child 1-DEM sleep.PROG  
 [**That** boy] is sleeping and [**that** boy] is not sleeping. (ok while pointing)
- b. # wàyn (n)á-y-ì bínè ká wàyn (n)á-y-ì bínè  
 1.child AN-1-DEM sleep.PROG NEG 1.child AN-1-DEM sleep.PROG  
 # [**The** boy] is sleeping and [**the** boy] is not sleeping.'

- *yí* can discriminate individuals, while *náyì* is a kind of definite
- The infelicity of *náyì* shows that it always refers to the same individual relative to a particular context – the signature of definiteness.

- Narrative sequences constitute the core anaphoric definite environment. Here, the (n)a- marker is required for anaphoric reference; use of the exophoric demonstrative or bare noun results in distinct interpretations

(23) NARRATIVE SEQUENCE 1, *Context:* Out of the blue.

- a. wùwì ẽtsèn t̀è v̀i kwèn à mò ẽ-ηgēη zóyn  
 1.woman 1.certain p2 enter enter to 1SG.OBJ 5-house yesterday  
 Yesterday, a woman walked into my house.
- b. mà é kó n-tímè yèn wùwì ná-y-ì  
 1sg DJ NEG N-ever see 1.woman AN-1-DEM  
 I'd never seen [**that/the** woman] before.

- c. mà é ko n-tímè yèn wùwì y-ì  
 1sg DJ NEG N-ever see 1.woman 1-DEM  
 ‘I’d never seen [**that** woman] before.’ = a new woman being pointed to, not the woman in (22a)
- d. #mà é ko n-tímè yèn wùwì  
 1sg DJ NEGN-ever see 1.woman  
 ‘I’d never seen [**a** woman] before. = A general comment

(24) NARRATIVE SEQUENCE 2, *Context*: Out of the blue.

- a. tsòŋ tẹ tsòŋé mbví  
 1.thief P2 steal 9.chicken  
 ‘A thief stole a chicken.’
- b. vó gá? lá mbví (n)á-y-ì tǎ ŋ-kwá?à  
 3PL say QUOT 9.chicken AN-9-DEM P2 N-sick  
 ‘They say that [**that/the** chicken] was sick.’
- c. vó gá? lá mbví y-ì tǎ ŋ-kwá?à  
 3PL say QUOT 9.chicken 9-DEM P2 N-sick  
 ‘They say that [**that** chicken] was sick.’ = must be a different chicken from (23a)
- d. vó gá? lá mbví tǎ ŋ-kwá?à  
 3PL say QUOT 9.chicken P2 N-sick  
 ‘They say that [**a** chicken] was sick.’ = a general comment, likely not the same chicken as in (23a)

(25) NARRATIVE SEQUENCE 3, *Context*: There is a boy and a girl sitting in the classroom...

- a. wàyn é wùwì y-ì tǎ nyá? á bèn è wàyn é wùlím y-ì  
 1.child 1.AM 1.woman 1-DEM P2 sit at side 1.AM 1.child 1.AM 1.man 1-DEM  
 ‘[**that/the** girl] was sitting next to [**that/the** boy].’
- b. mà tẹ bwùmtẹ wàyn é wùlím ná-y-ì zōyn  
 1SG P2 meet 1.child 1.AM 1.man AN-1-DEM 1.yesterday  
 ‘I met [**that/the** boy] yesterday.’
- c. mà tẹ bwùmtẹ wàyn é wùlím y-ì zōyn  
 1SG P2 meet 1.child 1.AM 1.man 1-DEM 1.yesterday  
 I met [**that** boy] yesterday. = one that we are pointing at, again, not the boy in (24a)
- d. mà tẹ bwùmtẹ wàyn é wùlím zōyn  
 1SG P2 meet 1.child 1.AM 1.man 1.yesterday  
 ‘I met [**a** boy] yesterday.’

