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The Semantics and Pragmatics of Bare Singular Noun Phrases

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## ABSTRACT

### The Semantics and Pragmatics of Bare Singular Noun Phrases

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This dissertation examines the behavior of bare singular noun phrases, a set of English nominals showing no formal indication of either definiteness or mass/ count status. Although they appear to be count nouns, I show that these nominals represent maximal projections. Often disregarded as potential referring expressions and rarely discussed as an NP option, bare singulars are used to assist a hearer in finding relevant information about a referent.

Based on an examination of 922 naturally occurring tokens of bare singular NPs in locative PPs (e.g., *on campus*, *at school*, *in church*), I show that they are used to convey three distinct meanings involving the locatum and the denoted location. Specifically, their use can create a Familiarity Implicature, an Activity Implicature, or can be used generically.

Familiarity Implicature is a form of deixis by which the location is identified by being anchored off one of the discourse participants. Activity Implicature is a use of the whole PP to predicate information about the located person, although the NP itself is non-referential. Bare location forms can also be used as generic expressions to give characterizing information about the location kind. The implicated senses are created through conventional R-based implicature; thus, the implicated meaning is not cancelable, reinforceable, or non-detachable. This non-detachability means that the implicated meaning of these words is connected to the bare singular noun phrase form, but as a necessary, not sufficient, constraint; not all ostensive count nominals used in the bare singular form convey the implicated meanings. The Familiarity or Activity meaning is associated, by convention, with just those nouns that belong to certain semantic classes (social/ geographical spaces, recording and framing media, and temporal interruptions), when certain relationships are taken to hold among the discourse participants. I show five morpho-syntactic indicators by which other languages represent the same contrasts which the bare versus articulated form captures in English: omission of articles, contraction, contrasting locative prepositions, locational versus non-locational verbs, and case marking.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Identifying Bare Singular Nominals

#### 1. Introduction

This work investigates the properties of a set of English common nouns which are distinguished by their atypical use in forms that reveal neither definiteness nor number. I will show that this marked syntactic form of the nouns, in phrases such as *at camp*, *on campus*, and *in school*, is an indicator of their use in implicating additional information relating to locations, typically that the located person is involved in the prototypical activity of the location, or that the location is one to be deictically interpreted as affiliated with the current speaker, hearer, or located person.

#### 1.1 Organization of the Thesis

In this dissertation I use findings from naturally occurring data to strengthen our understanding of the syntactic/ semantic correlations of NP types, and to demonstrate that the use of bare singular nominals in PPs assists a hearer in finding the correct information about a referent.

Understanding the bare singular form, a rarely discussed NP type, helps to pinpoint the grammatical units involved in the mass/ count dichotomy, a topic discussed in Chapter 2. The semantics of the location nouns found as bare singular nominals is discussed in Chapter 3. The pragmatic dimensions involved in using the NPs for reference are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 looks at the ways other languages represent the same contrast that the bare versus articulated form captures in English. Chapter 6 discusses applications of this information and presents the conclusions of this study.

Within Chapter 1, the first section illustrates the constructions, pointing out their marked syntax and meaning, and discusses how the corpus of examples was collected. Section 2 gives a first sketch of some of the qualities that these nominals share with mass nouns, as well as with full NPs. Section 3 then discusses the distribution of bare singular nominals, showing that they can be found in subject and direct object position, as well as their most frequent use as the object of a preposition. Finally, Section 4 lays out the terminology that I will be using to discuss the bare nouns, other nouns they are used with, and the referents of the NPs of both these groups.

## 1.2 Examples of the Constructions

The nouns under consideration, such as *camp*, *church*, *school*, and *home*, name locations, and in the bare singular form are most frequently found as objects in locative PPs, as shown in (1).

- (1) a. While tape recordings to uncover, say, infidelity aren't admissible **in court**, they can mean leverage in a settlement.  
(Jill Abramson, "Mind What You Say; They're Listening," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 25, 1989)
- b. During their first year **at school**, children become Octobrists and wear the badge of Baby Lenin.  
(Peter Gumbel, "Soviet Youth Organization Is in Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1989)
- c. The shrubs bounced against the ground again and again, and **upslope** the trees howled.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984. p. 156)
- d. "Did you notice Mr. Boldwood's doings **in church** this morning, miss?" Liddy continued, adumbrating by the remark the track her thoughts had taken.  
(Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874, Gutenberg etext)
- e. Up **on deck**, thinking of spending five days on the Dolphin, I began to be seized by feelings of panic and pain I couldn't explain.  
(Diane Johnson, "Great Barrier Reef," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 7, 1992)
- f. "My mother died because the hospital needed a bigger bottom line," says Ross. "The medication was there, **on site**, to prevent her death."  
(Nina Schuyler, "Reining in HMOs," *In These Times*, Sept. 2-15, 1996, p. 29)

What makes these nouns so intriguing is that they contrast with most other count nouns that are not found in the bare singular form. Those location nouns that are found without articles can be divided into four categories according to the type of item they denote: Social/ Geographical Spaces (a category used here to encompass municipalities, religious settings, educational settings, nautical settings, and natural features), Media (recording expressions and framing expressions), Temporal Interruption Events, and Untethered Metaphors. Examples from each of these categories are shown in Table 1 below (see Chapter 3 for discussion).



**Table 1**  
**Samples of Bare Location Noun Categories**

<b>Social/ Geographical Spaces</b>	<p><b>Municipalities:</b> She and her husband moved in <b>district</b>.</p> <p><b>Religious settings:</b> Being at the polls was just like being at <b>church</b>.</p> <p><b>Educational settings:</b> She was still sobbing when I got home from <b>school</b>.</p> <p><b>Nautical settings:</b> He scrubbed the decks of ships in <b>port</b>.</p> <p><b>Natural features:</b> I stayed on <b>shore</b> with the equipment.</p>
<b>Media</b>	<p><b>Framing expressions:</b> The Marionette's head loomed close behind her for an instant, then disappeared out of <b>frame</b>.</p> <p><b>Recording expressions:</b> Janine shouldn't be confused with the disaffected American kids popularized on <b>film</b> in recent years.</p>
<b>Temporal Interruption Events</b>	<p>On <b>break</b>, I opened the window to let out people's cigarette smoke.</p>
<b>Untethered Metaphors</b>	<p>We think we're on <b>target</b> in looking for renewed economic deterioration.</p>

When used in PPs, the bare nominals occur most often with the spatial prepositions *in*, *at*, and *on*, but can also be found with other prepositions, including *across*, *around*, *down*, *from*, *into*, *near*, *off*, *out of*, *to*, *through*, and *toward*. The characteristics of the prepositions used with these nouns are detailed in Chapter 3.

### 1.3 The Markedness of the Constructions

Two central aspects of the bare singular noun forms are unusual: their syntax and their meaning. First I will discuss their unusual syntactic form and the terms that have been used to discuss it. Then I will briefly describe the marked senses conveyed by the use of the bare forms.

#### 1.3.1 Marked Syntax

Depending on whether the focus of the study has been on the determiner, the noun, or the maximal projection containing that noun, the terms *unarticulated*, *anarthrous*, *zero form*, and *bare* have all been used to indicate a nominal construction which lacks an article. Greenberg (1978 *passim*), for example, discusses the “the unarticulated form of the noun”; Hall and Hall (1969) refer to PPs that contain such forms as “anarthrous” locative PPs; and Christophersen (1939 *passim*) refers to the same construction as a noun with the “zero form of the article.” The term “zero form” is widespread as a way to refer to the lack of an article before a noun.<sup>1</sup> Unlike morphology, however, where a zero morpheme’s presence may be inferred from changes to other words with which it is in concord (e.g., *the sheep is/ the sheep [+pl]are*), there is no reason to assume that some covert article is always present, that is, that the

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1. Pretheoretically, of course, as Parrish (1987:382) observes, “ $\emptyset$  is not an article but a pre-noun context.”

absence of an overt article implies the presence of a silent one, like a trace in syntax, for example. Palmer (1939), Yotsukura (1970), and Chesterman (1991; 1993) present versions of a schema for English containing a five-article paradigm which includes two types of silent articles, according to which the first type occurs with mass and plural nouns to name an entire set, often generically (e.g., *cheese, biscuits*), whereas the second type occurs with proper nouns and singular count nouns to name a known, one-member set (e.g., *John, hand-in-hand, in prison*). Here, however, they seem to be conflating uses of the NPs which lack articles with syntactic instantiations of the articles themselves. While this subdividing of the zero category captures a useful range of referential uses—similar to those I detail in Chapter 4—throughout this dissertation I will use *zero form* to refer to any non-overt article form, having as alternates (in English) only the definite and indefinite forms.

*Bare* is seen as a more general term to indicate a missing element.

Larson (1985) discusses “bare-NP adverbs,” by which he means NPs such as *that day*, or *every way imaginable*, which function as adverbial modifiers, but lack an expected preposition to indicate their adjunct function. Although the data Larson focuses on is different than that examined in this dissertation—since this work looks at PPs with overt

prepositions—the common idea is that a bare form lacks an expected element.

The term *bare noun phrase* is generally used for an NP containing no determiner. This should, in theory, encompass both bare plural forms (*cats*) and bare singular forms (*church* and *water*). Most work examining bare NPs, however (see especially Pelletier 1974, 1975, and Pelletier and Schubert 1989), has looked only at bare plurals, or, when discussing particular sentence positions, such as the subject of a generic sentence, has considered mass nouns to count as bare NPs as well. No discussion of bare NPs, however, includes bare singular count nouns. In part, this is because bare plurals show many of the same distribution patterns as indefinite singular noun phrases and mass nouns (see, e.g., Carlson 1977, Chierchia 1982, Gillon 1992, and Carlson and Pelletier 1995) and partly because bare plurals simply occur more frequently. In fact, some writers (e.g., Werth 1980:251, Behrens 1995:48) claim that English bare singular forms do not occur at all in certain syntactic positions.<sup>2</sup> How-

2. In particular, both Werth and Behrens cite the word *man* as the only possible count noun token to serve as a subject, as in (i).

- (i) Some day, *man* will walk on the surface of Mars.

It seems, however, that this use of *man* is used more as a mass noun/natural kind sense, synonymous with *mankind*. Krifka et al. (1995:6) therefore call this idiosyncratic use of *man* an NP, not a common noun, noting that this use can only be interpreted as

ever, as I will illustrate in Section 3, bare NPs containing singular count nouns occur in the full range of NP positions. A better understanding of their distribution patterns, as well as of the noun subsets that show up in this form, helps shed light on the semantic underpinnings of the mass/ count distinction.

Since a bare NP is commonly taken to be a bare plural form lacking an article, in Stvan (1993) I introduced the term “Bare Singular NP” to indicate any count noun use of an NP which is lacking an article, plural marker, and modifier, as a way to separate these unusual count noun forms from a range of other nominals, such as plurals, mass nouns, and modified forms. Indeed, bare forms are common with plural (and hence count) nouns, and mass nouns are, by definition, unmarked for number, although they may have a definite article; but a bare, ostensibly count noun, unmarked for number, is unexpected in English. This unexpectedness is observed by Ross (1995) who includes “articlelessness in the objects of prepositions” among the criteria for his “Defective NP” types. Soja (1994), after showing that bare noun constructions pattern more like full NPs than nouns, calls the bare singular count noun form an “NP-type noun.” This term transparently reveals one of the characteristics of the nouns, but it actually detracts attention from their kind-referring.

status as NPs, treating them instead as a type of lexical noun. By calling them bare singular NPs in the title of this work, I hope to point out the parallel to studies of bare plural NPs and to underline the fact that the bare use of the nouns represents a maximal projection. But for the remainder of this chapter I will continue to refer to these bare singular nominals by using the terms *nouns* and *nominals* in a pretheoretical sense, saving the presentation of evidence for their precise syntactic status (as N, N-bar, or NP) until Chapter 2.

### **1.3.2 Marked Meaning**

Besides the syntactic markedness of the bare singular form, the meaning of a PP without an article in its object NP differs from the meaning conveyed when an article is present. In Chapter 4, I detail how a speaker may use the bare singular form to trigger one of three types of pragmatic inferences. As I first illustrated in Stvan (1993), a bare singular form may be used to create an Activity sense or Familiarity sense; in addition, it can be used in a kind-referring Generic sense. Examples of each of these senses, in contrast to the meanings conveyed by articulated forms of the nouns, are provided in turn below.

The example in (2a) illustrates the Activity sense.

- (2) a. Her alternative was 90 days **in jail**.  
 (Gary Putka, "Classroom Scandal: Cheaters in Schools May Not Be Students, But Their Teachers," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 2, 1989)

Activity sense = being held as a prisoner

- b. My cousin is **in the jail**.

This sense is created by asserting information about the activity of the located person at the named location, an activity that is one typically associated with the type of place named. The location itself is treated as backgrounded information, that is, the fact that some actual jail is involved in the jailing activity is assumed, but this aspect is not the one highlighted by the use of *in jail*; hence, many people have referred to bare singular forms in general as institutional or generic uses of the noun since they do not pick out a particular referent. In (2a), *in jail* is a predicate used to convey that the located person is actually a prisoner there. This Activity sense is not present in the articulated form in (2b); with the articulated construction, the located person could be visiting the jail, cleaning the jail, etc.

Example (3a) illustrates the Familiarity sense—a deictic use anchoring the nominal either to one of the discourse participants (here defined as

either the speaker, hearer, or locatum) or to the place of the utterance.

- (3) a. I work **at home**, and I have found that this arrangement has a tremendous potential for personal growth, because nobody will notice if you eat as many as 20 lunches per day. (Dave Barry, May 9, 1992, usenet group "clari.feature.dave\_bar")
- Familiarity sense = in my home
- b. I work **at a home**.

In (3a), where an article is lacking, the home in question must be a discourse participant's home. In (3b), on the other hand, the articulated form of *home* does not serve to connect the referent to a discourse participant, so no Familiarity sense is conveyed.

Some words allow both types of inferences, as shown in (4). Here, both Activity and Familiarity paraphrases are possible:

- (4) During their first year **at school**, children become Octobrists and wear the badge of Baby Lenin. [= (1b)]
- Activity sense = attending school  
Familiarity sense = at their school/ at this school

A kind-referring generic use is also possible with bare singular nominals. Although more typical NP forms for generic uses are singular count forms with a definite article, plural count forms, and mass



nouns—as shown in (5a-c)—when used in a PP, the bare singular form can also be used generically, as seen in (5d).

- (5) a. **The restaurant** is a sit-down eating establishment.  
 b. **Restaurants** are sit-down eating establishments.  
 c. **Gold** is one of the first metals to attract human attention.  
 d. Religious conversion is a slippery concept **in prison**.  
 (“Prison Preaching,” *All Things Considered*, broadcast April 30, 1996)

Given these three possible uses for bare singular nominal forms within a PP, I will show how a speaker’s selection of the bare form from among the other available syntactic options reflects an ‘information-packaging’ function (Chafe 1976, Vallduví 1990, Lambrecht 1994, inter alia). Thus, I follow an ‘information structure’ analysis which assumes a component in the grammar in which the following holds:

[P]ropositions as conceptual representations of states of affairs are paired with lexicogrammatical structures in accordance with the mental states of interlocutors who use and interpret these structures as units of information. (Lambrecht 1994:5)

Since a speaker’s choice to use a syntactic construction with a particular discourse function can license the hearer to infer that the relationship between the information represented by the utterance and other relevant information in the discourse is appropriate to this discourse function (Birner 1992:2), this dissertation will look at the semantic and pragmatic constraints that allow a hearer to infer the function intended

by the speaker's use of a bare form. In short, it will show the matching of form and meaning—the discourse pragmatics—of the bare singular forms of location nouns.

#### **1.4 Corpus Collection**

In looking for examples of the bare singular location nouns, I searched both printed texts (books, magazines, newspapers, electronic newsgroups, email correspondence, and web sites) and spoken sources (radio and TV broadcasts, overheard conversations). The focus here is on American English, with spoken tokens by both black and white speakers representing the standard dialect. Regional variation in the data was not a consideration, except for a few noted exceptions when American English differs from British/ Canadian/ New Zealand English varieties (most notably the use of *in hospital* and *at university*), and one case of a specifically rural American term (*down cellar*). In predicting which bare singular forms could be felicitously used in other syntactic positions, I checked my own intuitions against other native speakers of American English.

My corpus contains 922 PP tokens containing bare singular nominals

(consisting of 94 different bare location noun types) and 72 examples of the bare forms used not in PPs but in subject or direct object position (consisting of 24 different bare noun types. (See Appendix A.) The bulk of the data come from electronic corpora, mainly 19th and 20th century novels and non-fiction works from the Project Gutenberg Etexts (1992), and half a year's worth of the *Wall Street Journal* (June to December 1989). Use of online texts allowed me to search more thoroughly for all occurrences of a given PP, though I also included isolated instances of naturally occurring tokens (those that I encountered or which colleagues relayed to me from conversations, ads, magazines, novels, movies, radio broadcasts, and newspapers). For unique cases of a noun type, I used the AltaVista search engine to check for additional examples of the usage on the Internet. The opportunistic additions are included in the corpus because they gave a useful broadening of range to the register and discourse types examined and helped me identify new occurrences for which to search. It should be noted, however, that donated examples sometimes provide less opportunity for a thorough examination of the works from which each example was taken.

In collecting tokens of bare singular nominals, I omitted data from newspaper headlines, captions, or email subject lines. Even though such

examples may appear to illustrate the phenomenon I was seeking, in fact, such formats routinely use a telegraphic style in which articles and other non-lexical categories are omitted. Thus, for examples like those in (6), it would not be clear if articles were lacking in the highlighted NPs for pragmatic reasons meant to help the reader identify information about the referent, or because the newspaper's copy editor needed to save space.

- (6) a. As IBM Goes Astray, **Market** Pines for **Leader**  
(*Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 5, 1989)
- b. **House** Wants **Smoking Ban** Permanent on Some Flights  
(*Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 3, 1989)
- c. Topic: Christians on **Campus**  
(<http://www.valpo.edu/cgi-bin/netforum/vu/a/15--11.1>)
- d. B&W waist-up in **white blouse** and **dark skirt**, smiling at someone cropped out of **shot**, publicity still  
(Caption to a Rita Hayworth photo--  
<http://shill.simplenet.com/actress/haywortr.htm>)

## 2. Identifying Bare Singular Nominals

### 2.1 Some Similarities to Mass Nouns and to NPs

To illustrate uses of the bare form that are not merely the stylistic shorthand used in headlines, I will first provide a preliminary diagnostic for recognizing bare singular forms, based on the observation that bare singular location nominals act more like mass nouns or full NPs than like

normal count nouns. The template shown in (7), for example, selects for either mass nouns or NPs, but, except for metalinguistic uses, regular count nouns cannot occupy the empty slot.

(7) Speaking of \_\_\_\_\_, ...

As expected, the count nouns in (8) are ill-formed in this slot without the addition of an article or plural morpheme to qualify them as full NPs.<sup>3</sup>

(8) Regular Count Nouns

- a. Speaking of \*table/ a table/ tables
- b. Speaking of \*park/ the park/ parks
- c. Speaking of \*store/ a store/ stores
- d. Speaking of \*bakery/ the bakery/ bakeries
- e. Speaking of \*cemetery/ a cemetery/ cemeteries
- f. Speaking of \*auditorium/ the auditorium/ auditoriums

The mass nouns in (9), however, are just fine in this slot:

(9) Abstract or Mass Nouns

- a. Speaking of grass
- b. Speaking of motivation
- c. Speaking of tofu

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3. These count noun forms are even excluded when the nouns seem to come from the same semantic categories as other bare singular forms, such as social institutions: cf. (8c-f) with the examples in (10a).

Likewise, the apparent count nouns in (10) are fine in this slot:

- (10) Bare Singular Nominals<sup>4</sup>
- a. Speaking of school/ church/ college/ home
  - b. Speaking of breakfast/ sabbatical/ vacation/ break
  - c. Speaking of videotape/ film/ tape

Thus a nominal shares distributional qualities with a full NP if it is either a mass noun or a member of the special bare singular nominal group, but not other bare count nouns. (As I will show in Section 2.2, there is also syntactic evidence to show that the bare singular nominals are not mass nouns—or plural forms—but should be considered to be a separate non-lexical constituent.)

Compounds, since they are lexical items and not NPs (see Levi 1978), behave the same way as other nouns regarding the distribution shown in (8)-(10). Some compound nouns, typically those with mass heads (e.g., *fire water*, *table linen*), can readily serve as full NPs; others, having ostensive count noun heads, have the NP distribution only if headed by a bare singular nominal. This is shown in the contrast among the compound count nouns in (11) and (12).

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4. Not all bare singular nominals that appear in PPs are felicitous in the template in (7), however: see Chapter 3.2 for a discussion of the characteristics of bare form subtypes.

- (11) a. Speaking of \*picnic table/ the picnic table/ picnic tables  
 b. Speaking of \*throw rug/ the throw rug/ throw rugs
- (12) a. Speaking of high school/ the high school/ high schools  
 b. Speaking of summer vacation/ the summer vacation/  
 summer vacations

The compounds in (11), which have true count nouns as the head, are ruled out in the template from (7) unless they have an article or plural marker. In contrast, those in (12), in which the head of the compound is from the special set of bare singular nouns, are fine in the bare form.

With some NN compounds, the head noun is dropped, but still plays a part in determining whether the entire compound is mass or count. In (13), for example, *daycare* is the clipping of *daycare center*, involving an ellipsis of a compound's head. Accordingly, *daycare* retains the full compound's attribute of countability. Other such clipped compounds are shown in (14), with the elided head noun shown in square brackets:

- (13) a. The teacher at my daycare said that ....  
 (11 year old, ABC News, Jan. 23, 1997)
- b. What's the name of the daycare that you work at?  
 (Overheard on a bus, Oct. 15, 1996)

- (14) a. In group [therapy] today we talked about expressing anger.  
 b. She prepared for the math test in history [class].<sup>5</sup>  
 c. My sister is in junior high [school].

## 2.2 NPs vs. Lexical Count Nouns and Mass Nouns

Soja (1994) observes that some of the apparently marked behavior of bare singular location nouns comes from having the syntactic distribution of full NPs, rather than count or mass nouns. She calls these bare nominal forms ‘NP-type Nouns’, and, in experiments on children’s acquisition of these forms (Soja 1994; Burns and Soja 1995a, 1995b, 1996), shows that children treat them as a separate part of the nominal system from regular mass or count nouns. While I disagree with her conclusion that bare nominals are lexical nouns, I follow up on Soja’s evidence that such nouns act like full NPs. In my investigation, which traces adult native speakers’ use of these NPs via an analysis of naturally occurring data, I show the range of nouns that can be used as bare singular nominals and the distinct types of meaning a speaker can convey by using this form. Because one of the issues yet to be satisfactorily explained regarding English nominals is the level at which the mass/ count distinction applies, I provide a more precise syntactic terminology for these nominals in Chapter 2, where I use bare singular nominals to help

5. The names of numerous classes are clipped following this pattern; it is in this use that *in gym* is felicitous—as a clipping of *in gym class*. *In gym* is infelicitous, however, when used to locate a person as being in an actual gymnasium.



decide the node level (N, N-bar, or NP) at which the mass/ count distinction is made.

### **3. Syntactic Distribution of the Bare Singular Nominals**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This section looks briefly at the syntactic distribution of bare singular nominals. In Stvan (1993) I discussed two of the types of implicated meanings that could be conveyed by these forms when used in PPs. Most other work on these forms has also focussed on their use in PPs, since it is as the objects of spatial or temporal prepositions that they most frequently occur (see, for example, Christophersen 1939:183; Quirk et al. 1985:277). Some investigations (such as Werth 1980) have even denied the possibility of bare singular count nouns occurring in subject position. This conclusion, however, appears to be due to the author's reliance on constructed examples. To check such assumptions about distribution, I collected and analyzed naturally occurring examples of bare nominals occurring in subject or direct object positions. My aim in this section is to demonstrate that bare singular noun forms do occur in subject and direct object positions. In the chapter on pragmatic aspects of bare singular nominals, I discuss whether the same two implicated meanings conveyed in PPs are conveyed by these NPs in sub-

ject or direct object position as well. If so, this would indicate that the marked meanings are tied to the bare form in general. If not, the implicated meaning might be more influenced by factors such as the preposition heading the PP, or by the linear position of the NP in the sentence (cf. information status constraints on sentence position, Prince 1981, 1992; Birner 1992).

### **3.2 Bare Singular Nominals as Subjects**

My initial searches for bare singular nominals targeted location nouns that occurred directly after spatial prepositions. To check whether these NP forms were limited to this position, I searched again for these same bare singular nominals in either sentence-initial position or following a transitive verb. Before collecting the corpus, I had found that native speakers were willing to use only some of these NPs in subject and direct object positions; the subsets they predicted were reinforced by the data collected from searching online corpora.

First, I tried using a subset of the nouns that are found in bare singular nominals, what I will call ‘institution expressions,’ as sentence subjects. I did this in two ways: I asked a group of native speakers of American English which of the 39 nouns they would use as the subject of the tem-

plate sentence shown in (15).

(15)  $\overline{\text{NP}}$  was where I spent most of my time.

Next, I searched online text sources for the institution nouns in sentence-initial position.<sup>6</sup> The results of the speaker judgments and online searches are shown in (16). Highlighted forms show nouns which are attested in subject position in my corpus.

- (16) a. Acceptable: **bed, camp, campus, church, class, college, court (legal), court (royal), daycare, home, jail, kindergarten, prison, school, seminary, town**
- b. Questionable: market, port, synagogue, temple, university
- c. Unacceptable: country, deck, hall, harbor, hospital, island, kitchen, line, meeting, office, property, river, sea, site, stage, stream, studio, theater

Attested examples from the corpus represented a proper subset of the nouns selected by speakers' intuitions; that is, while only 10 examples of the bare nouns as subjects have so far been culled (from 33 occur-

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6. Looking for sentence-initial occurrences should capture both generic-type characterizing sentences and predications about particular events, should the bare singular nominals occur in both these types of sentences. Whether or not bare singular nominals can occur as kind-referring generic NPs is a point discussed in Chapter 4.

rences in texts or conversations), all were from the set that speakers found acceptable, while searches for the nouns marked unacceptable or questionable turned up no tokens in subject position.<sup>7</sup>

Examples of sentences containing these bare nouns in subject position are shown in (17).

- (17) a. **Church** is a comfort, all right, but your water and your sewer, those are necessities.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 209)
- b. He didn't want to give the impression that “**prison** was only for those not socially advantaged.”  
(Arthur S. Hayes, “Ex-Fed Official Gets Jail Term For Data Leak,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 14, 1989)
- c. For many of us, **school** doesn't summon up happy memories.  
(Roy Harvey, “Chicago Books Reviewed,” *Chicago Books in Review* vol. 1, no. 4 Fall 96, p. 13)

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7. Since I was searching texts untagged for grammatical function, for my online searches I was relying on sentence position. Thus, I found a much smaller number of subject uses than PP uses since the majority of searches for these words in sentence-initial position found nouns that were modifiers in compounds—as those in (i)—rather than nouns serving as the sole component of the NP.

- (i) Town officials pass out pamphlets—partly paid for by the federal government—with perky cartoon characters dismissing the risks of asbestos.  
(Jonathan Dahl, “Perilous Policy: Canada Encourages Mining of Asbestos, Sells to Third World,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 12, 1989)

- d. They range from legal "fee-shifting" (to discourage needless litigation), to educational day care for children three to 12 when **school** is not in session, to a tuition voucher system that places the burden of financing upon students rather than parents.  
(Craig Lerner, "College Chat: Picking One, Running One," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 25, 1989)
- e. Farmers still do this in the field, although most of them know that **town** is a different situation, but not Mr. Berge and his friends, the Norwegian bachelor farmers.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 151)

The attested examples clearly support the speakers' intuitions that bare singular nominals can serve as subjects. Furthermore, subjects can consist of nouns which, when used in PPs, create both Familiarity as well as Activity senses. However, what is notable about the forms as subjects is that they do not maintain the specific deictic sense associated with Familiarity readings when nouns are used in subject position (for further discussion see Chapter 4).

### **3.3 Bare Singular Nominals as Direct Objects**

To test for the bare singular nominals as direct objects, I looked for the same institution nouns directly following a verb. I again did this in two ways: native speakers were asked to mark which nouns they would use as the object in the template sentence shown in (18).

(18) He planned to finish it before leaving  $\overline{\text{NP}}$ .

I then searched online text sources for the nouns following the words *leave* or *left*. I chose this verb for two reasons. First of all, in my template I wanted a motion verb that subcategorizes for a location NP object. Secondly, because I was not using a syntactically tagged corpus, I chose to search using the verb that had occurred most often with the direct object tokens I had already encountered. The two sets of results are presented below. Again, highlighted forms indicate nouns which are attested in the online texts in direct object position.

- (19) a. Acceptable: **camp, campus, church**, class, court (royal), college, daycare, harbor, **home, hospital, jail, kindergarten**, port, **prison, school, seminary**, synagogue, temple, **town**, university
- b. Questionable: bed, court (legal), deck, line, stage
- c. Unacceptable: country, hall, island, kitchen, market, meeting, river, property, sea, site, stream, studio, table

Although the verb I used when searching the online sources for NP objects was *leave*, many of the direct object tokens I found by other means followed other verbs, as shown in (20).

- (20)
- a. break/ pitch/ set up **camp**
  - b. attend/ cut short/ skip **church**
  - c. break/ leave **jail**
  - d. enter **kindergarten**
  - e. enter/ face/ flee/ mention **prison**
  - f. enter **seminary**
  - g. attend/ hate/ invent/ like/ miss/ start/ teach **school**
  - h. visit **town**

Bare nouns in direct object position are shown in (21).

- (21)
- a. The author deserves thanks for insuring that Manson will undoubtedly never leave **jail**, but the book that maintains his infamy also maintains his fame.  
(Alex Ross, "The Shock of the True," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 71)
  - b. Before government regulations... children ruined their health in ghastly sweatshops, instead of attending **school**.  
(Steve Frederick, "Good Old Days," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 18, 1996, sect. 1, p. 18)
  - c. He was known to visit **town** on occasion and even hoist a beer at Barney's, howbeit in silence.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 82)
  - d. Please plan to bring all payments up to date by June 13 or before you leave **campus**.  
(T. White, Northwestern University memo, June 4, 1997)

The acceptable bare forms in (19) make up a slightly different set than the nouns used in subject position, but again, the electronic text searches correspond to the intuitions of speakers. Eleven bare singular

nominal types were found to be used as direct objects out of a total of 36 tokens showing these NPs in direct object position; all of these were from the set speakers found to be acceptable in this position.<sup>8</sup>

It is worth noting that speakers qualified many of the nouns in (16) and (19) that they marked as questionable by noting that they do not normally talk about this particular place, so the bare form might be felicitous, but they didn't feel they could provide adequate acceptability judgments. This relates to a factor detailed in Chapter 4, which concerns bare nouns as markers of community membership. For example, a number of rarely found PP forms, such as *in studio*, *on property*, *in kitchen* (referring to a professional chef), and *out of office* (here meaning a secretary's workplace, not a political office)—as well as the bare forms of *church*, *synagogue*, *temple*, and *court*—were most acceptable for speakers who were participants in the subcommunities that attend these places regularly.

What the data in this section reveal, then, is that bare singular nominals can occur as subjects and direct objects. In Chapter 4, I show that each of these syntactic positions is associated with some meaning dif-

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8. After my initial electronic search, I found an additional three direct object types, including two that were not on the original survey: *down-town*, *work*, and *court* (legal).



ferences. Specifically, I demonstrate that bare singular nominal direct objects can be used to convey any one of the three pragmatic senses: Familiarity, Activity, and Generic uses. However, in subject position, bare singular nominals are not used to convey the Familiarity sense; instead, they are used to convey information about the kind of place the noun designates. So, while there is no syntactic restriction on bare form use, there is a pragmatic one.

While we have seen that bare singular nominals occur as both subjects and direct objects of sentences, in the rest of this chapter I will focus on these nominals in their primary position, within locative PPs.

### **3.4 Bare Singular Nominals as Objects in PPs**

PPs of the form [prep + bare singular nominal] are used in the full range of syntactic positions for locative PPs: as predicates, as NP modifiers, as adverbials, and as nominals.

#### **3.4.1 PPs As Predicates**

Predicative PPs may appear in one of two positions. First, they are commonly found following a verb is a copula or a verb of becoming, in which case they predicate something of the subject NP, as shown in (22).

- (22) a. There are twenty-nine students in Brian's homeroom. Two are currently in foster care—one girl because her father is **in prison** for murdering her mother; another girl spent last year in foster care.  
(Susan Sheehan, "Kid, Twelve," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 54)
- b. Shaffer moved to New York from Canada in the summer of 1975 to become a band member on "Saturday Night Live," and ended up **on stage** there frequently as a comedy performer as well.  
(*Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 6, 1996, Tempo section, p. 5)
- c. Our people're already **upriver**, so, tonight, you'll be the guest of a bunch of centipede enthusiasts.  
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./Nov. 1996, p. 117)
- d. When Alexandra was **in bed**, wrapped in hot blankets, Ivar came in with his tea and saw that she drank it.  
(Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*, 1913, Gutenberg etext)

The PPs can also function as predicates that follow direct objects; here they are not attributive post-nominal modifiers, but constituents of an [NP PP] small clause or its notational equivalent (cf. Stowell 1981, 1983; Chomsky 1981) with a resultative-like sense, as illustrated in (23):

- (23) a. There are computers to get kids **on-line**, a television studio donated by WBBM-Channel 2, a news bureau developed in conjunction with Children's Express news service and telephones that will allow visitors to give their opinions as part of a survey.  
(Susy Schultz, "Newest Exhibit Puts Kids Online, on TV," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Oct. 7, 1996, p. 29)

- b. Matsushita chose to keep a handful of Japanese technicians **on site** while most foreigners were evacuated, and the Chinese media made some embarrassing propaganda of that decision.  
(Jeremy Mark, "Foreign Businesses Operating in China Avoid Spotlight They Once Welcomed," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 1, 1989)

### 3.4.2 PPs as Modifiers of Nouns

The second functional role of PPs is as modifiers of a noun, either post-nominal,<sup>9</sup> as shown in (24), or prenominal, as in (25).

- (24) a. Towns **down river** use the Elbe as the source of water for drinking and bathing.  
(Thomas F. O'Boyle, "East Germany Pollution Has No Borders," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 6, 1989)
- b. It remarkably characterised the incomplete morality of the age, rigid as we call it, that a licence was allowed the seafaring class, not merely for their freaks **on shore**, but for far more desperate deeds on their proper element.  
(Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, 1850, Gutenberg etext)
- c. Why don't you meet me at the Parasol on top of the Sunbelt Plaza on Peachtree? Food's not all that hot, but the view is spectacular, and there's really not any place **downtown** that doesn't cater to tourists.  
(Anne River Siddons, *Homeplace*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, p. 239)
- d. I did not awaken him, for sleep **in prison** is such a priceless boon that I have seen men transformed into raging brutes when robbed by one of their fellow-prisoners of a few precious moments of it.  
(Edgar Rice Burroughs, *The Gods of Mars*, 1913, Gutenberg etext)

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9. Many of these have the feel of reduced relative clauses.

- e. My interest was first aroused when a friend of mine **at school** proudly showed me something he had just made. (Norman F. Joly, *The Dawn of Amateur Radio in the U.K. and Greece: A Personal View*, 1990, Gutenberg etext)
- (25) a. The industry also saw the provision as a means to highlight evidence that tankers pose more of an environmental risk than **offshore** rigs. (David Rogers, "Senate Requires Disclosure of Lobbyists In Vote to Clear Natural Resources Bill," *Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 1989)
- b. Planned offerings include listings for the names and locations of **online** library catalog programs, the names of publicly accessible electronic mailing lists, compilations of Frequently Asked Questions lists, and archive sites for the most popular Usenet newsgroups. (Brendan P. Kehoe, *Zen and the Art of the Internet*, 1992, Gutenberg etext)
- c. Hong Kong officials announced last week that the base will be relocated to a small island to allow **downtown** redevelopment. (William Mathewson, "World Wire," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 19, 1989)
- d. "Advertisers are beginning to discover what's going on out here—a style of advertising that's different than the rest of the country," says Geoffrey S. Thompson, senior vice president of ad agency Foote, Cone & Belding's San Francisco office. "We've had a real nice resurgence . . . and it's all **out-of-town** business."<sup>10</sup> (Joanne Lipman, "Small West Coast Shops Strive For Coast-to-Coast Reputations," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 11, 1989)

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10. Style books often recommend that prenominal modifiers of three words or more be hyphenated, and also certain subsets of two-word combinations, but this style varies. Also, while articles are often left out of compound modifiers, there are many exceptions to this as well: *on-the-job-training*, *off-the-shelf clothing*, *over-the-top performance*, and *under-the-table dealings*. Hence it is not only the role in a modifier that accounts for the lack of articles in the examples in (25).

### 3.4.3 PPs as Adverbials

A third role for PPs containing bare nominals is as a verbal modifier.

(See Chapter 3 for a division of adverbial locative PPs into those denoting a point to which the locatum travels and those denoting a location along which or across which the locatum travels.)