- In **President sentences** such as (26), unique definites allow reference to different individuals across sentences; anaphoric definites refer to the same individual in both sentences
  - (N)á-ì behaves like an anaphoric definite, referring to the same individual, which is infelicitous in this context (26b)
  - Bare noun behaves like unique definite (25c)

(26) PRESIDENT/PM SENTENCES

- a. kè-tú kó ẽ-ló? kó dí? wùlím lúwèn  
 7-head 7.am 5-country 7 COP 1.man now  
 ‘Currently the President is a man.’

- b. #á lú n-dí? á nsí? ē-tsén kè-tú kó ē-ló? (n)á-ky-i(=kó)  
 it F3 N-cop at point 9-some 7-head 7.AM 5-country AN-7-DEM(=7.ENC)  
 n-dí? wù kèjòm  
 N-COP person Kejom  
 # ‘One day, [**that/the** President/Prime Minister] will be a Kejom.’
- c. á lú n-dí? á nsí? ē-tsén kè-tú kó ē-ló?(=kó)  
 it F3 N-cop at point 9-some 7-head 7.AM 5-country(=7.ENC)  
 n-dí? wù kèjòm  
 N-COP person Kejom  
 ‘One day, [**the** President/Prime Minister] will be a Kejom.’

- Example (25b) is infelicitous because the current president is not Kejom (Babanki)
- Example (25c) expresses the possibility a different future president will eventually be Kejom.
- Jenks (2015, 2018) shows that donkey anaphora (covarying anaphora without syntactic binding) patterns with anaphoric definites in Mandarin and Thai just as in Babanki:

(27) DONKEY SENTENCES

- a. nó?è ndè á γé kí?í ndũŋki<sub>1</sub> é-zhísó [ndũŋki (n)á-y-i]<sub>1</sub>  
 every who REL 3SG have 1.donkey INF-feed 1.donkey AN-1-DEM  
 ‘Every man who owns [a donkey]<sub>1</sub> feeds [**the/that** donkey]<sub>1</sub>.’
- b. nó?è ndè á γé kí?í ndũŋki<sub>1</sub> é-zhísó [wén]<sub>1</sub>  
 every who REL 3SG have 1.donkey INF-feed 3SG.IND  
 ‘Every man who owns [a donkey]<sub>1</sub> feeds [**the/that** donkey]<sub>2</sub>.’
- c. nó?è ndè á γé kí?í ndũŋki<sub>1</sub> é-zhísó [ndũŋki y-i]<sub>\*1/2</sub>  
 every who REL 3SG have 1.donkey INF-feed 1.donkey 1-DEM  
 ‘Every man who owns [a donkey]<sub>1</sub> feeds [**that** donkey]<sub>\*1/2</sub>.’ (**the one pointing at**)
- d. nó?è ndè á γé kí?í ndũŋki<sub>1</sub> é-zhísó [ndũŋki]<sub>\*1/2</sub>  
 every who REL 3SG have 1.donkey INF-feed 1.donkey  
 ‘Every man who owns [a donkey]<sub>1</sub> feeds [(any) donkey]<sub>\*1/2</sub>.’ (**no donkey in particular**)

- Only anaphoric demonstratives (27a) and pronouns (27b) allows the donkey anaphoric reading
- The exophoric demonstrative (27c) and the bare noun (27d) result in distinct interpretations, as in narrative sequences
- Schwarz (2009) shows that **producer-product bridging** pattern with anaphoric definiteness, in contrast with part-whole bridging.
- This is correct for Babanki, where producer-product bridging licenses anaphoric demonstratives:

(28) PRODUCER-PRODUCT BRIDGING

- a. Shien tò bà?lǎ á-sǎŋ. N-zén (n)á-y-i di? wù kèjòm  
 Shien P2 sell 6-corn NOM-buy AN-1-DEM COP 1.person Kejom  
 ‘Shien sold corn. The trader is from Kejom.’
- b. Shien tò zèn kē-kí. Wù kè-n-tsíf (n)á-y-i di? wù kèjòm  
 Shien P2 buy 7-chair 1.person 7-NOM-carve AN-1-DEM COP 1.person Kejom  
 ‘Shien bought a stool. The carver is from Kejom.’