- (26)
- a. I couldn't find the words to name all that, and I walked beside Kathryn without saying a thing, all the way **downriver** to her family's home.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 262)
  - b. Many Japanese companies are now producing **off shore**.  
(Ron Yates, *World View* radio broadcast, WBEZ, Chicago, March 14, 1997)
  - c. At the height of his influence, Mr. Granville was a glitzy showman. Chimpanzees romped **on stage** with him; laser lights blazed to entertain the crowds at his investment seminars.  
(John R. Dorfman, "One Fallen Guru Is Rising Again," *Wall Street Journal*, July 28, 1989)
  - d. Beginning, like a book, with a catalog of all the previous works by the same author, it proceeds with a lengthy account of an impassioned theoretical debate following a Paris cineclub screening, then with a love story of sorts, but the film's narrative and dialogue are recounted almost entirely **offscreen**, in voice-overs.  
(Jonathan Rosenbaum, review of *Venom and Eternity*, *Chicago Reader*, June 13, 1997, Section Two, p. 13)
  - e. The global list can also be searched **online**.  
(Jean Armour Poll, *Surfing the Internet*, 1992, Gutenberg etext)

- f. In 1988 they confiscated only half as many stimulants, which Japanese traditionally have used to stay awake **at school** or work, as in 1987, but five times as many “recreational” drugs such as marijuana and hashish. (Damon Darlin, “Japanese Fear New Juvenile Violence Is Sign of Spreading ‘American Disease’,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989)
- g. The beauty of Burnett’s story (the novel, which was published in 1905, is an expanded version of an 1888 novella) is that it presents the battle of youthful fancy against adult “realism” as a kind of epic struggle, fought where it is usually fought—**in school**. (Terrence Rafferty, “The Current Cinema,” *The New Yorker*, May 29, 1995, pp. 92-3)
- h. For in Venezuela, if a company is charged with doing wrong with the nation's money, that company's top executives can sit **in prison**—denied bail—while the case lumbers through an unwieldy legal system. (Jose de Cordoba, “Wanted in Caracas: Many Executives Flee Venezuela in Scandal Over Dollar Reserves,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 24, 1989)
- i. In an invention that drives Verdi purists bananas, Violetta lies dying **in bed** during the prelude, rising deliriously when then she remembers the great parties she used to throw. (Manuela Hoelterhoff, “Mr. Z.'s Cast-Proof ‘Traviata’,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 25, 1989)
- j. At the same time, tens of thousands supposedly are moving **out of state** to escape the hubbub. (Tim W. Ferguson, “Trip Down Memory Freeway,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 7, 1989)

#### 3.4.4 PPs as Locative Subjects and Objects

In the fourth functional role, the PP itself is used to name a particular place, so that the PP functions as an argument rather than a modifier.

While the existence of 'locative subjects,' such as the example in (27a) is well known (Lyons 1977, Stowell 1981, Jaworska 1986, Bresnan 1990, Jones 1998, inter alia), PPs with bare nominals can be used in other nominal positions too, as the examples in (28) illustrate.

- (27) a. **Under the bed** is dusty.  
 b. The area **under the bed** is dusty. [=Jones 1998, (5)]
- (28) a. Instead of his usual monologue, Mr. Hall just shouts "I'm back!" from **offstage** and introduces Ms. Abdul.  
 (Leon E. Wynter, "Ghetto and Suburb Go to a House Party," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 1989)
- b. Although most of the apartment complexes on the auction block were built by Texans, most of the buyers are from **out of state**.  
 (Christi Harlan, "Apartment Complex Sales Brighten a Dark Market," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 5, 1989)
- c. It's an hour forty-five now from O'Hare to **downtown**.  
 (Bill Lindy, Shadow Traffic, WBEZ, Nov. 26, 1997)

While there is some debate as to whether the highlighted expressions illustrated in (27a) and (28) should be considered NPs or PPs (cf. Jackendoff 1983, Williams 1984, Chametzky 1985, Jaworska 1986), these expressions are all composite units of a preposition and NP, and certainly have many qualities of nominals, e.g., the whole PP is used to name a place and is found in positions usually filled by an NP. In (27) that is the subject position, while in (28) the object of a preposition is

the position filled by the PPs. Though bare nouns in PPs can name a specific point or space, when used in this way they are less likely to be found as subjects than as objects of prepositions. PPs can fill these object positions if the referent fills the thematic role of source, goal, or path.

#### 3.4.5 Lexicalized PPs and Orthography

Two issues arise concerning the orthographic conventions of PPs containing bare singular nominals. Note first that the same PP will often vary among publication styles between a solid word, a hyphenated one, or a two-word form, as illustrated in (29) and (30).

- (29) a. The next day a heavy wall of clouds moved **onshore**.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 127)
- b. Gilbert obligingly rowed to the landing and Anne, disdainingly assistance, sprang nimbly **on shore**.  
(Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908, Gutenberg etext)
- (30) a. The full text of publications can be searched **online** and copied from the system, which can accommodate up to ten users at one time.  
(Brendan P. Kehoe, *Zen and the Art of the Internet*, 1992, Gutenberg etext)
- b. Children can get **on-line**, on television, on the phone and in the news in this new exhibit.  
(Susy Schultz, "Newest Exhibit Puts Kids Online, on TV," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Oct. 7, 1996, p. 29)



- c. Given the constraints of time, WEIBEL omitted a large number of ancillary items in order to say a few words concerning storage requirements and what will be required to put a lot of things **on line**.  
(*LOC Workshop on Electronic Texts*, 1992, Gutenberg etext)

Since choice of orthographic form is often arbitrary for uses that are not prenominal, perhaps reflecting a not yet complete diachronic move towards solid forms (Pyles and Algeo 1982, Peters 1994), I have treated all such forms as PPs. However, note that some of the PPs containing bare nominals have true lexicalized equivalents that can serve as synonymous predicates:

- |      |    |            |           |
|------|----|------------|-----------|
| (31) | a. | abed       | in bed    |
|      |    | asea       | at sea    |
|      |    | ashore     | on shore  |
|      |    | aboard     | on board  |
|      | b. | imprisoned | in prison |
|      |    | encamped   | at camp   |

Those in (31a) are true synonyms, while those in (31b) are not symmetrical. For the pairs in (31b), the phrases on the right entail the meaning of the word on the left, while the adjectives on the left have broader metaphorical uses than the meanings of the phrases.

This similarity of PPs to lexical forms is not unusual. As a part of her

evidence that there is a kind of word-formation process that occurs on a phrasal basis, Rauh (1993:131) lists a number of expressions in Modern English now classified as adverbs or prepositions, which have developed out of [P + NP] constructions:

- (32)    aboard        aground        apart  
            abreast        aloud         ashore  
            again         apace         atop

For most lexical/ phrasal pairs where both are still in use, the lexicalized form is more formal, and even archaic. Of these, the members of only one pair (*on board/ aboard*) appear to be interchangeably used in current English. An additional unusual quality of the word *board*—with its semantically opaque and metonymically derived sense of *ship*—is that it is not used in any other count noun situations, e.g., one does not speak of *a beautiful board* or *several boards* in that same sense. In addition, both *on board* and *aboard*, unlike the other PPs in the corpus, serve syntactically as transitive prepositions, as seen in (33).

- (33)    a. Unlike an aircraft's black box, however, the voyage-data recorder doesn't capture the conversations of crew members because the wide distances **on board** a ship would make that impractical.  
           (Daniel Machalaba, "Lloyd's Register 'Black Box' for Ships Meets Resistance From Shipping Lines," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 4, 1989)

- b. Leveritt and Brinkman stepped **aboard** the boat that was to carry them upriver.  
 (Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Sept./ Oct. 1996, p. 122)

In contrast to the uses in (33a), other PPs having bare singular location objects cannot take an NP object:

- (34) a. \*The global list can also be searched **online** the database.  
 b. \*I waded **on shore** the land.  
 c. \*Alexandra was **in bed** a couch.

Although *on board* is exceptional in sometimes serving as a preposition, nonetheless this particular PP is found serving in the other traditional PP functions, such as the adnominal and adverbial uses in (35).

- (35) a. Hours later, the explosive destroyed the Boeing 707 over the Indian Ocean, killing every one of the 115 people **on board**.  
 (William M. Carley, "Study in Terror: How Asian Schoolgirl, Tutored in Espionage, Became Bomber of Jet," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 12, 1989)
- b. Pretty soon we'd have a laundry list of things you could and couldn't bring **on board**, and that could be difficult for our airport screeners to handle.  
 (William M. Carley, "Keeping Terrorists' Bombs Off Airplanes," *Wall Street Journal*, July 28, 1989)

#### 4. Terminology for the Two Referents in Locative Expressions

Since bare singular nominals most often occur in locative PPs, a discussion of the terms for the referents involved in spatial expressions is called for. Following the distinction introduced in Karttunen (1969), I assume the referents of NPs to be not actual objects but discourse entities, that is, mental constructs of the objects denoted; these are taken to exist in the speaker's and hearer's minds—in their discourse model—and may or may not reflect an entity in the real world.

A number of terms have been used to identify the referents of the two positioned entities in a locative expression, designated as A and B in the examples below:

(36)     The cat is in the house.  
          A   B

(37)     Take the book from under the table.  
          A   B

The referent of the A expression, the entity actually being located somewhere, is called the “locatum” in Clark and Clark (1979), and this term is frequently used in lexical semantics. In their works contrasting English, Polish, and Russian prepositions, Weinsberg (1973) and Cienki

(1989) call this referent the “spatial entity being localized” (or the SpE), while they call the referent of the B expression, the actual place or location, the “localizer” (or L-r). In Langacker (1987), the A expression is referred to as the “trajector” (or tr), while the B expression is the “landmark” (or lm).<sup>11</sup> Talmy (1972, 1978), in his studies of motion and location, calls the A expression the “figure” and the B expression the “ground,” based on the use of these terms in Gestalt psychology. Gruber (1965), defining the relations in lexical semantics, refers to the A expression as the “theme” and the B expression as the “reference object.”

This last term is frequently found in discussions of spatial expressions to refer to the entity against which some object is oriented. Herskovits (1985), for example, discusses the traits of the most prototypical reference objects,<sup>12</sup> which include their being large, immobile, and easy to see or contextually salient. However, while the NPs under discussion are found as objects of locative prepositions, the category of reference

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11. While Langacker’s terms are widely adopted by writers using the framework of Cognitive Grammar, I have avoided them here because *trajector* may have unintended connotations of movement or flight and *landmark* may seem to imply an edifice, or at least, an artifact.

12. Herskovits (1986) also uses *located entity* for the A expression and *reference entity* for the B expression.

object is a more inclusive category than would be useful for this study. Reference object covers all sorts of objects that could be named in a PP, such as the smaller referents of the NPs shown in the left-hand column of (38), whereas in the PPs I am discussing, the located object mainly appears as a type of social institution or community location, as shown in the PPs in the right-hand column:

(38) Reference object is	<b>an artifact</b>	<b>a community location</b>
	next to the bicycle	at school
	against the wall	in church
	near the pencil	at camp

For the B term, therefore, I use the term *location* with the understanding that a location is a subtype of reference object, so what holds true for locations may not hold true for all reference objects. For the A term, I use Clark and Clark's term *locatum*. A summary of the terms that have been used for these two referents is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Terms for the Two Referents in Locative Expressions**

<b>Work</b>	<b>Term for A</b>	<b>Term for B</b>
Clark and Clark 1979	Locatum	
Weinsberg 1973 and Cienki 1989	Spatial entity being localized (SpE)	Localizer (L-r)
Langacker 1991	Trajector (tr)	Landmark (lm)
Talmy 1978	Figure	Ground
Gruber 1965	Theme	Reference object
Herskovits 1986	Located entity	Reference entity
Herskovits 1985	Located object	Reference object

All the terms from previous works listed above tell us something about the referents' relation to each other. However, in aiming for the most neutral and basic term that applies to those referents specifically involved in bare singular nominal situations, I use *locatum* and *location* for the referents of the two NPs, except when I am directly quoting another writer.

## **5. Conclusion to Chapter 1**

We saw in this chapter that the set of location nouns that shows up in the bare form is unusual not only in being syntactically marked, but also in being used to convey particular kinds of information about the

location or the locatum. Though superficially resembling count nouns, we see that since only mass nouns can normally occur with neither a determiner nor a plural marker, the forms have some of the distributional traits of both mass nouns and NPs. They are found in subject and object position, but occur most often in PPs. While it is not unusual for count nouns to shift into mass noun uses in certain contexts, the constructions under examination are not used in such contexts. What it means to be a mass or a count form is an area I will explore in Chapter 2.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Mass Nouns and Count Nouns

#### 1. Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the categories of mass and count and how they apply to English location nouns that are used as bare singular nominals. I will show how these nouns help us to determine the point at which speakers decide whether a noun is mass or count; in particular, I question whether putative count nouns such as *school*, *church*, and *camp* should be considered count nouns when they are used in the bare singular form. I explore mass/ count in two directions: first, just as definiteness has been shown to have both cognitive criteria (of referent identifiability and activation in the discourse) and formal grammatical markers (determiners, capitalization of proper names) (cf. Lambrecht 1994), so too can countability be analyzed as both a cognitive view (of a referent's individuatedness) and a formal grammatical marking (through determiners or plural morphemes). As with definiteness, the two aspects of the mass/ count distinction do not always have a one-to-one correlation in language use. Secondly, in questioning whether the

mass/ count distinction is itself oversimplified or inappropriate in the case of some nouns, I conclude that all instances of the mass/ count distinction should be determined on the basis of discourse context alone. Thus, mass/ count does not affect the word level (i.e., lexical nouns are underspecified for countability); instead, formal mass/ count marking is a feature of noun phrases. I conclude that the mistaken association of bare nouns with countability can be clarified by the crucial separation of lexical nouns from sometimes identical full NPs and intermediate N-bar level constituents, each of which encodes a different type of semantic information.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. The Traditional Mass/ Count Distinction**

### **2.1 Dividing Languages by Noun Types**

According to Gillon (1992), count nouns and mass nouns were first discussed as relevant to English in the second volume of Jespersen's 1909 work on English grammar. Since then, this distinction has played a major role in descriptions of English article use as well as in comparisons of English nominals with those of other languages. Greenberg's work on language universals (1978b), for example, discusses the

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1. In this work I am assuming a three level X-bar system for nominals, though my conclusions regarding the interpretation of bare singulars as phrasal rather than lexical items could be accommodated in a DP framework as well.

mass/ count distinction as it appears in a number of languages, both those that use noun classifiers and those that do not. He notes that the mass/ count distinction interacts in different ways with such morphemes as classifiers, articles, and definiteness markers. Thus, it might seem that a system based on the mass/ count distinction is orthogonal to noun class systems.

Gil (1987:255), on the other hand, argues for a division between classifier and non-classifier languages that can be more precisely distinguished by using an NP typology that is “a joint product of the two co-varying parameters of configurationality and the count-mass distinction.” Using this system, English-type languages are characterized by having configurational NPs (which means lexical nouns have a different distribution than either N-bars or full noun phrases) as well as by a distinction between count and mass nouns. Languages such as Japanese, on the other hand, have non-configurational (or flat) NPs and treat all nouns as mass. Gil suggests that obligatory morphosyntactic marking of (in)definiteness and of nominal plurality are just two of seven correlates of the +configurationality and +mass/ count parameters, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Language Types Correlating with NP Types**  
 (adapted from Gil 1987:256)

	+ <b>configurational</b> + <b>mass/ count</b> (e.g., English)	- <b>configurational</b> - <b>mass/ count</b> (e.g., Japanese)
Obligatory marking of (in)definiteness	+	-
Obligatory marking of nominal plurality	+	-
Obligatory marking of numeral classification	-	+
Existence of adnominal distributive numerals	-	+
Free NP-internal constituent order	-	+
Existence of stacked adnominal numeral constructions	-	+
Existence of hierarchic interpretations of stacked adjective constructions	+	-

These first two correlates—or rather, their absence—come into play in discussing bare singular nominals, as we will see in the following discussion of the mass/ count issue.

## 2.2 Evidence for the Mass/ Count Distinction

In languages like English, which grammatically contrast mass and count nouns, the semantics of the mass/ count distinction is reflected in the way that speakers treat nouns whose referents are considered distinct countable things (e.g., *cat*, *table*, and *book*) versus ones whose referents are treated as an uncountable mass (e.g., *water*, *rice*, and *clothing*).<sup>2</sup> Syntactic evidence for the two types is easy to come by: traditional

2. Mass nouns do not necessarily have referents which are physically indivisible; the referents of *rice* and *clothing*, for example, are both composed of individual units in the real world. Instead, mass nouns are

indicators of count nouns in ESL grammars (e.g., Azar 1981) and reference grammars (e.g., Quirk et al. 1985) list the presence of indefinite determiners *a(n)* or *another* with the singular form, the quantifiers *few*, *many*, *several*, or *some* with the plural form, and the nouns' use as subject with plural verb forms. In addition, Baker (1978) notes that the pronoun *one* can have as its antecedent a count noun, but not a mass noun. These diagnostics are listed in (1). Examples of the markers used with count nouns are given in (2).

(1) Diagnostics for count noun use

- a. indefinite determiners: *a(n)*, *another*
- b. cardinal numbers
- c. these quantifiers with plural nouns: *few*, *many*, *several*, *some*
- d. plural morphemes
- e. use with plural verb forms
- f. possible antecedent for *one(s)*

(2) Count noun examples

- a. Sam has a cat/ another cat/ \*cat.
- b. Sam has sixteen cats.
- c. Sam has many cats/ some cats/ several cats/ few cats/ \*too much cat/ \*little cat/ \*some cat.
- d. I don't like cats.
- e. The cats are very sleepy.
- f. I was looking for a new couch<sub>i</sub>, but I finally bought a used one<sub>i</sub>.

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those that speakers refer to collectively (e.g., *there is rice on my plate*, vs. *there are 136 rices on my plate*). To speak of individual units of a mass noun material requires something along the lines of a classifier, e.g., six *grains of* rice, four *pieces of* furniture, five *items of* clothing.

Mass nouns, on the other hand, are generally identified by not taking plural morphemes or appearing with plural verb forms, as well as by their use with the modifiers *much*, *little*, *a great deal of*, and unstressed *some* with the singular noun form. Mass diagnostics are listed in (3) and examples of mass noun uses are shown in (4).

(3) Diagnostics for mass noun use

- a. indefinite determiners: zero or unstressed *some*
- b. not used with plural verb forms
- c. not used with plural morphemes; these quantifiers with singular forms: *much*, *little*, *a great deal of*
- d. not a possible antecedent for *one*

(4) Mass noun examples

- a. My house contains \*a furniture/ \*another furniture/ furniture/ some furniture
- b. The furniture is very old/ \*The furniture(s) are very old.
- c. My house contains \*furnitures/ \*many furnitures/ \*some furnitures/ too much furniture/ a great deal of furniture
- d. \*I was looking for new furniture<sub>i</sub>, but I finally bought (a) used one<sub>i</sub>.

### 3. Contexts Influencing Mass or Count Uses

One problem with diagnostics such as those exemplified in (2) and (4), however, is that depending on the situation, many nouns can be used as either a mass or a count form. These mass/ count alternations result in “dual words,” with meanings produced by a number of types of metonymy (see Jespersen 1924:198-201). Examples of some dual words from

different semantic categories are given in (5).

	<b>mass use</b>	<b>count use</b>
(5) a. <b>count foods</b> <sup>3</sup>	a great deal of apple some potato not much chicken	three apples some potatoes many chickens
b. <b>material</b>	lots of gold a lot of steel was used too much chocolate a great deal of tofu	a metallic gold a steel that weathers six chocolates a firmer tofu
c. <b>makeup</b>	wearing too little chapstick wearing too much lipstick a great deal of rouge	buy a new chapstick hand me a red lipstick a rouge for darker skin
d. <b>abstract terms</b>	much experience a little talent too much theory	many experiences few talents too many theories

Gillon (1992:601) briefly discusses such dual status words but dismisses them as either the result of a special process of type-shifting (see below) or the historical application of such a rule, which leaves more opaque cases of polysemy/ homophony. These types of shifting, however, are productive, robust processes. To illustrate, I will discuss three of the contexts which commonly induce this typeshifting: in 3.1, I show how the demolition of a count noun's referent can lead to a part or all of its material being used as a mass form (so-called "grinder effects"); in

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3. These are examples of foods that are count nouns before they are ground up, while some other foods are mass nouns when the food is intact and so are often used with classifiers, e.g., *broccoli*, *parsley* – see Mufwene (1995) for a wide range of these.

3.2, I discuss how a setting that requires indicating the size of a serving or purchased unit of a substance can turn a mass noun into a count noun; and in 3.3, I show that referring to a natural kind can turn a mass noun into a count noun. These three situations are discussed in detail below.

### 3.1 Grinder Effects

Pelletier (1975) first proposed the idea of a huge “universal grinder” able to pulverize any object. The ground-up output of this device can be referred to by the same word as the original object, but now is used as a mass noun. Hence you could felicitously utter the examples in (6) concerning the output of such a grinder.

- (6) a. Be careful not to let any bits of **table** get mixed in with the sand.  
 b. Look, you’ve got **shoe** all over your sleeve.

Other works have investigated the grinder scenarios. For example, Akiyama and Wilcox (1993) studied children’s choice of lexical form for referring to material before and after being ground. A grinder test was presented in which mass substances (e.g., water) were shown to maintain identity through transformation, while objects (e.g., cup) do not. Children were asked if the same name could be used for the same item



after it was ground up. Children accepted the same name for food, ignoring syntactic mass/ count information; they accepted the same name for objects, but here relied on mass/ count markers. When they were asked if the same name could be used after transformation of unfamiliar hardware items and food items that had been labeled by nonsense mass and count nouns, children still tended to use the same name for food, relying this time on perceptual information concerning the object's shape.

As Akiyama and Wilcox's study shows, although any number of items can go into the universal grinder, some objects, such as food, are more likely to occur in a whole or ground-up state in the real world. This exposure influences our sense that some referents are inherently more mass or count. However, there is a large measure of arbitrariness in the assignment of an object to a mass or count type word.<sup>4</sup> In many cases the same entity can be named by both mass and count forms, as shown by the following examples:

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4. The choice of words a speaker uses to refer to carbonated soft drinks varies by region in the U.S. In some dialects, however, these terms are not always used interchangeably. In my dialect at least, *soda* can be either a mass or count term, while *pop* is only mass.

	<b>mass</b>	<b>count</b>
(7)	clothing	garments
	cattle	cows
	equipment	tools
	spaghetti	noodles
	footwear	shoes

(examples from Mufwene 1984:201; McCawley 1975)

### 3.2 Serving Size

The second instance of typeshifting, this one taking words from mass to count forms, occurs often, though not exclusively, with foods, beverages, or cosmetics. For example, the substance that is in my glass at dinner is water, which is generally referred to by a mass form, as in, “I’ll have some water.” However, if three people at my table order glasses of water, then the substance is saliently considered as divided into servings, and we can speak of ordering “three waters,” using a count form. The examples in (8) and (9) further illustrate contexts allowing a count reading from a traditionally mass noun.

- (8) a. Red **meat** has more fat than chicken or fish. (mass)  
 b. Donna’s diabetic diet required her to eat two starches and one **meat** in the early evening. (count)
- (9) a. There is **cola** in this glass, not iced tea! (mass)  
 b. We’d like two diet **colas** and one beer. (count)

### 3.3 Natural Kinds

A third instance of typeshifting from mass to count forms occurs when mass nouns are used to refer to a type or natural kind. It is especially frequent with material terms, as shown in (11a), and with color terms, illustrated in (11b).

- (10) a. There are only three bottled **waters** on the market (count)  
           that I like.  
       b. The samples brought in to the lab represent (count)  
           three different **waters**.
- (11) a. I need a **steel** that will not rust. (count)  
       b. I am deciding between two **reds** for the kitchen wall. (count)

Bunt (1985:11) characterizes this mass into count mapping as a “universal sorter,” in contrast to Pelletier’s universal grinder. Bunt (1985:11) describes the context for this typeshifting as follows:

Conversely, we can imagine a machine that takes as input a continuous stream of any substance (wine, linen, etc.), performs inspections according to colour, alcohol percentage, strength, etc., and issues qualifications like ‘This is an excellent wine; This is a strong linen’, etc.

Pelletier and Schubert (1989:343) call the same device a “universal objectifier.”

### 3.4 Interfacing with the Real World

Casey (1997) notes that while examples such as (5)-(11) are problematic

for the intuitive view that count nouns are used to refer to discrete objects and mass nouns to refer to non-solid substances, they are not necessarily evidence of complete semantic arbitrariness. According to him, “the real world extensions of *bullets* and *ammunition* may be identical, but the corresponding concepts need not be. The difference may lie in how we construe these entities” (Casey 1997:19). He follows recent theorists (e.g., Carroll 1978; Lakoff 1987; Bloom 1990, 1994a; Jackendoff 1991; Mufwene 1984; Wierzbicka 1988; Wisniewski et al. 1996) in suggesting that “count/ mass syntax maps not simply to entities in the world, but rather to the cognitive construal of those entities as individuals or unindividuated entities” (Casey 1997:20). Casey calls this view, which holds that the count/ mass distinction is grounded in a cognitive rather than an ontological distinction between individuals and unindividuated entities, the “cognitive individuation hypothesis.”<sup>5</sup> Casey does not exclude syntactic features such as modifier type or number from

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5. Of course, the mass/ count distinction should not be considered our only lexical representation of cognitive categories. In a LINGUIST posting relating how Whorf’s original explanation of different words for snow has been misinterpreted, Tony Woodbury lays out several such categorizations that speakers encode in language:

Words don't merely match pre-existing things in the world. Rather, they shape and encapsulate ideas about things—how they are categorized (compare *dog* vs. *canine*), how we are interacting with them (compare *sheep* vs. *mutton*), how the word functions grammatically (compare the noun *cow* vs. the adjective *bovine*), and how we wish to represent our attitudes about them (compare *critter* vs. *varmint*).

playing a role in generating semantic differences in count/ mass constructions, but suggests that such markers alone cannot adequately account for all meaning differences; in other words, conceptual differences in count/ mass category representations also exert significant influence.

Similarly, in considering whether the domain of the count-mass distinction is semantic or pragmatic, Gil (1987:267) concludes on the basis of shifts like the three mentioned above that the distinction is pragmatic, albeit showing grammatical reflexes. His evidence includes the way that a speaker's acknowledgement of "a natural unit of enumeration depends on a number of contextual factors," which is why in languages that reflect the mass/ count distinction, "an appropriate context can be constructed to convert almost any mass noun into a count noun" (Gil 1987:267).

### **3.5 Conclusion to Section 3**

Gil's language typology, with its seven possible ways in which noun phrases may be used in a language (shown above in Table 3), works well in systematizing the pertinent differences among languages and allowing

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(Tony Woodbury, Message 2/ 75 From The Linguist List, Subject: 5.1239 Eskimo "snow," Nov. 6 1994, Subject: 'Snow' lexemes in Yup'ik)

an examination of definiteness and mass nouns that does not rely solely on English forms. But like many discussions of the mass/ count distinction, it makes overly broad claims concerning the obligatory marking of mass/ count and plurality. In particular, it fails to account for a language like English having forms in which a count noun occurs without either plural markers or articles. What we find further muddies the water(s) is that not only do some nouns seem to fit into both mass and count categories in different contexts (e.g., the dual status nouns created by typeshifting contexts), but that the bare singular forms appear in contexts which seem to fit into neither category.

On the basis of experiments with superordinate terms, Casey (1997:107) argues that “syntax affects both the ease with which we instantiate categories and the inferences we make about them.” His work indicates that “the contexts in which count and mass terms are used vary systematically, with count nouns used in describing individual interactions or parts, and mass nouns used in relating group interactions” (Casey 1997: 107). He concludes that “much of the existing evidence supports the contention that count and mass entities are distinguished by an abstract principle of individuation, with count items marking individuals and mass terms signifying unindividuated portions or groups” (Casey

1997:2). Again, however, the truly problematic terms are those that appear in settings where they lack syntactic identifiers as either mass or count.

Gil's inclusion of NP-internal configurationality, however, offers a way out of this situation. As I noted earlier (Chapter 1, Section 2.2), bare singular nominals have much in common with maximal rather than lexical projections, thus we should consider that the marking of mass/ count does not apply at the NP level. That is, if bare singular nominals are NPs, we would not expect them to take articles or plural markers. Nonetheless, the nouns that make up the bare singular nominals are unusual in not formally revealing their mass/ count status.

#### 4. Nouns That are Neither Mass nor Count

In addition to the typeshifting contrasts, other noun uses occur in which the nouns are not identifiably either mass or count. Pelletier and Schubert (1989:343) list examples which include the following types:

##### (12) Modifier nouns in N-N compounds

- a. Lee ran into the **brick** wall while she was sniffing **nose** drops.
- b. The **water meter** man hit the **snow** man which held the **tape** recorder.

## (13) Location nouns in PPs

While in **prison**, Lee felt at **home** only when he was in (the) **hospital**.

As instances of mass or count forms, most of these examples are unclear because they lack individuating determiners, our main syntactic identifier of noun type. A further example is shown by constructions consisting of “groups of nouns, either in enumerations or when the words are arranged in pairs connected by a conjunction or a preposition” (Ahlgren 1946:190; also see Quirk et al 1985:28). These nouns generally also appear in the bare form; some examples are shown in

(14).

- (14) a. Kerens could remember the unending succession of green twilights that had settled behind them as he and Riggs moved slowly northward across Europe, leaving one city after another, the miasmatic vegetation swamping the narrow canals and crowding from **rooftop** to **rooftop**.  
(J. G. Ballard, *Drowned World*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1962, p. 17)  
(cf. \*vegetation crowding to rooftop)
- b. walking from **kitchen** to **bathroom**  
(cf. \*he walked to bathroom)
- c. Silkowitz had a hand in everything, running from **corner** to **corner**, his long girlish hair rippling, the sliver thumb ring reddening in the light of the “Exit” sign whenever he glided past it. (Cynthia Ozick, “Actors,” *The New Yorker*, Oct. 5, 1998, p. 89-90)  
(cf. \*running to corner, his girlish hair rippling...)



- d. In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from **face** to **skirt** with the crimson drops.  
(Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, New York: Bantam Books, 1971 [1891], p. 27)  
(cf. \*She became splashed to/ at/ on skirt)
- e. Since 1987, it's been a Performance Today tradition to journey through the country, from **church** to **auditorium** to **town hall**, sharing in celebration of the holidays.  
(<http://www.npr.org/programs/pt/command/CDs.html>)  
(cf. \*to journey through the country to auditorium)
- f. They led me down **hall** after **hall**, until, ahead, I saw a double set of doors marked MORGUE.  
(Philip K. Dick, *Radio Free Albemuth*, 1985, New York: Arbor House, p. 201)  
(cf. \*They led me down hall, until)

In addition, predicate nominals are often found in bare singular form:

- (15) a. Tom was both **father** and **mother** to the child.
- b. She was **president** for two terms.
- c. He was **best man** at his brother's wedding.

All of the uses in (12)-(15) could be considered bare singular nominals, although it is the location nouns in PPs, with their particular added sense of Activity and Familiarity, that will be the focus of this work.

Should bare forms be considered inherently count nouns that shift to mass forms in certain contexts? If not, how do we explain their behavior? Are they count or mass forms at all when they are in the bare form? Since information from determiners and affixes is lacking, syn-

tactic distribution offers another perspective. By checking the positions in which the nouns occur and the modifier types with which they can co-occur, Soja (1994) shows that the bare nouns act like neither mass nor count forms—not like lexical nouns at all—but like full noun phrases.

Starting with the observation that these words show unusual behavior for count nouns, Soja argues that when they appear without determiners, nouns such as *church*, *camp*, *school*, etc. are, in fact, not count nouns, but represent a third type of common noun, distinct from either mass or count nouns. As evidence, she points out that although they appear in bare form, something only mass nouns usually do, these nouns differ from mass nouns in not being able to appear with the mass-noun determiner *much*:

	<b>with no determiner</b>	<b>nominal type</b>
(16)	a. <b>Evidence</b> was called for.	mass noun
	b. <b>Camp</b> lasted a month	bare singular
	c. * <b>Cat</b> stayed in the house	regular count noun
	<b>with mass noun modifiers</b>	<b>nominal type</b>
(17)	a. *They owned much <b>cats</b> .	count noun
	b. *They placed it in much <b>buckets</b> .	count noun
(18)	a. *She is in much <b>school</b> .	bare noun
	b. *He is at too much <b>camp</b> .	bare noun

The examples in (17) and (18) do show a similarity of bare nouns to count nouns—particularly when they describe a single moment in space or time. For uses of the bare forms that do not occur in locative PPs, however, Soja’s determiner contrast does not hold up. As the examples in (19) show, in a context where enough time has accumulated to produce a quantity of experiences at a site, or where the noun can be interpreted as an activity rather than a location, mass noun modifiers are more acceptable with the same nouns:

- (19) a. He had been to so much **camp** that he could always find the North star.  
 b. He attended too much **church** last year; now he wants to be a priest.  
 c. Too much **school** is hard on a kid.

In addition to the similarities seen in (17) and (18) of bare singular forms in PPs to count nouns, Soja notes that bare nominals, unlike many types of full noun phrases, sometimes appear with count noun determiners such as *a*:

- |         | <b>with count noun determiners</b> | <b>nominal type</b> |
|---------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| (20) a. | * This is an <b>evidence</b> .     | mass noun           |
| b.      | This is a <b>camp</b> .            | bare singular       |
| c.      | This is a <b>cat</b> .             | regular count noun  |

The determiner tests, rather than indicating that bare forms are neither count nor mass, might also be considered evidence that they can be construed as either. I suggest that the tests in (16)-(20) simply show that context and the choice of determiner can force a mass or count reading on an ambiguous nominal form.

A more revealing set of tests that Soja presents are the ones that show that bare nominals share the distribution of full noun phrases, including pronouns and proper nouns, two lexical noun types which serve as full noun phrases. In particular, bare singular nominals cannot appear with pronominal adjectives, yet do appear with predicate adjectives (Soja 1994:268). These properties are illustrated in (21) and (22).

	<b>with pronominal adjectives</b>	<b>nominal type</b>
(21)	a. *This is nice <b>camp</b> .	bare noun
	b. *This is nice <b>the building</b> .	full noun phrase
	c. *This is nice <b>lamp</b> .	regular count noun
	d. This is nice <b>water</b> .	mass noun
	<b>with predicate adjectives</b>	<b>nominal type</b>
(22)	a. <b>Camp</b> is nice.	bare noun
	b. <b>This building</b> is nice.	full noun phrase
	c. * <b>Lamp</b> is nice.	regular count noun
	d. <b>Water</b> is nice.	mass noun

The examples in (16)-(22) show that the bare forms sometimes have the

distribution of count nouns—in (17), (18), (20), and (21)—and sometimes have the distribution of mass nouns—in (16), (19), and (22). Notably, in (21) and (22), their distribution is the same as that of full noun phrases. Soja (1994) accordingly refers to the group of nouns that can occur as bare singular nominals as ‘NP-type nouns’.

#### 4.1 More X-Bar Level Tests for Bare Singular Nominals

To further verify that bare singular nominals are indeed full phrasal constituents, consider the following evidence. Syntacticians have long noted that a single unmodified noun can have the same distribution as a noun phrase when it is a plural noun such as *cars* or a mass noun such as *clothing* (e.g., Bloomfield 1935, Harris 1946). But bare forms are more unusual in the singular. To see if bare singular forms could indeed be functioning as a phrasal category, as Soja’s diagnostics suggest, I tested the nominals using the full array of diagnostics enumerated by Radford (1988:84-90) for constituency and X-bar status. These are listed in (23). The results are demonstrated in (24)-(28).

(23) Only full phrases

- can be coordinated with another full XP (ordinary coordination)
- can share a constituent in coordination
- can be replaced by a pro-XP constituent  
(for NPs this would be pronouns)
- can be preposed
- can serve as sentence fragments

In the examples that follow, the material in brackets was added to an attested example.

(24) **Ordinary Coordination**<sup>6</sup>

**Camp** and **her grandmother's farm** were where she was happiest.

In (24) the bare singular nominal *camp* is conjoined to the full noun phrase *her grandmother's farm*, showing that *camp* is serving as a full phrasal constituent here.

(25) **Shared Constituent Coordination**

- a. She got up and walked slowly toward **camp**  
[and **the comfort of a hot meal**]  
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./Nov. 1996, p. 118)
- b. The men can defeat immunities that states often assert in **court** [and **other legal settings**] by showing that officials knew or should have known that design of the structure was defective and that they failed to make reasonable changes.  
(Anne Newman, "Asbestos Once Used in Kent Filters Led To Workers' Cancer Deaths, Group Says," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 2, 1989)

In (25a), the preposition *toward* can be shared by the bare form *camp* as well as the full noun phrase used in the following phrase. Likewise, in

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6. This test is different from the paired bare forms in (14) in that it includes an overt full noun phrase as one coordinated element.

(25b) the bare form *court* shares the preposition *in* with the full noun phrase *other legal settings*. The examples in (25), then, show that the bare singular nominal forms *camp* and *court* are functioning as full noun phrase objects within their PPs.

(26) **Substitution by a Pro-NP**

- a. Not that I had any special reasons for hating **school**.  
(Max Beerbohm, *Going Back to School*, in The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.39)
- b. Not that I had any special reasons for hating **it**.
- c. Need help setting up **camp**?  
(Bill Amend, *Fox Trot* cartoon, Aug. 15, 1996.)
- d. Need help setting **it** up?

In (26), the pro-form *it* is used to replace *school* and *camp* showing that these words are NPs here.

(27) **Preposing**

- a. Manson will undoubtedly never leave **jail**, but the book that maintains his infamy also maintains his fame. (Alex Ross, "The Shock of the True," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 71)
- b. **Jail** Manson will undoubtedly never leave.

In (27), the fact that *jail* can be preposed shows it must be a complete phrasal category here, hence it must be an NP.

(28) **Sentence Fragments**

- a. **College** was not necessary, nor was a well-paying job.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 118)
- b. What wasn't necessary? College. (NP type noun)
- c. What wasn't necessary? \*Job. (Bare regular count noun)
- d. What wasn't necessary? A well-paying job. (full noun phrase)

In (28b), the bare singular nominal *college* suffices as a fragment answer, just as the full noun phrase does in (28d). This contrasts with the count noun fragment in (28c). In (28a), therefore, *college* acts like a maximal projection.

Tests such as those in (24)-(28) redirect our focus concerning one of the puzzles related to the bare forms, which is, why do these count nouns show up without articles? The answer is that they are not count nouns. In fact, the term *count noun* itself is misleading, for, as I will argue, *nouns* are not the units that represent count/ mass at all—some higher constituent, N-bar, or NP does so (see Allan 1980). In addition, while syntactic countability markers like articles are one way to indicate NP status, I will argue that other factors such as the semantic subset of the noun, and the discourse context in which the noun is found, also influence the interpretation.



## 4.2 Some Traditional Mass Nouns Also Serve as Bare Singular Nominals

As we saw, certain contexts, like the three typeshifting scenarios discussed in Section 3, allow many words to have both a count noun reading and a mass noun reading. It is on the basis of such ‘dual word’ contrasts that Soja seeks to show a contrast between NP-type nouns and count nouns, as shown in (29).