- c. ɛ̀-ŋgə̀ŋ tɛ̀ biymè. Wù kə̀-m-bwóm (n)á-y-ì di? wù kə̀jom  
 5-house P2 collapse 1.person 7-NOM-build AN-1-DEM COP 1.person Kejom  
 ‘A house collapsed. The builder is from Kejom’

- The definiteness pattern in Babanki:
  - Bare nouns required in most simple unique definite contexts
  - Exophoric demonstratives required in part-whole bridging and situation-based covariation
  - Anaphoric demonstratives are required in anaphoric contexts

### SECTION 5.3 SHARED KNOWLEDGE DEFINITENESS

- Typological work (e.g. Becker 2018) establishes a third kind of definiteness, used for shared knowledge; it is unclear to what extent this category overlaps with anaphoric definiteness
- One relevant context is a category Hawkins (1978/1991) refers to as ‘recognitional’, which serves a reminding function. Here, only the exophoric definite is possible in Babanki:

(29) RECOGNITIONAL DEFINITE CONTEXT  
 wù bó kwòʔtè bùshí y-ì á yès ñ-kí? li  
 2SG still remember 1.cat 1-DEM REL 1PL.EXCL N-have such  
 ‘Do you remember [**that** cat] (we used to have)?’

- *náyì* would be used if the cat has been referred to earlier in the conversation.
- These facts establish that exophoric definites extend beyond purely exophoric uses, into contexts which bring new, known, entities into the discourse.

- In addition, Babanki has a distinct construction for reference to individuals who had been identified at particular points in the past, which combine demonstratives with adverbs:

(30) Temporal definites

a. wù bó kwòʔtè wùwì ɛ̀ b́ŋgə̀ŋ y-ì  
 2SG still remember 1.woman 1.AM 1.morning 1-DEM  
 Do you remember that woman of the morning?’ (today past demonstrative)

b. wù bó kwòʔtè wùwì ɛ̀ źɔ̀yn y-ì  
 2SG still remember 1.woman 1.AM 1.yesterday 1-DEM  
 Do you remember that woman of yesterday?’ (yesterday past demonstrative)

c. wù bó kwòʔtè wùwì ɛ̀ ŋgwù? y-ì  
 2SG still remember 1.woman 1.AM 9.year 1-DEM  
 Do you remember that woman of long ago?’ (distant past demonstrative)

- Here, *(n)áyì* would be used if the woman has been referred to earlier in the conversation

- Barlew (2014) describes the distribution of the Bulu definite marker *-te* (cf. Eton anaphoric *-te*, Van de Velde 2008) as *salient definiteness*, which is similar to anaphoric definiteness in many respects but requires shared knowledge and also extends to unique definite contexts in certain pragmatic situations:

- (31) Salient definite contexts (adapted from Barlew 2014, ex. 52)
- a. *Context:* Abondo is sitting on a bus when a man he does not know sits down beside him. The man says (out of the blue):  
**chwichwì** ó bání láyn  
 1.sun 1.AM be bright today  
 [The sun] is bright today.
- b. *Context:* Same as above, only after sitting down, the stranger opens the window shade on the bus, letting in bright sunlight. Then the stranger says:  
**chwichwì y-í** ó bání láyn  
 1.sun 1-DEM 1.AM be bright today  
 [The sun] is bright today.
- c. *Context:* Same as above, only after sitting down, the stranger opens the window shade on the bus, letting in bright sunlight. Then the stranger says:  
**chwichwì ná-y-ì** ó bání láyn  
 1.sun AN-1-DEM 1.AM be bright today  
 [The sun] is bright today.
- In (31b), the speaker is pointing out the sun to the listener, supplying new information
  - In (31c), the speaker is assuming that the listener is experiencing the negative effect of the sun as well, so the discourse participants have shared knowledge of the sun, as in anaphoric reference.
  - These contrasts confirm that the exophoric definite has an DR-establishing function while the anaphoric demonstrative requires a pre-established DR

#### SECTION 5.4 EXOPHORIC AND ANAPHORIC DEFINITENESS

- Recall that the anaphoric definites cross-cut with a two-way spatial distinction on the demonstrative itself: **-ì** demonstratives are away from speaker and beyond, while **-èn** demonstratives are near-speaker
- Comparing the contexts where the different demonstratives are most natural indicates that only the away from speaker anaphoric marker is incompatible with spatial reference:

(32) Away from speaker demonstrative: **-ì**

**Bú** y-ì dì? ghè ndè  
 9-dog 9-DEM COP of who  
 ‘Whose dog is **that**?’

*Suggested context:* The dog is currently not near the speaker and referred to for the first time.