- (29) a. Did you enjoy **camp** last summer?  
(NP-type noun sense)  
b. Did you visit three **camp**s in June?  
(count noun sense)

While it is clear that many ostensible count nouns used in the bare form should actually fall into this new NP-type noun category, it is also important to consider the converse. What about ostensible mass nouns—could some of these also have NP-type noun uses? I propose that there are also a few traditional mass nouns, including *work*, *day-care*, and *property*, which, like the NP-type nouns, are found as bare singular nominals. Such nouns are a much smaller percentage of the bare nominal collection than the putative count nouns. However, they are likely candidates to be bare singular nominals because they are found in the same constructions (locative PPs) and have the same semantic features (habitual, socially identified spaces) that the putative count noun

tokens do in their most distinct bare singular instances. That is, unlike most of the mass nouns that appeared in the CHILDES data that Soja examined, which mainly contained mass nouns naming artifacts or material (*clay, bread, grass*), likely bare singular nominals that might at first appear to be mass nouns would name community locations.

In (30)-(32) below, I show that while the location senses of *work, day-care*, and *property* are not normally considered count nouns, by observing their use with the indefinite article *a*, we can see that in some uses, neither are they mass nouns. In other words, the bare form of a noun is not necessarily a sign of a mass noun. Thus, there are not just bare/ count, but also bare/ mass alternations.

- (30) a. They say the Republican reliance on tax credits for families wouldn't provide enough overall assistance and wouldn't do anything to improve the quality, or increase the supply, of **day care**.  
(Cathy Trost, "Legislation Faces Reshaping With Senate Conferees, And Bush's Opposition," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 6, 1989)
- b. The first thing women want is more **day care** for their children.  
(Urban Lehner and Kathryn Graven, "Quiet Revolution: Japanese Women Rise In Their Workplaces, Challenging Tradition," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 6, 1989)

- (31) a. Of the five who completed the program, four were receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children at the beginning of the program. Four were also working at least part-time and the other was volunteering at a neighborhood **day care**.  
(Clarence Page, *Chicago Tribune*. Sept. 4, 1996, Section 1, p.19)
- b. If your kids are in daycare, or if you run a **daycare**, ...  
[here's something you want to hear]  
(KARE 11 News, Minneapolis, Jan. 24, 1997)
- (32) a. Nahoko Hayashida says her bosses at Japan's national television network, NHK, let her leave work a few minutes early to retrieve her son from **day care**, but the 32-year-old production coordinator believes this concession is extended in return for her tacit agreement not to compete with men for certain top jobs.  
(Urban Lehner and Kathryn Graven, "Quiet Revolution: Japanese Women Rise In Their Workplaces, Challenging Tradition," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 6, 1989)  
**= his daycare center**
- b. She's [the young child of an ill mother] having some problems in **daycare**.  
(K. Schmitt, phone conversation, Sept. 1996)  
**= her daycare center**

The examples in (30) show traditional mass uses of *daycare* (the most common use) in which the noun is used to refer to a kind of service; those in (31) show the count noun use formed via a clipping of the compound *daycare center*; while those in (32) show bare singular uses in which a particular institution is anchored to one of the discourse participants.

As will be shown in Chapter 3, in addition to fitting the general semantic

sense for bare social/ geographical spaces, namely, as a place where a person habitually spends a set amount of time, *daycare* also fits into one of the main semantic subsets, that of educational settings, a category which also includes *school, college, kindergarten, junior high, yeshiva*, and many other bare singular nominal types.

Further examples in (33) and (34) involve *work* and *property*, two other words which are often considered to be mass nouns. Although the sense of *work* synonymous with *labor* is normally used as a mass noun (e.g., “some work and some play is necessary each day”), there is also a location sense that acts more like a shortened form of *one’s work place*. This possessive use will be discussed in Chapter 4, but for now the aspects that are relevant are that the word can occur as a bare singular nominal in which the referent is identified as a specific place:

- (33) a. On Monday morning, Nathan drives Penny to **work**.  
 (Susan Sheehan, “Kid, Twelve,” *The New Yorker*, Aug.19, 1996, p. 53)  
 = **her work place**
- b. Seventeen-year-old Junko Furuta was riding her bike home from **work** last spring when a gang of teen-age boys kidnapped her.  
 (Damon Darlin, “Japanese Fear New Juvenile Violence Is Sign of Spreading 'American Disease,’” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989 )  
 = **her work place**

- c. I brought a portable radio in to **work**.  
(Radio talk show transcript)  
= **my work place**
- d. He put in a call to Cunningham from his hotel room. The maid answered and he decided Nancy must be at **work**.<sup>7</sup>  
(Brown Corpus, L07 0020)  
= **her work place**

*Property* is also generally used as a mass noun, as we see when homeowners speak of “owning a little bit of property.” Realtors, however, conceptualize property as an individuated commodity, and so speak of “showing six properties” in a certain region. As a bare singular nominal, however, the form is used in a way that designates a particular piece of property:

- (34) a. Here’s a package of things to do on **property**.  
(Check-in clerk at a resort in Cape Cod, July 28, 1996)
- b. For guests who are staying “on **property**,” the effect is to feel always within an environment controlled and made safe for them. They imagine themselves sealed off from the rest of the state, its crime and encroaching poverty, though technically they are not.  
(The Project on Disney, *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995, p. 114)

In summary, *daycare*, *work*, and *property* are all putative mass nouns that also have bare singular nominal uses, and occur in PPs where they

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7. This sense of *at work* is distinct from the non-locational sense where it is opposed to *at play*.

are used to designate a particular location that is anchored to one of the discourse participants—the meaning of other bare singular nominals used in Familiarity Implicature. What is notable is that, unlike all other bare singular nominals discussed so far (e.g., *school*, *camp*, *home*, *prison*), these are putatively mass nouns.

Lack of formal markers of countability, then, does not indicate that the NP's referent is unindividuated (i.e., that it is a mass use), but only that count/ mass is not highlighted as a relevant feature in this use. The same nouns in other NPs may be marked for countability. This is not surprising if we consider the bare forms to be not nouns, but NPs.

As further support for positing a new noun type, Soja (1994:280) presents evidence from language acquisition, suggesting that children are able to distinguish NP-type nouns from both count nouns and mass nouns at around the same time that they are working out the mass/ count distinction. However, this distinction could also be accounted for by concluding that what she really has evidence of is that children distinguish NPs from lexical nouns at the same time they distinguish mass and count nouns.

## 5. Questioning the Mass/ Count Dichotomy

While a system such as that laid out in Gil (1987) is useful in describing the differences between English and classifier languages by indicating that English has obligatory marking of nouns as either mass or count, we have seen that a number of situations arise in which nouns are used in English without being formally marked for definiteness or indefiniteness and also without being marked as singular or plural. This means that identifying the nouns as either mass or count is difficult. The set of bare singular nominals, culled from a corpus of naturally occurring data, provides an interesting testing ground for fine tuning a theory of noun categorization, including the issues listed in (35).

- (35) • Is the mass/ count distinction only binary?  
 • Is its marking obligatory for each noun use?  
 • Is one form of dual status words the primary one?  
 • Can words be considered underspecified for either mass or count?

Before presenting the way in which I see bare singular nominals as clues to how we should answer the questions in (35), I will first examine four previous approaches, sketched in 5.1-5.4 below, which have argued for a revision of the traditional view of the mass/ count distinction, examining each to see how it accounts for bare singular nominal uses.

### 5.1 A Third Co-hyponym to Count and Mass

Soja (1994) is the first to treat the supposed count forms, which most often appear in PPs, as a separate class of nouns. Soja's findings in analyzing language acquisition data suggest a need to break out of the binary opposition. Her solution is to posit a third type of noun; these nouns at first appear to be count nouns, but in certain constructions do not fit the behavior of either mass or count. Her evidence is consistent with Gil's connection of countability to nominal configurationality, since her third noun category is identified by having the distribution of a full phrasal category, which she calls "NP-type nouns."

Soja starts on the right path by noting that bare singular nominals exhibit marked syntactic behavior, but does not go on to treat bare singular nominal forms as NPs or to fully distinguish the nouns from the NPs that contain them. Finally, her analysis falls short by continuing to maintain that count/ mass is a distinction at the noun level.

The NP-like distribution of bare singular nominals is important to note, although clearly other word types are capable of standing alone as NPs: proper nouns (*Mary*), plural count nouns (*cats*), and mass nouns (*water*). What is more unusual is the fact that by not occurring in mass



noun distribution and by lacking determiners, bare singular forms do not show syntactic signs typical of either mass or count forms, definite or indefinite uses. On the other hand, these bare singular forms do show meanings that, like definite and indefinite NPs, can be shown to correspond to particular referring functions. For example, the ability of some bare singular nominals to pick out specific places (as in the case of those used for Familiarity Implicature) means these nominals also have NP-like definite referring abilities. Understanding the referential uses of the bare marked forms of these “nouns,” therefore, is another clue that it is the English NP typology, rather than its noun typology, that is under discussion. However, since not all nouns appear as bare singular nominals, a study of the particular nouns so used—what could truly be called a study of NP-type nouns—is necessary, as I will show in Chapter 3. To do that, however, it is important to distinguish between the nouns and their uses as NPs.

## **5.2 The Contrast Exists, But Not in the Nouns**

Another approach to altering traditional thinking on the mass/ count distinction is presented by Muromatsu (1995). She suggests that the mass/ count distinction is not inherent in nouns at all, but instead, that countness and massness are characteristics conferred by classifiers and

measure words, respectively, elements which she finds in English as well as Japanese-type languages. Under her system, like Soja's, bare nouns are neither mass nor count. Muromatsu suggests that bare nouns differ from mass and count nouns in that they cannot refer to physical entities but only denote qualities (1995:145). To illustrate this, she cites the examples in (36) (= her (3) and (5)):

- (36) a. She has more sense than Mary, **child** though she is.<sup>8</sup>  
 (Jespersen 1933:130)
- b. This is **cotton**, not wool.  
 (Jespersen 1933:129)

Muromatsu presents a scheme according to which nouns are labeled as “non-referable” nouns (neither mass nor count), mass nouns (quantifiable and referable), or count nouns (individuates). However, her claim that bare nouns are never used to refer, but only to name qualities, is oversimplified. While it correctly accounts for predicate nominals, like those in (36), as well as for some predicative uses of the bare nouns in

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8. The bare use of *child* in (36) is less felicitous when the nominal comes after the verb:

- (i) ? Mary, though she is **child**.

The reading in (i), however, becomes more acceptable when *child* is considered a role, along the lines of the following examples:

- (ii) Mary, though she is president/ ambassador  
 (iii) Mary, though she is child, is also teacher.

PPs (i.e., those used in Activity Implicature), her system does not account for the specific deictic functioning of the bare singular forms used in Familiarity Implicature. While Muromatsu does note that the bare forms may also occur in PPs (1995:176), she does not adequately address the full range of behavior of the nouns used in this position. In her account, bare forms are simply homogeneously non-referential and hence neither mass nor count. Since I will show, however, that some types of bare singular nominals are used to refer, her approach—of locating the mass/ count distinction solely in classifiers and measure words and of prohibiting bare singular nominal forms from being used to refer—must be rejected.

### **5.3 English and Japanese Types Are Not Clearly Contrasted**

Some authors have been led by exceptions in the mass/ count system to pursue a way to revise its use. Mufwene (1981, 1984, 1995), for example, suggests that the mass/ count distinction in nouns (which he refers to as the classifier vs. singulative distinction) is not so clearly shown in English as to make this a good criterion for language typology:

According to the relevant linguistic literature, English is a “singulative” language, with only a handful of classifiers used typically with mass nouns. I argue that the distinction between numeral-classifying and singulative languages is not as clear-cut as has been suggested. English has many classifiers, some of which are used also with count nouns and are distinct from quantifiers. These classifiers are more transparent than in the classic numeral-classifying languages and may shed light on the status and function of numeral classifiers.  
(Mufwene 1995, abstract)

Conversely, Cresti (1997:2) argues that “a closer look at Chinese and Japanese reveals that... as far as countability is involved, classifiers are completely vacuous... that Chinese and Japanese have [some] genuine count nouns.”

Both Mufwene and Cresti, approaching the mass/ count distinction from different directions, accurately conclude that the traditional division of languages according to whose nouns are syntactically countable is overly simplified. As I will suggest in Section 6 below, this is partly due to considering all non-NP level nominals to be nouns. I propose that the larger point for which Mufwene and Cresti have found evidence is that to discuss mass/ count at all requires introducing an N-bar level.

#### **5.4 Mass/ Count is Only One Ingredient**

Finally, Behrens (1995) presents an extensive review of work on count nouns in order to determine whether mass/ count is a distinction at the lexical or syntactic level. Examining the assumptions linguists have made concerning categorization of nouns, she attempts to look at nominals in the same way that recent researchers (e.g., Levin 1993) have approached verb classes: as instances of lexical subregularities showing “recurrent contrasts or alternations which show a correlation between different senses and different syntactic contexts” (Behrens 1995:3). She concludes that various possible interpretations of the same noun form make “the categoriality of the MASS/ COUNT distinction doubtful” (Behrens 1995:12). Like Gil, Behrens looks at languages besides English to examine the validity of the mass/ count distinction. She concludes that mass/ count per se cannot be considered a universal contrast (at either the syntactic or semantic level), but that the “semantic ingredients of [that] category can be expected to be conflated and integrated in different ways in the lexico-grammar of other languages” (Behrens 1995:106). Even in English, as I will argue, some of the elements we think of as mass/ count information may emerge in other ways than just through articles and plural markers.

### **5.5 Conclusion to Section 5**

Earlier assumptions that some languages mark all nouns as either mass or count, while others do not make this distinction, have proven to be too hasty since within the putative mass/ count languages some nouns seem to show neither feature, while within the putative non-count languages, some but not all, words seem to take count classifiers. Further, the nouns themselves may not bear the feature of countability, and nouns that seem to be count can have their countability vary with other qualities of the noun. These situations lead me to question which element is involved when we use the labels mass and count in English, the topic of the next section.

## **6. Determining the Level at Which the Mass/ Count Distinction Applies**

Thus far, I have discussed nouns and how they differ from NPs because, as noted in Gil (1987), in languages such as English, hierarchical nominal levels co-occur with the mass/ count distinction in nouns. Now I suggest we further explore the role of nominal configurationality in this issue by exploring the idea that it may not be nouns that show the mass/ count distinction, but either NPs or some mid level, N-bar type. It is worth noting that, assuming a three-level version of X-bar theory (e.g.,

Chomsky 1970, 1986), there are three nominal levels that can be the affected unit when mass and count are being assigned. Pelletier and Schubert (1989) note that cases have been made for assigning countability to both word level, making it a syntactic issue, and to the NP level, where count or mass is determined by the noun's occurrence in a real utterance. At the word level (in the syntactic expression approach), lexical nouns are marked as mass or count, but then allowed by lexical extension rules to be used in shifted meanings (Pelletier and Schubert 1989:346). This would be illustrated by the grinder examples in (6) and (7), for instance. In the occurrence approach, on the other hand, the whole NP is considered to be count or mass depending on its use in a given utterance. Although it is not as crucial for the mass forms Pelletier and Schubert are examining, they hint that some mid level between N and NP may be the most appropriate place for mass and count to be determined (Pelletier and Schubert 1989:375). Cresti (1997) presents evidence along these lines, finding unexpected cases where Japanese, a language with apparently nonconfigurational NPs, has subsets of nouns that show countability in certain groupings, thus showing that as far as the mass/ count distinction is concerned, Japanese has more relevant sublevels within its NPs than expected if we assume a correlation of countability with NP configurationality.

In this section I will pursue the suggestion of Pelletier and Schubert (1989) by trying to locate the mass/ count distinction within units at a higher nominal level than N, while at the same time determining which of these levels best represents the bare singular nominals.

### **6.1 Descriptions Using Features**

Gillon (1992) proposes two binary syntactic features CT (count) and PL (plural) to describe the differences between mass and count phrases in English, suggesting that these are features of nouns that percolate up to the NPs containing them. Pelletier and Schubert (1989) dispute this approach, noting that number alone is sufficient to syntactically select the correct form (since mass forms take singular verbs). So while they exclude PL from the semantic domain, Pelletier and Schubert consider CT to be a purely meaning-related distinction. They present convincing evidence for removing the mass/ count distinction from syntax; the question then becomes: at which point can the independent contributions of semantics and pragmatics be seen?

Another approach worth investigating is that the CT feature is privative—that is, that a nominal is either unmarked for CT or is +CT, rather than being marked by a binary CT feature. Although the uses of mass



and count forms are such that a word's interpretation can easily alternate between the two categories, as illustrated in the typeshifting examples in (6)-(7) and (9)-(12) above, there is no danger of adding and then erasing the +CT feature for an individual word sense (a difficulty if the goal is a monotonic system of feature changing), because it is with each new use of a word that countability is determined. I suggest that semantically, all nouns are unmarked and that either syntax creates a unit which is treated as count or mass (typically by an article or morphology in English), or pragmatics marks a use as count or mass (as seen in the typeshifting contexts discussed above). Under this system, we may observe that other languages may not have syntactic marking of count forms, and thus may appear to have only mass forms; likewise, they may rely on a wider range of pragmatic settings than English to influence the mass/ count reading. In summary, I am proposing that nouns themselves are unmarked, but either syntax or context can create mass and count nominals of a higher constituent level out of unmarked nouns, based on the noun's use in a given utterance.

## **6.2 What Level Is a Mass/ Count Nominal?**

Because individual words can be interpreted in different ways depending on context, as the evidence in Section 3 indicates, I argued above that

nouns themselves should not be considered either mass or count. In other words, to use the labels of “mass” or “count,” a context in which the noun is used must first be established. At the word level, then, nouns are neutral, or underspecified for count. However, some contexts are so much more common in real usage that we take certain uses to be the default ones for certain nouns, e.g., water is more often discussed as a mass substance, cats are most often encountered as countable units, so we talk of *water* being a mass noun and *cat* being a count noun. But contexts do occur in which the opposite interpretation holds. Allan (1980:566) observes that “even though countability is characteristic of NPs, not of nouns, it is nonetheless a fact that nouns do show countability preferences—insofar as some nouns more often occur in countable NPs, others in uncountable NPs, and still others seem to occur freely in both.” Yet as Casey (1997) observes, it is not an ontological distinction we indicate, but a cognitive construal of entities as mass or count forms in a particular instance.

### **6.3 N-bar Tests**

Since it is not a noun on which we encode mass/ count, then, under a traditional X-bar theory of NPs, that leaves two levels of nominals available: it is either an N-bar constituent that shows mass/ count, or it is

the NP that does so. As a first step I propose that the relevant level is the N-bar. One of the first indications that some more complex level of configurationality must enter the picture comes from the use of *one* substitution, mentioned in Section 2 in the diagnostics for identifying mass and count uses. This test is usually introduced as evidence for the existence of a constituent level between that of the word and the phrase. For example, Baker (1978) at first suggests that *one* replaces a count noun, but later presents an analysis in which a “Nom” node is introduced, a precursor to an N-bar node. He establishes that *one* can substitute for the whole Nom node if the head noun is count. That is, *one* is a pro-constituent that replaces the N-bar (Nom) node rather than just N.<sup>9</sup> This is illustrated in the contrast between (37) and (38).