(33) Near speaker demonstrative **-èn**

**Bú** y-èn lù fá ntú?  
 9-dog 9-DEM leave from 1.palace  
 ‘**This** dog is from the palace.’

*Suggested context:* The dog is currently near the speaker and referred to for the first time.

(34) Anaphoric definite (n)á-ì

**Bú** ná-y-ì dì? ghè ndè  
 9-dog AN-9-DEM COP of who  
 ‘Whose dog is **it**?’

*Suggested context:* The dog has been mentioned previously in the conversation and is not physically present.

- (35) Near listener demonstrative **ná-èn**  
**Bú ná-y-èn** lù fá ntú?  
 9-dog AN-9-DEM leave from 1.palace  
 ‘**This** dog is from the palace.’

*Suggested context:* The dog has been mentioned previously in the conversation, is physically present and near the speaker.

- **Prediction:** Because *náyèn* refers to physical referents, only *náyì* should occur in texts where there such a referent is absent.
  - In 19 narrative texts collected in January 2015 in Kejom Ketinguh (Babanki Tungo) there are 26 occurrences of the anaphoric demonstrative.
  - Of these, *náyì* occurs 25 times while *náyèn* is used once at the end of a tale in sentence (36), not as part of the story, where there is no standard way to make this pronouncement:

- (36) Announcing the end of a folktale
- a. ngàn ó mú m-mé á kè-ŋí **ná-k-èn**  
 9.story DJ then N-end at 7-place AN-7-DEM  
 ‘The story has ended at this point.’
- b. tá lè ngàn ó m-bé m-mé  
 only such 9.story DJ N-already N-end  
 ‘Just like this, the story has ended.’

- Similarly, in 70 Kejom proverbs we found three occurrences of *náyì* but none of *náyèn*.

- The survey of texts confirms that the near-speaker form but retains its reference to physical space in anaphoric forms; only near-hearer form *náyì* is a purely anaphoric demonstrative.
- This suggests *náyì*

## SECTION 6. DEMONSTRATIVES AND CONTRASTIVE FOCUS

- One hypothesis about the anaphoric vs. exophoric distinction is that it is purely pragmatic: anaphoric dem=‘old information’, exophoric = ‘new information’
- Demonstratives in Babanki can be fronted to a position before the noun when they are in focus (37b, Akumbu & Kießling 2022: 29-33)
- The form of the demonstrative is different in these cases – an initial /ə/ occurs, which is also found with demonstrative pronouns (37b) and licensed N deletion:

- (37) Fronting of demonstrative -ì
- a. kə-mbò ky-ī ká kó bəŋ  
 7-bag 7-DEM 7.SM NEG be good  
 ‘[**That bag**] is not nice.’

- b. ̀əky-ì (k̀ə-mb̀ò) ḱó lú fá f́é  
 7-DEM 7-bag 7.SM leave from where  
 ‘Where is [THAT (bag)] from.’

- Only contrastive focus (on the particular individual) licenses fronting; information focus in response to a question does not license the fronted demonstrative:

(38) Information focus

- a. wù t̀ə z̀èn k̀ə-mb̀ò k̀ə-k̀òò  
 2.SG P2 buy 7-bag 7-INT  
 ‘Which bag did you buy?’
- b. k̀ə-mb̀ò ky-ì  
 7-bag 7-DEM  
 ‘That bag.’
- c. \*̀əky-ì k̀ə-mb̀ò  
 7-DEM 7-bag  
 ‘THAT bag.’

- Anaphoric and exophoric requirements of the demonstrative are retained in these contrastive forms:

(39) Fronting of anaphoric demonstrative **ná-èn**

- a. **k̀ə-mb̀ò ná-k-èn** ḱó ḱó b̀òŋ  
 7-bag AN-7-DEM 7.SM NEG be good  
 ‘[THIS bag] is not nice.’
- b. **ná-k-èn k̀ə-mb̀ò** ḱó lú fá f́é  
 AN-7-DEM 7-bag 7.SM leave from where  
 ‘Where is [THIS bag] from?’

(40) Fronting of anaphoric demonstrative **ná-ì**

- a. **k̀ə-mb̀ò na-ky-ì** ḱó ḱó b̀òŋ  
 7-bag AN-7-DEM 7.SM NEG be good  
 ‘[THE/THAT bag] is not nice.’
- b. **na-ky-ì (k̀ə-mb̀ò)** ḱó lú fá f́é  
 AN-7-DEM 7-bag 7.SM leave from where  
 ‘Where is [THE/THAT (bag)] from?’

- Anaphoric/exophoric demonstratives lack inherent focus but are compatible with additional contrastive semantics, suggesting the difference between them cannot be reduced to topic vs. focus.

## SECTION 7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

- Babanki may represent a new point in semantic typological space: a language where unique definiteness is in fact unavailable, but a four-way distinction is marked in the demonstrative system

- We can analyze the Babanki system first as a distinction between a bare noun — which has a default existential interpretation — vs. the demonstrative/anaphoric definite forms, which introduce an index:

(41) a.  $\llbracket k\grave{a}\text{-mb\grave{o}} \rrbracket^{\text{f}}$  ‘bag’ =  $\lambda P.\exists x.\text{Bag}(x) \ \& \ P(x)$   
 b.  $\llbracket k\grave{a}\text{-mb\grave{o}} \text{ ky-DEM}_1 \rrbracket^{\text{g}}$  ‘that bag’ =  $\iota x.\text{BAG}(x) \ \& \ x=g(1)$

- The indefinite interpretation is the only one available for (non-kind-level, non-generic, non-predicative) bare nouns in Babanki; it occurs at the first mention of all nouns regardless of whether they are unique
- The unavailability of a true unique definite interpretation accounts for the oddity of a bare noun in part-whole bridging and situation-based covariation, which rely on situational-uniqueness
- Exophoric and anaphoric demonstratives introduce an index, which forces them to directly refer (or facilitates dynamic binding in donkey anaphora)

- Demonstratives mark a four-way featural distinction:  $[\pm\text{near speaker}]$ , and  $[\pm\text{anaphoric}]$ :

(42) a.  $y\grave{i}$  [-near speaker, -anaphoric]  
 b.  $y\grave{e}n$  [+near speaker, -anaphoric]  
 c.  $n\acute{a}y\grave{i}$  [-near speaker, +anaphoric]  
 d.  $n\acute{a}y\grave{e}n$  [+near speaker, +anaphoric]

- The  $[+]$  values place an additional restriction on the variable introduced by a demonstrative:

(43) a.  $\llbracket [+near \text{ speaker } 1] \rrbracket^{\text{g}} = g(1)$  if  $g(1)$  is near  $s$  in  $c$ , else undefined  
 b.  $\llbracket [+anaphoric] 1 \rrbracket^{\text{g}} = g(1)$  if  $g(1)$  is an existing discourse referent in  $c$ , else undefined

- The existence of anaphoric demonstratives has been discussed in the typological literature (e.g. Himmelmann 1996, Diessing 1999), but their relevance to Greenberg’s (1978) definiteness cycle has not.
- The fact that anaphoric demonstratives are morphologically and semantically more marked than their exophoric (and definite) counterparts in many African languages suggests anaphoricity is not always derived via ‘erosion’ of a regular demonstrative meaning.

## References

- Akumbu, Pius W. 2011. Tone in Kejom (Babanki) associative constructions. *Journal of West African Languages* 38(1). 69–88.
- Akumbu, Pius W. 2016. Babanki coda consonant deletion and vowel raising: A case of allomorphy. *Berkeley Linguistics Society (BLS)* 42. 3–20.
- Akumbu, Pius W. 2019. A featural analysis of mid and downstepped high tone in Babanki. In Emily Clem, Peter Jenks & Hannah Sande (eds.), *Theory and description in African linguistics: Selected papers from the 47th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. 3–20. Berlin: Language Science Press.
- Akumbu, Pius W. & Evelyn Fogwe Chibaka. 2012. *A pedagogic grammar of Babanki*. Köln: Köppe.
- Akumbu, Pius W., Larry M. Hyman & Roland Kießling (2020). The segmental and tonal structure of verb inflection in Babanki. *Phonological Data and Analysis*, 2(2):1–33.