- (37) a. I met the owner of six cats who was allergic to fur. (count noun)  
 b. \*I met the one of six cats. *one* replaces N only  
 c. I met the one who was allergic to fur. *one* replaces N-bar
- (38) a. I saw evidence of six cats in that house. (mass noun)  
 b. \*I saw one of six cats. *one* replaces N only  
 c. \*I saw one. *one* replaces N-bar

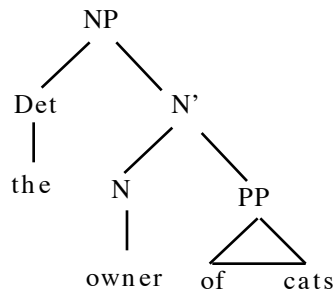
As shown in the phrase structure tree in (39), while the determiner itself

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9. Of course, one-word Ns can be immediately dominated by an N-bar, and N-bars can be immediately dominated by an NP node, so in that sense, one-word constituents are also ultimately NPs, so that replacing the N-bar in such a case would be the same as replacing the N.

is not part of an N-bar constituent, the choice of which determiner to attach in order to make a full noun phrase would rely on information (such as number and countability) at the N-bar level. This indicates that it is an N-bar, and not an N or NP, which is marked as +CT. (37c) is grammatical because *one* replaces a string that both contains a count nominal and is an N-bar. It contrasts with (37b), (38b), and (38c), none of which meets both of these qualifications.

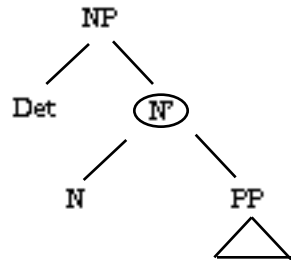
(39)



In short, the claim I put forth in this chapter is that to understanding the relevant level for the mass/ count distinction requires that we separate lexical forms from higher level projections. I also claim that the unit involved in mass/ count is one that does not yet contain the determiner, a mid-level unit: N-bar under a traditional three-level X-bar system.

N-bar (not N) is the count/ mass node under a three-tier nominal system:

(40)



The point of raising these NP-internal configurationality issues is to fine-tune our level of thinking about these nouns. I started by noting that the forms under discussion were unusual constructions for count nouns. I then showed that nominals should only be considered +CT once they are within noun phrases. Hence, this dissertation is not looking at ‘count nouns’ per se, but at larger constituents that contain nouns. For bare singular nominals, then, being designated as +CT could only be relevant if the nominals, too, are N-bars or NP forms rather than nouns. One use of the bare singular form is to show distinctions similar to individuatedness, while not being formally marked for mass/ count.

## 7. Conclusion to Chapter 2

The discussion of the mass/ count distinction in this chapter has shown that uses of most common nouns can have both mass and count interpretations depending on context, with the consequence that a noun's  $\pm$ CT feature, often taken to be a semantic feature based on qualities of the referent, is actually, in part, determined pragmatically on the basis of the speaker's presentation of the referent in a particular context. Additional evidence of the NP as the relevant constituent is a nominal's ability to serve as a full noun phrase. Most mass and abstract nouns (e.g., *water*, *peace*, and *fabric*) have the distribution of full NPs, as can be seen by their ability to serve as subject or object without the addition of an article, plural morpheme, etc. Lexical count nouns, on the other hand, generally require another element (an article, modifier, or plural morpheme), before they can serve as an NP. Location nouns from certain semantic subsets, however (including institutional words such as *school*, *church*, *camp*) or temporal events such as *break*, *sabbatical*, *breakfast*), can also be used alone as full noun phrases. Thus, these special nouns have both the regular count noun distribution, where they occur within an NP, and a use as a bare singular noun phrase, where they are used to convey certain referential information.

This means that this bare noun phrase construction does not merely represent the result of a typeshifting process for turning count nouns into mass nouns (which would then produce a noun like *camp* having all the semantic characteristics of unindividuatedness ascribed to mass nouns). Rather, the bare construction reflects a categorization of groups of certain referents that are presented in the discourse with certain aspects highlighted. It is not surprising, therefore, that some words which are generally considered to be mass nouns (e.g., *work*, *property*, *daycare*) might also come from the same semantic category (social/ geographical spaces) as count nouns that serve as bare NPs. These allegedly mass forms involve the same pragmatic factors when used in the bare form to create implicated meaning. So we see two aspects of pragmatics at play concerning nominal types. One is the type shifting that emphasizes either a mass or count reading for a noun's given use. The other is a conventional implicature created by the use of certain bare forms to convey Activity and Familiarity senses which direct the hearer to a particular type of referent.

Soja (1994) suggests a new category of noun, one that is neither mass nor count. I suggest that bare singular nominals are not co-hyponyms of mass and count nouns, but that they represent a meaning/ form pair-

ing that is used to convey other aspects of referents. Previous researchers (Muromatsu 1995, Mufweme 1981, 1984, 1995, Cresti 1997) have suggested that the labeling of a language according to whether it marks count nouns is too distinctly drawn; proposed solutions have tried either to make a third noun category or to show that the mass/ count distinction is not universally valid (Behrens 1995). The existence of bare singular noun phrases does not eliminate the role of countability from the grammar; the ability to mark our conceptualizations of a mass/ count distinction has a place, but it should not be confused with other referential functions in discourse.

I suggest that one reason these bare singular nominals are often mislabeled as being mass or count nouns is due to their range of referential possibilities. One use—semantically count-like—serves to pick out one particular identifiable referent (e.g., *Will you be on campus tomorrow?*). The other bare singular nominal uses are both non-referential; no particular referent is identified, but only characteristics of the natural kind are indicated (*It's more difficult to keep fit in prison; Tom doesn't go to church*). These uses seem more mass- or set-like. However, these are not semantic issues, but rather, a pragmatic question of referent identification.



To discuss mass/ count at all requires introducing multiple levels of phrasal projections. As we will see, languages have ways to mark information at the noun, N-bar and NP level. In English, countability is only relevant at certain levels, while referentiality is relevant at another. The term ‘count noun,’ then, can be considered to mean the head noun in an NP that it is used in an individuating way in a given utterance, rather than a noun with a particular semantic feature. However, the nouns used in bare singular nominal constructions can be analyzed by other semantic features, as I will show in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Lexical Semantics of Bare Singular NPs

#### 1. Introduction

As we have seen, most singular ‘count nouns’ do not suffice in bare form as full NPs; one of the notable features of the set of nouns under discussion is that they do. This chapter analyzes location nouns that are found as full NPs, showing that they fall into several classes, determined by characteristics of the referent of each NP as well as by the type of preposition with which the NPs occur.

Section 2 of this chapter looks at the nouns that occur as bare singular NPs. In that section, I examine the senses of the nouns and present four categories of bare singular NPs: Social/ Geographical Spaces, Media, Temporal Interruptions, and Untethered Metaphors.

Section 3 examines the spatial prepositions used with bare singular NPs. Section 3.1 distinguishes the meanings of the three most basic spatial prepositions: *in*, *on*, and *at*. Section 3.2 contrasts PPs that

name the location point with those PPs that describe the path the locatum travels relative to either the locatum (direction) or to the location (traversable locations).

Finally, as an initial step in capturing the patterns of meaning produced by these marked noun classes when they are used with certain prepositions, Section 4 examines several proposals for the existence of lexical elements that are larger than the word, since some of the PPs act more like individual meaning units. Thus, in seeking useful descriptions of the expressions containing bare singular nouns, constructions, idioms, and use types are considered as ways to capture phrase-dependent meaning.

## **2. Analyzing the Nouns**

### **2.1 Senses of the Bare Singular NPs**

In this section, I show that bare singular NPs contained within spatial PPs can be divided into four categories, according to the sense of the NP's referent. Since we are examining the NPs in locative phrases, it is helpful to consider the types of referents that these NPs are used to discuss. Places are often considered to be separate from entities (that is, first-order entities as defined by predicate calculus). However,

though places and entities are different, “in so far as they occupy space, entities may serve to identify the spaces that they occupy. For example, in... *I'll meet you at the car*, ‘the car’ is used indirectly to identify a place: i.e., the space that is occupied by the car” (Lyons 1977:693). As we will see, large immobile entities like buildings may especially be viewed as places:

There are many nominal expressions in English which can be understood as referring either to entities or to places according to the context in which they are used. For examples, ‘the church’ or ‘the house’ may refer to a physical entity which though it is normally located in a particular place, would still be identifiable as the same thing if it were moved to another place. But the same expression may also refer to places (or spaces) within which other entities are located: cf. John is in the church. (Lyons 1977: 475)

This use of a noun denoting an entity to indirectly denote a place is seen in the first set of nouns, the Social/ Geographical Spaces group.

### **2.1.1 Social/ Geographical Spaces**

Of the bare singular NPs found in PPs, those nouns highlighted in Table 4 constitute the largest set in my corpus. They are shown with attested prepositions, though other prepositions are likely to occur with these as well.

**Table 4**  
**PPs Containing Social/ Geographical Spaces**  
 Location is a place  
 Locatum is a physical object

on/off <b>base</b>	in <b>harbor</b>	at/to <b>sea</b>
in/to/out of <b>bed</b>	up <b>hill</b>	from/off/on <b>shore</b>
at/to/from/in/into/ toward <b>camp</b>	at <b>home</b>	on <b>site</b>
close to/off/on/to <b>campus</b>	in <b>hospital</b>	at/in/to <b>seminary</b>
down <b>cellar</b>	up/down <b>island</b>	up <b>slope</b>
at/in/to <b>chapel</b>	in/to/into <b>jail</b>	down/on <b>stage</b>
at/in/from/to <b>church</b>	in/to <b>kindergarten</b>	in/down/out of <b>state</b>
in <b>class</b>	in <b>kitchen</b>	down/up <b>stream</b>
in <b>clinic</b>	in/on <b>line</b>	in <b>studio</b>
at/from/in/out of/to <b>college</b>	to <b>market</b>	in/to <b>synagogue</b>
in <b>country</b>	in/after/to <b>meeting</b>	at/to <b>table</b>
at/in out of <b>court</b> (legal)	after/out of <b>office</b>	to <b>temple</b>
at/in <b>court</b> (royal)	at <b>pasture</b>	in <b>theater</b>
at/in/to <b>daycare</b>	off <b>planet</b>	across/around/down/in/in to/out of/outside/through/ to/toward/up <b>town</b>
on <b>deck</b>	in/into <b>port</b>	at/to <b>university</b>
in <b>dock</b>	from/in/out of/to <b>prison</b>	at/from/to <b>work</b>
in <b>district</b>	on <b>property</b>	off <b>world</b>
in <b>hall</b>	down/up <b>river</b>	in <b>yeshiva</b>
	at/in/from/outside/to/ toward <b>school</b>	

For this group of PPs, the locatum is a physical object, typically human, although also possibly a vehicle or other artifact. The location is a noun whose referent would be primarily categorized as a place: some are open areas, some are buildings, some are rooms. It has long been noted (e.g., Quirk et al. 1985:277) that bare nouns in such PPs are often used to convey a sense of a social institution. I will call those NPs that name social spaces, community institutions, or geographical features ‘Social/ Geographical Spaces.’ Out of a corpus of 796 tokens denoting Social/ Geographical Spaces, I have found 55 attested bare singular NP

types, shown in Table 4. Selected examples appear in (1).

- (1) a. He also says Charlie, the oldest Salinger, and his girlfriend, Kirsten, will face a big obstacle in their relationship, and Claudia, 13, will announce she has fallen in love **at summer camp**.  
(Jennifer Mangan, "Inviting Praise," *Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 15, 1996, Section 5, p. 3)
- b. The contrast is apparent **on campus**, too. Unlike their predecessors in the Vietnam era, many ROTC students today can be seen wearing their uniforms and boots—not just to military classes, but all day long.  
("ROTC Regains Respect on Campuses As Graduates Fare Well in Workplace," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 11, 1989)
- c. The space between his two front teeth, which were unusually far apart, gave him the proficiency in whistling for which he was distinguished **at college**.  
(Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*, 1913, Gutenberg etext)
- d. While tape recordings to uncover, say, infidelity aren't admissible **in court**, they can mean leverage in a settlement.  
(Jill Abramson, "Mind What You Say; They're Listening," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 25, 1989)
- e. They are not proficient on the computers; like Brian, twenty-four of his classmates have no computers **at home**, and they attend Computer class only twice a week.  
(Susan Sheehan, "Kid, Twelve," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 54)
- f. "I'd call up the prison board and get their cell numbers and then I could write to them. These people are a stamp away. They're sitting **in jail** with nothing to do but look at the walls. They want people to write to them."  
(Mike Sula, "Shocks to the System," *Chicago Reader*, Aug. 9, 1996, Section 1, p. 28)

- g. At \$1 a bag, so many people want ice that a huge line forms outside any store where it is available, and the average buyer has to stand **in line** for four hours to buy it.  
(David N. Laband, "In Hugo's Path, a Man-Made Disaster," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 27, 1989)
- h. Some of this I understand, but not the part about ice interfering with takeoffs. We've been **offplanet** nearly ten months. Has something unusual happened?  
(Suzette Haden Elgin, *Earthsong: Native Tongue III*, DAW Books: New York, 1994, p. 121)
- i. But Chen I. Chung was on an upwardly mobile track, because those more qualified to lead than he was would soon be dead or **in jail**.  
(Frederic Dannen, "Revenge of the Green Dragons," *The New Yorker*, Nov. 16, 1992, p. 81)
- j. During their first year **at school**, children become Octobrists and wear the badge of Baby Lenin.  
(Peter Gumbel, "Soviet Youth Organization Is in Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1989)
- k. Up **on deck**, thinking of spending five days on the Dolphin, I began to be seized by feelings of panic and pain I couldn't explain.  
(Diane Johnson, "Great Barrier Reef," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 7, 1992)
- l. He finally escaped from the neighborhood, at seventeen, by joining the Navy. He scrubbed the decks of ships **in port** — the sort of menial work that most Negroes were assigned.  
(Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Belafonte's Balancing Act*, *The New Yorker*, Aug. 26/ Sept. 2, 1996, p. 135)
- m. The shrubs bounced against the ground again and again, and **upslope** the trees howled.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 156)

- n. Up on the beach below me were a score of similar boats, each with its long pole, at one end of which was a pike, at the other a paddle. Thurid was hugging the shore, and as he passed out of sight round a near-by promontory I shoved one of the boats into the water and, calling Woola into it, pushed out **from shore**.  
(Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Warlord of Mars*, 1919, Gutenberg etext)
- o. A ship—a huge ship, so big that for a second I thought it was just **offshore**.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984, p. 87)

Based on the senses of the nouns, five semantic subgroups emerge within the group of Social/ Geographical Spaces. ‘Municipality’ nouns are listed in (2); these all denote official, bounded territories—areas that would be under a single jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

- (2) **municipalities:** base, campus, country, district, island, planet, property, site, state, theater, town, world

The second subset of Social/ Geographical Space nouns, shown in (3), are all buildings related to religious practice.<sup>2</sup>

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1. *Theater* is included here in its use relating to an area of military operations, not the sense relating to show business.

2. *Seminary*, listed with these religious settings, could also be considered a member of the group in (18), which are more generally places intended for learning or studying.

Soja (1994) also notes the bare use of the word *mass*; while this word qualifies as religious, I considered it more an event than a location, since unlike *chapel*, *church*, and *temple*, a mass does not generally also name a building. I have therefore not included *mass*. (Cf. the word *class*, which if it were purely an event, would not be a bare location



(3) **religious settings:** chapel, church, seminary, synagogue, temple

The third subset of Social/ Geographical Space nouns, shown in (4), denote places intended for learning or studying:

(4) **educational settings:** campus, class, college, kindergarten, school, university, yeshiva

Soja (1994:269) notes that variations of “education words” commonly occur in bare singular form. And indeed, not only *school*, but all compounds that it heads (such as *day school*, *high school*, *law school*) as well as names of years in school (*kindergarten*, *first grade*, *second grade*, etc.) would count as Social/ Geographical Spaces. Likewise, compounds headed by many of the words listed in Table 4 also show up as bare singular forms (e.g., *summer camp*, *boot camp*, *prison camp*).

Besides the two senses created by using the word denoting a building to indirectly name the space in which it is located, Behrens (1995) identifies a further split in uses of these building terms—between the institution occupying a building and the physical building. In collecting types of nouns most often cited as problems for mass/ count distinction, she includes the examples in (5).

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word either; *class*, however, is included in (18) as a clipping of *classroom*.)

- (5) a. Mary goes to school  
 b. Mary goes to the school  
 c. Harry is in church/ jail  
 d. Harry is in the church/ jail  
 (Behrens 1995:53, ex. 27 )

She notes that these systematic sense alternations are distinct from the mass/ count alternation because they can be found in neutral mass/ count contexts too, as in (6).

- (6) a. The University has decided to close the dental school.  
 b. The University is in Evanston.

Behrens observes that because of this additional sense contrast for buildings, lexical context rather than the grammatical (distributional) context is commonly assumed to ‘disambiguate’ or select the appropriate sense (see Bierwisch 1983). Such sense alternations provide a productive device for extending vocabulary and are found as well in languages which lack a grammatical paradigm for mass/ count comparable to the English paradigm. Behrens (1995:54) notes, however, that in English the mass/ count syntax also comes into play: “Some systematic metonymies correlate not only with distinct lexical environments, but also with mass or count contexts and thus, are syntacto-semantic alternations in the same ways as the transitivity alternations in the verbal domains are (cf. Levin 1993).”

The next set of nouns, shown in (7), are all related to travel on water, while those in (8) denote natural environmental features<sup>3</sup>:

- |                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (7) <b>nautical settings:</b> | deck, dock, harbor, port  |
|                               | river, sea, shore, stream |
| (8) <b>natural features:</b>  | hill, slope               |

The semantic groupings in (2)-(4) and (7)-(8) are based only on the shared meanings of the nouns.<sup>4</sup> These semantic divisions give a first glimpse of what we could consider to be criteria for identifying felicitous bare singular NPs of the Social/ Geographical Spaces category. That is, information on how speakers categorize the referents of these NPs allows us to make predictions about what other nouns could serve as bare singular NPs, although it is not sufficient to guarantee that all NPs from those categories will show up in bare forms.

3. *River, sea, shore, and stream*, might also be considered members of either the set in (7) or in (8).

4. Not all the bare singular NPs pass the “speaking of \_\_\_” test (Ch. 1, example (7)). Members of the Natural Features category are less felicitous in that template than other members of the Social/ Geographical Spaces set. The constraints relate to the semantic categories in (7) and (8) as well as to pragmatic aspects that will be discussed in Ch. 4: only those bare NPs that denote social institutions and are used in Familiarity Implicature (but anchored off a participant, not anchored off the place of the utterance) pass this test.

### 2.1.2 Media

Distinct from the Social/ Geographical Spaces terms just discussed is a set of count noun locations for which the locatum is not a physical object, but an image or a piece of information. In these phrases, too, the count nouns do name the location of that information, but the bare NP is primarily a type of recording medium rather than a place, and the PPs are often expressions of means, specifying how the locatum was recorded.<sup>5</sup> This set of location tokens I refer to as Media Expressions. The set of nouns is smaller than that set of bare singular NPs making up the Social/ Geographical Spaces, but, because of the newness of some of its members, it is a more open, productive category, easily encompassing words for new technology. In addition, these nouns are not used for the same range of referring functions as the Social/ Geographical Spaces, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4. Media Expressions divide into two types: Recording Expressions and Framing Expressions, which I illustrate and discuss in turn. Some examples of the first type, Recording Expressions, are shown in (9).

- (9) a. Plenty of Grammy® magic has been captured **on album** over the years.  
(BMG Music Service catalog, 1997)

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5. There is a precedent for using bare forms in means adverbials involving tools (e.g., *make something by hand*, *walk the dog off leash*, *arrive by train*), but the PPs containing Recording Media NP also show other behavior similar to the other spatial PPs under investigation.