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3765/pda.v2art2.32>

- Akumbu, Pius W. & Roland Kießling (2022). The role of the Babanki noun phrase-final enclitic class marker. *Linguistique et Langues Africaines* 8(1): 1–40. <https://doi.org/10.4000/lla.2202>
- Asiimwe, Allen. 2014. *Definiteness and specificity in Runyankore-Rukiga*. Ph.D. Thesis, Stellenbosch University.
- Barlew, Jefferson. 2014. Saliency, uniqueness, and the definite determiner -tè in Bulu. In Todd Snider, Sarah D’Antonio, and Mia Weigand (eds.), *Semantics and Linguistic Theory (SALT) 24*, 619–639.
- Becker, Laura. 2018. Articles in the world’s languages. PhD dissertation, Universität Leipzig.
- Boutwell, Richard L. 2018. Speaker attitude and demonstrative choice in Nchane (Beboid). *Studies in African Linguistics* 47.
- Dayal, Veneeta 2004. Number marking and (in)definiteness in kind terms. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 27. 393–450.
- Diessel, Holger. 1999. *Demonstratives. form, function, and grammaticalization*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/tsl.42>
- Greenberg, Joseph. 1978. How does a language acquire gender markers. *Universals of human language*, vol. 3, ed. by Joseph Greenberg, 47–82. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Himmelman, Nikolaus P. 1996. Demonstratives in narrative discourse: A taxonomy of universal uses. In Barbara A. Fox (ed.), *Studies in anaphora*, 205–254. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Hyman, Larry M. 1979. Tonology of the Babanki noun. *Studies in African Linguistics* 10. 159–178.
- Hyman, Larry M. 1980. Babanki and the Ring group. In Larry M. Hyman & Jan Voorhoeve (eds.), *Noun classes in Grassfields Bantu*. 225–258. Paris: SELAF.
- Jenks, Peter. 2015. Two kinds of definites in numeral classifier languages. In *Proceedings of SALT 25*. 103–124.
- Jenks, Peter. 2018. Articulated definiteness without articles. *Linguistic Inquiry* 49(3). 501–536.
- Levinson, Stephen C., Sarah Cutfield, Michael J. Dunn, N. J. Enfield, and Sérgio Meira, (eds.). 2018. *Introduction: demonstratives: patterns in diversity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Löbner, Sebastian. 1985. Definites. *Journal of Semantics* 4. 279–326.
- Meeussen, Achiel E. 1967. Bantu grammatical reconstructions. *Africana Linguistica* 3:79–121. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale.
- Maroney, Mary. 2019. Inconsistencies of the Consistency test. *Proceedings of the Linguistic Society of America*. 55:1-10.
- Meeuwis, Michael, and Koen Stroeken. 2012. Non-situational functions of demonstrative noun phrases in Lingala (Bantu). *Pragmatics* 22:1, 147–166.
- Nunberg, Geoffrey. 1993. Indexicality and deixis. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 3. 143–184. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00126509>
- Owusu, Augustina. 2022. *Cross-categorical definiteness/familiarity*. PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University.
- Schwarz, Florian. 2009. *Two Types of Definites in Natural Language*. PhD dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Schwarz, Florian. 2013. Two kinds of definites cross-linguistically. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 7(10). 534–559.
- Van de Velde, Mark. 2008. *A Grammar of Eton*. Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin.
- van der Wal, Jenneke. 2010. Functions of demonstratives in Makhuwa narratives. *Africana Linguistica* 16, 183–213;
- Wilkins, David. 1999. The 1999 demonstrative questionnaire: “This” and “that” in comparative perspective. In *Manual for the 1999 field season*, 1–24. Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.