- b. Subpoenas went out en masse for maximum scare, and were delivered to traders' homes with a uniform message: Confess or we will use RICO to take your homes, cars and money and send you to jail. We have it all **on tape**.  
(Jeff Bailey and Scott McMurray, "Were Investors Sitting Ducks?" *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 3, 1989)
- c. Many times, when I am interviewing somebody, they will ask, "When am I going to be **on TV**?"  
(Neil Steinberg, "Adventures of a Pencil-Wielding Pariah," *Chicago Reader*, Oct. 25, 1996, Section 1, p. 25)
- d. When you're on a network and you've brought another Mac's hard disk onto your desktop, make an alias of any shared program, document or folder. When you're **offline** and you'd like to reconnect, just double-click the alias.  
(David Pogue and Joseph Schorr, "Secrets of the Macintosh Revealed," *MacHome Journal*, April 1997, p. 28)
- e. A tornado watch means "Watch the sky: Weather conditions are right for a tornado." A tornado warning means "A tornado has been sighted or picked up **on radar**: Take cover immediately."  
(<http://www.army.mil/usar/arpercen/hubjun.htm>)
- f. Most national advertisers **on video** so far have created special commercials, often hugely elaborate extravaganzas related to the movie's plot.  
(Joanne Lipman, "Texas Firm's Splicing of Local Ads Into Videos Angers Movie Studios," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989)

The words in Table 5 show attested PPs containing Recording Expression bare singular NPs; of the 87 Recording Expression tokens collected, I have found 18 different noun types.<sup>6</sup>

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6. *Television* and *TV* are counted as the same type; *tape*, generally short for *audiotape*, is counted separately from *videotape*.

**Table 5**  
**Recording Expressions**  
 Location is recording media  
 Locatum is information

on <b>album</b>	on <b>radio</b>
on <b>cable</b>	on <b>record</b>
on <b>cassette</b>	on/off <b>screen</b>
on <b>CD</b>	on <b>sonar</b>
on <b>disk</b>	on/off <b>tape</b>
on <b>film</b>	on <b>television/TV</b>
on/off <b>line</b>	on <b>video</b>
on/off <b>mike/microphone</b>	on <b>videocassette</b>
on <b>radar</b>	on <b>videotape</b>

Note that the PPs in Table 5 all contain count nouns and occur with the preposition *on*, as opposed to the examples in (10), which show other terms for recording information, but are not unexpected bare forms since they are mass nouns rather than count nouns:

- (10) a. in ink  
 b. in memory  
 c. in print

The influence of prepositions on the grouping of bare singular NP objects will be discussed in Section 3.1.1.

A group related to the set in Table 5, but distinct from it, is the small group of nouns highlighted in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Framing Expressions**

Location is the area within a visual frame  
Locatum is an image

on/off <b>camera</b> in/out of <b>frame</b> in/out of <b>range</b> on/off <b>screen</b> in/out of <b>shot</b> in/out of <b>sight</b> on/off <b>stage</b> in/out of <b>view</b>
---

These nouns are related to photography and film media, but are particularly used in phrases that indicate a bounded space or frame within which the locatum is viewed. That is, while the locata of Table 5 are data lodged or recorded fairly permanently in a type of medium,<sup>7</sup> the locata of Table 6 can move in and out of the location. To highlight this contrast, an expression involving a Recording Expression is given in (11), while a PP used as a Framing Expression is given in (12).

- (11) The film crew that comes to capture the town **on film** for a public television show finds a conflict brewing between the old and the new in Dadetown.  
(Pat Dowell, "Left for Dade," *In These Times*, Oct. 28, 1996, p. 28)

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7. This is reflected in the verbs used with these PPs as predicates, which are either forms of *be* or *record*, *catch*, *capture*, and related synonyms.

- (12) As Buzz moves **off-camera** to the right, Neil comes into view beyond the plus-Z strut.  
(<http://www.hq.nasa.gov/alsj/a11/a11.clsout.html>)

Though both (11) and (12) relate to filming, in (11) the locatum (the town) is fixed onto the location medium (film), while in (12) the locatum (Buzz Aldrin) is momentarily located outside of the location frame (the view of the camera). Other examples of Framing Expressions are shown in (13):

- (13) a. The Marionette's head loomed close behind her for an instant, then disappeared **out of frame**.  
(<http://www.filmscouts.com/matinee/flubber/productn.html>)
- b. Beginning, like a book, with a catalog of all the previous works by the same author, it proceeds with a lengthy account of an impassioned theoretical debate following a Paris cineclub screening, then with a love story of sorts, but the film's narrative and dialogue are recounted almost entirely **offscreen**, in voice-overs.  
(Jonathan Rosenbaum, Review of "*Venom and Eternity*," *Chicago Reader*, June 13, 1997, Section Two, p. 13)
- c. Cinema legend insists that there is a pair of pliers visible in the bottom of one dinosaur scene in the original King Kong (1933). To save the shot, the animators apparently animated it **out of shot**, as if it were a snake burrowing underground.  
(<http://www.ansonice.com.au/craigd/digest/digest32.htm>)



- d. The baby Jesus appears in two of the plays, "Birth of Christ" and "Adoration of the Shepherds." In *Bend*, the baby Jesus there had not auditioned, mind you, but he played the part like a natural. When he was first carried **on stage**,<sup>8</sup> a young voice in the crowd exclaimed, "It's a live one!" (Susan Hauser, "Cherubs Audition for Divine Part," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 17, 1989)
- e. Bennett Braun appeared on the Chicago evening news with his star patient, who switched personalities **on camera**. (Joan Acocella, "The Politics of Hysteria," *The New Yorker*, April 6, 1998, p. 68)

### 2.1.2.1 PP and NP Ambiguities

The Media category, like the Social/ Geographical Spaces group, can be broken down further. Unlike the Social/ Geographical Spaces, however, which showed different noun classes for the locations, the Media terms have differences that are found in contrasting senses for the same location term (see Nunberg 1978 for a detailed treatment of polysemy and extended reference). Bare singular NPs from the Recording Media set can be used in at least three senses: the first is used to refer to the broadcast of that media form (e.g., by television as opposed to by radio), the second is used to refer to the particular content of the broadcast (e.g. "Does kids' television contain too much violence?"), and the third to

---

8. *On stage* has several uses: as a Social/ Geographical Spaces expression, when it follows a copula, it is used to mean 'to perform (typically on a stage); as a metaphor, it is used to mean 'to be hyperanimated,' or 'to act like one is the focus of attention'; as a framing expression, it is predicated of a locatum that is moving into a bounded, visible space. This last use is also exemplified by *off stage*, *backstage*, *downstage*, and *upstage*.

name the apparatus used to access the content (television, meaning a TV set).<sup>9</sup> Besides these variations in the sense of the “locations,” a polysemous range of senses for the locatum NP is also possible, because the Media NPs are used to discuss representations of real-world objects; as a result, an ambiguity can occur concerning whether the locatum is the thing originally recorded or is a depiction of it. Both the location and locatum contrasts will be discussed in Section 2.1.2.2.

### 2.1.2.2 Sporadic Reference and Eroded Forms

Some words naming media formats require an article, as shown in the (a) examples of (14) and (15).

- (14) a. I read it in the **newspaper**.  
 b. \*I read it in **newspaper**.
- (15) a. We saw it at the **show** last week.  
 b. \*We saw it at **show** last week.

---

9. Nunberg (1978:60-61) also lists other functions for “words of transmission” (or Recording Media terms), including reference to the industry and to the group of people who work in the field. In (i), for example, *radio* is used to mean “the radio profession”:

- (i) She studied acting with the famous Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and got into **radio**, writing the questions for a pioneer quiz show and taking bit parts as a gun moll.  
 (Whitney Balliett, “Edith Oliver: One on the Aisle,” *The New Yorker*, March 9, 1998, p. 33)

Since *radio* in (i) is not a location noun, I do not pursue the use of this industry sense.

- (16) a. He talked to her on the **phone**.  
 b. \*He talked to her on **phone**.

Quirk et al. (1985) include such obligatorily articulated forms in their discussion of different kinds of specific reference that can be created in English by using articles. The types created with the definite article include situational reference (which is derived from the extralinguistic situation and can be based on either the immediate situation or derived from general knowledge), anaphoric and cataphoric reference (in which the referent is evoked in the actual discourse), and sporadic reference, illustrated in (17).

- (17) a. attend the **theater**  
 b. listen to the **radio**  
 c. talk on the **telephone**

For the NPs in (17) “reference is made to an institution which may be observed recurrently at various places and times” (Quirk et al. 1985: 269). They also extend the term ‘sporadic reference’ to expressions referring to transportation and communication, such as those in (18).

- (18) a. ride the **bus**  
 b. catch the **train**  
 c. wait for the **mail**

In all these cases, the definite article does not lead the hearer to pick out one particular bus, phone, or piece of mail, but instead is used to refer to any one member of the general category named by that noun.

Birner and Ward (1994) also note this use of the definite article when no particular referent is picked out. While they show that unique identification of the referent licenses the use of the definite article, they also show that uniqueness is only sufficient, not necessary, for definite reference, in view of cases like (16) and (17), where definite NPs are used to refer to locations or objects whose referents are “not relevantly differentiable from other objects denoted by the same NP” (Birner and Ward 1994:7) (see also Givón 1978, Kadmon 1990). Concerning this set, Birner and Ward note Ladusaw’s spoken observation that, for NPs whose referents are vehicles, in the absence of uniqueness, the definite article may be used only if the vehicle is one that moves along a regular pre-established path (Birner and Ward 1994:10). Thus the use of *the train* or *the bus* that Quirk et al. note can be felicitous only in the articulated form, while words such as *car*, *bike*, and *motorcycle* (with a non-unique referent) cannot, as seen in (19).

- (19) a. #ride in the car  
 b. #ride the bike  
 c. #take the motorcycle

In (20)-(24), instances of sporadic reference involving definite articles with NPs having undifferentiated referents are contrasted with the same NPs used in different kinds of reference.

- (20) I walked into the nearest restaurant and asked the waiter for directions.  
   (from situation)                            (from general knowledge)
- (21) She spent two hours a day on the telephone.  
   (sporadic, not one particular phone)
- (22) She was thankful for (the invention of) the telephone.  
   (kind-referring)
- (23) The telephone that sold the best was the black rotary dial model.  
   (taxonomic)
- (24) She dropped the telephone.  
   (unique referent)

With the definite article use that relies on general knowledge, as illustrated in (20), the mention of a restaurant sanctions the use of *the waiter* in that particular scenario; here a particular real-world waiter is referred to. With sporadic reference, on the other hand, as in (21), general knowledge does not indicate that just one phone is present—in fact, no particular phone, but possibly several phones are meant; it is just the activity of telephoning that is invoked. Both (20) and (21) contrast with the use in (22), in which the invention of the natural kind ‘telephone’ is meant, not the sporadic use which could refer to any given

phone. Another kind-referring use is shown in (23), where one particular subtype of a kind is referred to—Krifka et al. (1995:74-77) call this one the taxonomic sense. Finally, (24) shows the most typical use of the definite article—one in which the referent is uniquely identifiable (within the discourse).

As might be expected, in some instances ambiguity arises concerning the type of reference invoked by using articulated forms. An example is given in (25).

- (25) My sister goes to **the theatre** every month.  
 [=Quirk et al. 1985, p. 269, ex. 1]

As Quirk et al. (1985) explain, the highlighted NP in (25) might be used to invoke situational reference (that is, to indicate a particular theater, e.g., The Goodman Theater). A more likely meaning, however, is that the sister does not necessarily confine her theater-going to a single building but attends theater events at different places at different points in time. Through sporadic reference, then, *the theatre* might also be used to refer to theater as an institution. Under the sporadic interpretation, “it would be inappropriate to ask in response [to (25)]: ‘Which theater?’” (Quirk et al. 1985:269).

However, more to the point for our examination of bare forms, sporadic reference not only is identifiable by the use of the definite article, but in many cases, “has become so institutionalized that the article is not used” (Quirk et al. 1985: 277).<sup>10</sup> To clearly distinguish their “institutionalized” bare form from other uses of this same term, I call this optional dropping of the definite article during sporadic reference the ‘eroded’ form. Thus for Quirk et al., both (26a) and (26b) can be described by saying that when no particular piano is being referred to, both (a) and (b) are used for sporadic reference, while I distinguish (26b), which lacks an article, as an example of the eroded sporadic form.

- (26) a. Do you play the **piano**?  
 b. Do you play **piano**?

Musical instruments are often found in such synonymous pairs of articulated and eroded forms. In expressions with syntactic objects that denote musical instruments, as with other bare direct objects, the verb+NP together create the effect of noun incorporation: Does she [play piano]<sub>VP</sub>? He [plays saxophone]<sub>VP</sub> in the band. The bare form is the usual NP form in these cases, when the object is any one of an undifferentiated class. What is unusual, then, is the existence of a (nearly) syn-

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10. By “institutionalized” here they do not appear to mean that the referent is treated as a social institution, but rather that a habit of speech has become what might be called ‘idiomatic,’ ‘lexicalized,’ or ‘casual.’

onymous articulated form:

- (27) a. She deserved to **play organ** for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.  
(Amy Tan, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, p. 70)
- b. Offered a position as organist in the town of Arnstadt at the age of eighteen, he accepted, and proceeded to dedicated [*sic*] himself to the art of composition. In 1705 he walked fifty miles to Lübeck to hear Buxtehude **play the organ**.  
(<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/~0100543/bach.htm>)

As Christophersen (1939:132) notes, musical instruments are often referred to by using an NP with a definite article, creating an ambiguity between reference to a particular referent and a “generic term for the entire invention.” With such NPs, speakers may some times use a definite article in places where an indefinite article could also be used. In (28), for example, Christophersen claims that if no one definite banjo is meant, then “playing on a banjo” could be substituted:

- (28) Perhaps he would have turned away ... had he not heard a most astonishing sound... Somebody in Dullingsham Junction was playing the banjo.  
(J. B. Priestley, *The Good Companions*. London: Heinemann, 1929, p. 201) [=Christophersen (1939:132)]

With many kinds of count nouns, as long as the referent of an NP is undifferentiated from other referents denoted by that NP, hearers can interpret the NP through sporadic reference to mean any one instance of the type. Moreover, when musical instruments are the referents and



they are viewed as such an undifferentiated set, using any article with the NP is optional:

- (29) a. Someone was playing the banjo.  
 b. Someone was playing (on) a banjo.  
 c. Someone was playing banjo.

### 2.1.2.3 Broadcast vs. Apparatus Senses

The eroded form of a sporadically referring NP might at first appear to explain the optional use of the definite article in the PPs *on (the) radio* and *on (the) television/ TV*. But although *TV* and *radio* appear in both articulated and bare forms, it is another factor that accounts for their bare use. Here the absence of an article is used to disambiguate two metonymous senses. For *television/ TV*, no article is used when the type of broadcast is discussed, while the article is used by most speakers when referring to the apparatus which receives the broadcast, as shown by the examples in (30):

- (30) a. They would never put that **on TV**. [broadcast sense]  
 b. ? They would never put that **on the TV**. [broadcast sense]  
 c. The remote control is **on (top of) the TV**. [apparatus sense]  
 d. \* The remote control is **on (top of) TV**. [apparatus sense]

The difference shown in (30) is not just an institutionalized, eroded dropping of the article, but is an alternation chosen to reflect different

meanings of the word *TV* (see Nunberg (1978) for a detailed accounting of metonymous relations).

The meaning associated with the syntactic form of the location NP then influences a hearer's sense of the semantic type of locatum as well. This is shown in (31), which illustrates the information inferrable by the choice of whether to use an article: while the locatum which is *on the TV* is a physical object, the locatum that is *on TV* is part of the content of a broadcast.

- (31) a. Look--the cat is **on TV!**  
 b. Look--the cat is **on the TV!**

For the pair of utterances in (31), both (a) and (b) were true in the context described, though non-equivalent, due to metonymous senses of *TV*. The context involved a "Cat Adventure Videotape" which contains images of birds, mice, cats, and dogs. While the video played, one real cat sat in front of the TV screen to watch, while another cat attacked the screen from above, sitting on the TV set (Gregory Ward, p.c.).

In some dialects, ambiguity can occur with the articulated location NP when the referent of the locatum NP can be interpreted as either an

object or a depiction of one, as occurs in the British usage in (32):<sup>11</sup>

- (32) A: Oh dear, the radio's exploded.  
 B: Well what's **on the television**, then?  
 A: Looks like a penguin.  
 B: No, I didn't mean what was on the TV SET; I meant what  
 PROGRAM!  
 (Monty Python's Flying Circus, *Another Monty Python Album*,  
 Buddha Records, 1972, side B)

Oddly, however, *on (the) radio* and *on (the) television/ TV* do not show identical patterns in the meaning assigned to each NP form. *Radio* regularly appears with both the definite article and the zero form to convey the broadcast sense, as shown in the examples in (33).

- (33) a. Now here was Simon asking me what I wanted for Christmas. Once again I was listening to "Yingle Bells" [*sic*] **on the radio**. (Amy Tan, *The Hundred Secret Senses*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995, p. 97)
- b. For the past three years, Coke has been running advertisements—only **on radio** and only in selected cities — in a bid to boost morning consumption. (Michael J. McCarthy, "New Pepsi Soda Will Seek To Break the Coffee Habit," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 28, 1989)

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11. In some non-standard American dialects also, especially among older rural speakers, *the TV* is used in the broadcast sense as well as the apparatus sense, as in the example in (i) in which the character speaking is a rural grandmother:

- (i) You know what I heard **on the television**?  
 (Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country*, New York: Harper & Row, 1985, p. 14)

In neither (33a) nor (33b) is a particular radio apparatus referred to. Thus (33) shows that the use of the article is optional when referring to a radio broadcast. However, with *radio*, as with *television*, only equipment can only be referred to by using an article with the word:

- (34) a. Is that a fly **on the radio**?  
 b. Is that a fly **on radio**?

In contrast to the ambiguous (34a), (34b) can only be used to refer to the fly's buzzing sound being broadcast.

To summarize the difference, for all speakers the bare form of both words is used to refer to only the broadcast sense. The articulated form has more ambiguity. For some speakers, *the television* can refer to either the broadcast or the receiving apparatus, and for all speakers, *the radio* can have both these senses (see Table 7).

**Table 7**  
**Bare and Articulated Uses of *Radio* and *TV***

	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Television</b>
<b>+ article</b>	apparatus or broadcast	apparatus (broadcast also in some dialects)
<b>- article</b>	broadcast	broadcast

An additional ambiguity in identifying the locatum arises since it is common in any medium to refer to an image of something in the same terms that we would use to refer to the real thing (e.g., *Show me the cat in the picture, Honey*). With electronic media, too, we speak of people being *on TV*, when it is their image that is being televised and viewed. This would be another instance of the deferred reference detailed by Nunberg (1978). This referring function of representation to the original is responsible for our understanding of the examples in (35), where the underlined words have as their referent not a human being, but some audio or video depiction of one:

- (35) a. If you're not on cable you're not going to be watched.  
(John Dimsdale, *Marketplace* radio broadcast, Oct. 3, 1996)
- b. Many times, when I am interviewing somebody, they will ask, "When am I going to be on TV?" [= (23)]
- c. If she was as simpering in life as she is on film, one sympathizes a bit with Belushi's escape into reality-altering substances.  
(Julie Salamon, "Belushi's Story; Father-Daughter Gangsters," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 24, 1989)
- d. Moreover, SCAD's business affiliations with lending institutions, accreditors, and professional organizations were jeopardized by individuals in constant communication with one another, and caught on tape *coordinating* [emphasis in original] further efforts to harm SCAD. If "conspiracy" isn't the proper term for this, then no such term exists in the English language.  
(Lloyd B. Lewis, Letter to the Editor, *Lingua Franca*, Sept./ Oct. 1996, p. 7)

A verb such as *watch* can take an object that is an artifact (e.g., watch the clock) or one that names the content of the broadcast (e.g., watch the news); however, the meaning of the underlined phrase in (36) is not ambiguous; as we saw, without an article, the bare word *television* is not used to refer to a TV set.

- (36) She reminded me that **watching television** was as bad as going to the movies.  
 (Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 236)

If there are two NP objects, as in (37), one is overtly marked with a means preposition such as *with*, *on*, or *via*:

- (37) But the networks are finally waking up to a large demographic reality, which is that a lot of younger people don't **watch news on TV**.  
 (Howard Kurtz, "The Kids on the Bus," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 9, 1996, p. 32-3)

As illustrated in (37), when used as a means preposition, *on* generally takes a bare NP object. However, *on* can also be a spatial preposition, requiring a physical object, which would show up as an NP with an article. The difference between meanings of the NP *television* depends on whether the content (the object being depicted) is already specified through another NP, as it is by *news* in (37); in that case, the PP *on tele-*

*vision* specifies the means. In (38), several senses are conflated:

- (38) On the radio at eleven, Ben Grauer came on from Times Square to narrate the amazing descending ball of light that marked the New York New Year, and Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians played from the Waldorf, which was exciting to imagine ... but it would have been more exciting to watch it **on television**, which we didn't have.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 236)

The phrasing of the final clause in (38) creates a structure in which *television* is the direct object of the word *have*. This involves the same token of the word *television* in the two clauses shown in (39).

- (39) a. It would have been more exciting to watch it on television.  
b. We didn't have television.

In (39a) *on television* is a means adverbial. But two interpretations could explain the use of the term *television* in (39b). One approach is to claim that there is a sense of *television* that refers to being hooked up for TV service, perhaps akin to *having cable* or *getting electricity*.<sup>12</sup> Neither of these cases involve an artifact, but instead some other commodity to prepare the viewer to receive the broadcast. The second explanation for

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12. Cf. In Irish English the definite article is used for this sense (e.g., *getting the electricity*).

the construction in (39b) relies on a combination of the broadcast and artifact senses brought into being in a way similar to the entities evoked in Ward et al.'s (1991) analysis of pragmatic islands, i.e., the existence of the broadcast sense from *on television* makes accessible an actual (discourse entity of a) television set for referring to. These two readings of the NP *television* in (39b) I therefore identify as the 'service' sense and the 'invoked apparatus' sense.

#### 2.1.2.4 Two New Media Expressions

Two newer media terms, *the Internet* (and the clipped form *the Net*) and *the World Wide Web* (or just *the Web*), are most often found with the definite article, as illustrated in (40) and (41).

- (40) a. I got the article off the Net.  
 b. \*I got it off Net.

- (41) a. I found the article on the Web.  
 b. \*I found it on Web.

Since each represents a unique identity, the use of the definite rather than an indefinite article is not surprising. Conversely, the metaphor of the Net or the Web as a single physical space is reinforced by the use of the articulated form. However, when the NPs are used in means adverbials, it is surprising that they do not appear in the bare form, as other



media terms do. Only with *via*, a more overt marker of means, do these NPs sometimes appear in the bare form, as shown in (42):

- (42) If you have comments on the show, you can send them to us via Internet.  
(WBEZ radio broadcast, 1997)

It will be interesting to watch the evolution of the form of these two media NPs. It is unlikely that either will be used with an indefinite article very soon (at least, not as long as each referent is unique, although it could come to pass that one day there will be numerous independent internets available). However, it is possible that they will remain in the articulated form when being used for sporadic reference, like *the telephone* and *the movies*. They may also make the transition to the eroded zero form, when used in sporadic reference, like *on radio/ on the radio*. The third model would be if they ended up like *on line*,<sup>13</sup> *on tape*, or *on cable*, i.e., only used in the bare form.

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13. Two senses are distinguished by article usage with the word *line*: if people are 'on the line' they are involved in a telephone call, whereas to be 'on line' means people are using a computer connection (sometimes via a phone line).

Yet another sense of *line* included in the Social/ Geographical Spaces, was the 'queue' sense. However, in some regions of the U.S. there is a contrasting pair here as well. In the New York area people form a queue by getting *in line*; once it is formed, each new person gets *on line*. In most other U.S. dialects, *in line* serves for both these meanings.

### 2.1.2.5 Apparatus vs. Content Senses

In scanning electronic corpora for the string *on video*, I found *video* used as a clipping for both *videotape* and *videocassette*. In its clipped form *video* remains a count noun. Although the head noun is dropped, its influence is still felt in determining whether the entire compound is mass or count. (This is in keeping with the behavior of other clipped compounds, as we saw in Chapter 1, Sect. 2.1). Technically, tape is the material a movie is recorded on, while a cassette is the artifact onto which the tape is wound. That is, while the original event is recorded onto videotape, copies of that tape are circulated in the shell of a videocassette. Or put another way, a videocassette contains videotape. Not all recording media terms, however, allow reference to both the material and the artifact. For example, we could say that a version of a movie is being distributed *on film* (which is the material that is recorded on) but not *on reel* (the artifact on to which the film is wound).

A more general referring function is seen throughout the Recording Media terms. Both *videotape* and *videocassette* can be used, by means of metonymy, to refer to the content on the tape, as well as to the form of the media; the word *film* behaves the same way, as shown in (43).

- (43) a. *The Manchurian Candidate* is my favorite **film**.  
[sense = content] [form = count]
- b. I'd rather watch it on **film** than rent the video.  
[sense = material] [form = mass]
- c. I would always rather watch a **film** than a video.  
[sense = media form] [form = count]

*TV*, on the other hand, can be used to refer to both the medium and the apparatus, but not to an individual bit of the content—for that there is the word *show*, or within that category, *episode* (but cf. a mass use: *I feel like watching some TV*). This individuated use can be tested for all the terms by inserting the Media word in a template that uses the word as an indefinite count noun, as shown in (44), and checking to see if a content or apparatus sense results.

- (44) That's a \_\_\_ I really like.

The results of such a test are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
**Recording Media Terms Used as Count Nouns**

	Content	Apparatus for Projecting the Data	Object Containing the Data
cable			
line			
cassette	yes		yes
compact disk/CD	yes		yes
(floppy) disk	yes		yes
film	yes		yes
record	yes		yes
tape	yes		yes
video	yes		yes
videocassette	yes		yes
videotape	yes		yes
computer		yes	yes
radar		yes	
radio		yes	
sonar		yes	
television/TV		yes	

Table 8 shows a contrast in use of Recording Media terms in their ability to be used to refer to the content recorded on them. *Cable* and *line* only serve as means terms, that is, objects that are *on cable* and *on line* are never placed on a cable or on a line; these terms are only interpreted through the metonymous sense. For the other Recording Media terms, based on the two sets of groupings shown in the table, I propose the following rule for count noun uses of recording media: if there is an apparatus sense assigned to a recording media word (as there is for *com-*

*puter, radar, radio, sonar, and television/ TV*), then the content sense is blocked (cf. blocking rules in Clark and Clark 1979). Likewise, if there is another word for the apparatus, then using the media word for the apparatus is blocked. For example, for the medium of film there is the word *projector* for the apparatus, and thus we do not use the word *film* for the apparatus sense. For the medium of video we have the word *VCR* as the apparatus, and thus do not use the word *video* for the apparatus sense; tellingly, the word *video* is used differently by some non-native speakers of English, who use *video* to mean the machine that plays a tape (perhaps in a direct translation from the way their languages assign the content/ apparatus/ object distinction). For the medium of audio-tape, English has the words *recorder* or *player*, and thus the words *tape* or *cassette* are not used to refer to such an apparatus. Note that computers seem to be acceptable in both senses because the term *computer* is sometimes used to refer to the monitor and sometimes to the drive that stores the data.

In conclusion, with utterances containing Recording Expressions, both locatum and location NPs can have polysemous uses. For the locatum, we may denote a physical object or an image depicting it. For locations, generally the use of the article indicates a concrete referent, while the

bare form is used to convey a media or broadcast sense.

### 2.1.3 Temporal Interruptions

The third set of bare singular NPs consists of count nouns that name a stretch of time which provides a break in a regular routine. These are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9**  
**Temporal Interruption Expressions**<sup>14</sup>  
Locatum is animate

at <b>breakfast</b>	on <b>break</b>
at <b>campfire</b>	on <b>holiday</b>
at <b>dinner</b>	on <b>lunch [break]</b>
at <b>lunch</b>	on <b>leave</b>
at <b>recess</b>	on <b>recess</b>
at <b>sunset</b>	on <b>sabbatical</b>
	on <b>vacation</b>

The two columns in Table 9 represent two subtypes of temporal occasions, or two ways of viewing periods of time. Nouns in the first column, which occur with *at*, denote points at which some event occurs; they pick out a scheduled time slot in the day. This is an expected extension of *at*, which in its locative function picks out a point in space. The nouns in the second column, which occur with the preposition *on*, denote longer stretches of time during which some regular activity is not

14. For Soja's subjects, who were preschool-age children, *snack* and *snacktime* also showed up as bare singular NPs. These terms, I would argue, are also temporal interruption expressions, although my corpus has no attested examples of adults using these terms.

done, but is put on hold, so to speak. These terms generally refer to times not within a daily schedule, but interruptions in a year's routine.<sup>15</sup> The *at* phrases describe an event in which the duration of the event rather than the point at which it occurs is emphasized. As with the set of Social/ Geographical Spaces, the locatum is animate.

As demonstrated in (45), the PP containing these nouns indicates the locatum's state or activity (or lack of activity), and thus can be used to infer where the locatum's activity might be taking place. Unless it is stated in a separate PP, however, (such as in B's response in (45b), the exact location of the located person is only implied.

- (45) a. A: Is Janet around?  
       B: Oh, she's on sabbatical.
- b. A: Is Janet around?  
       B: Oh, she's on sabbatical in France.
- (46) a. A: Where's Tom?  
       B: He's on break.

For (45a) and (46), the hearer can infer (by means of rather easily defeasible R-implicatures) that the locatum is somewhere 'not here.'

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15. The terms *break* and *lunch [break]*, are exceptions to this view since they often occur as events in a daily, not yearly schedule. It may be that they are viewed, like *vacation* and *sabbatical*, as more specifically interruptions in the work routine, so that it is the lack of paid activity that is emphasized.

### 2.1.4 Untethered Metaphors

In examining bare singular count nouns that occur in PPs, one last set was found that can be grouped together not so much for the meanings that the nouns share, but because the expressions are used in situations which have in common the location NP's lack of a referent. The expressions are purely metaphorical, and no physical location is referred to. For example, when a person is described as *on edge*, no physical edge is meant; when a person is *on target*, there is no actual bull's-eye; when someone is *out of line*, there is no queue being referred to, etc. Thus, while they contain locative prepositions and nouns which have count senses sometimes denoting a physical location, this set of commonly used PPs are not used here as locative expressions. These PPs are listed in Table 10.

**Table 10**  
**Untethered Metaphors**  
 No object named by the NP is involved

off <b>base</b> in <b>bed</b> (with) on <b>board</b> on <b>edge</b> in <b>line</b> (with) out of <b>line</b> on <b>target</b> on <b>track</b>
--



With *on target*, for example, the locatum is typically a person's abstract predictions or plans, and the phrase indicates the degree to which they are accurate, as in (47).

- (47) You were **on target** regarding industry problems, but wide of the mark in portraying the financial health of this company.  
(David R. Waters, "Letters to the Editor," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 31, 1989)

A non-metaphorical reading of *on target*, on the other hand, would need to have a physical projectile locatum rather than a locatum that is a plan or idea—as in the sentence in (48).

- (48) We thought the missile was veering off course but it stayed **on target**.

Note that when contact is made with an actual, physical target, an article would be needed to talk about the word *target's* referent:

- (49) Look, a squirrel has landed **on the target**.

*On board* is often used to describe someone joining a team or a company, as in example (50). In this case the metaphor is that the company is like the crew of a ship, but no actual ship—the original referent of *board*—is referred to.<sup>16</sup>

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16. This sense is still seen in some uses of *board* in modifiers, such as an *onboard* or *outboard motor*.

- (50) Shortly after coming **on board**, he hired Marvin Honig, formerly an executive vice president of ad agency FCB/ Leber Katz Partners, to Esty's top creative spot.  
 (Thomas R. King, "Joseph O'Donnell Quits as Chairman Of Saatchi Ad Unit," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 4, 1989)

Similarly, with *off base*, *on track*, and other metaphorical uses of PPs found in Table 10, while a count noun is included in the PP, there is no physical object being referred to by the NPs. A longer metaphorical phrase that is frequently found is *be in bed (with)*. Used metaphorically, *in bed with* involves no actual bed, rather the locatum(s) (generally people of power such as a company's or a country's leaders) are implied to be in collusion.

A couple remaining bare forms appear in PPs in which the NPs are not denoting locations at all. These nouns, although they resemble members of the Social/ Geographical Spaces group, have unrelated senses. They are further differentiated from the majority of bare singular NPs by being limited in co-occurrence to certain verbs:

- (51) lie **in state**
- (52) a. go to school **out of state**  
 b. play the next two games **in state**  
 c. travel **out of state**
- (53) hold **at bay**

In (51), for example, the word *state* is not used as freely as the Municipality uses of *state* shown in (52). The sense of *state* in (51) occurs with very few verbs. Unlike the PPs in (52), *state* in (51) is not used to refer to a location; *lie in state* is more of a set, non-literal phrase. Both (51) and (53) show words that have non-locational senses that only superficially resemble the count noun senses.

## 2.2 Uses of Bare Singular NPs and Their Containing PPs

In looking at the four sets of nouns that can be used as bare singular NPs in locative expressions, we see that some are used in reference, and others in predication. Traditionally, nouns are considered to have denotations, while NPs are used to refer.<sup>17</sup> Looking at the bare singular NPs in locative PPs, recall that for the metaphorical uses, while the nouns have denotations, the bare NPs are not used to pick out any referent denoted by the noun; a member of this set, then, only occurs in PPs that are predicating expressions of the locatum.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the temporal

17. “First-order entities are such that they may be referred to” (Lyons 1977:443).

18. Of course, different senses of the same noun may have different bare form uses. To say a person is *on line* (meaning using a computer or accessing a database) or that information is *on line* (meaning located on or available via a database or computer) is to use a predicating expression about the locatum, while to say a person is *in/ on line* (meaning standing in a queue) could be either a referring expression,

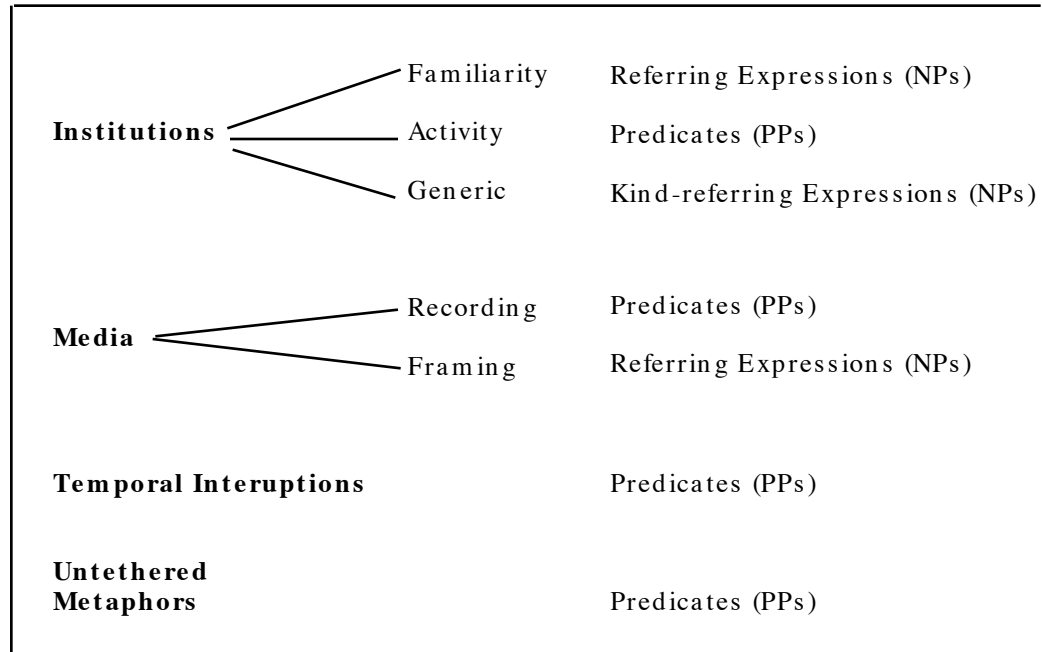
interruption expressions do not pick out an event or entity in their bare NP use, but in PPs are used to predicate the activity of the locatum. Of the media terms, the Recording Expression are again predicates. For an entity to be *on TV*, no specific television set is referred to; instead, the PP predicates something of the locatum. The framing expressions, on the other hand, are used to convey a particular framed space, from a particular participant's point of view. The Social/ Geographical expressions also are used in both predication and reference. The generic use is kind-referring, the Familiarity use is individual referring, and the Activity use is not referential at all, but consists of a PP predicate describing the locatum (the locatum, however, is a referring expression). These different uses of bare singular NPs are displayed in Table 11.

**Table 11**

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indicating a particular line, or a predicate describing the locatum's queueing activity.

### Predicates and Referring Expressions



The PPs that are solely predicates, which contain NPs not used for reference, are in line with claims that bare singular forms are not used to pick out actual places (cf. Christophersen 1939:183, Hall and Hall 1969:3, Quirk et al. 1985:276-277). But it is the groups of NPs with both referring and predicating uses that are the ones of interest here, since they indicate that we cannot make a blanket generalization about the meanings and uses of bare singular forms.

### 3. Analyzing the Prepositions

Now that I have laid out the four main categories of nouns that are used

as bare singular NPs, I turn briefly to the influence of preposition choice on the meaning of the phrases containing those NPs. In some ways this choice is also affected by knowledge of the NPs' referents, relating as it does to such aspects as the physical shape of the location NP's referent and the size and mobility of the locatum.<sup>19</sup> But first, let us consider some of the geometric information that speakers take to be the underlying meaning of a spatial preposition.

### **3.1 Denotations of the Spatial Prepositions *in*, *on*, and *at***

#### **3.1.1 Geometric Aspects**

First I will lay out some of the expectations about the distinct meanings of *in*, *on*, and *at* that a hearer brings into play.

Herskovits (1985: 358-359) presents a view of each preposition as a category organized around a focal relation, the "ideal meaning" for the preposition. The definitions on the left in (54) show the four ideal meanings she proposes for the prepositions under discussion:

---

19. Other relevant aspects, as we'll see in Chapter 4, are such pragmatic factors as the expected use of the locatum and location, the relation between the speaker and hearer, and the speaker's current view of the location.

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| (54) a. <b>in</b> : spatial inclusion                                    | Food is in the freezer.     |
| b. <b>on</b> : contiguity and support<br>(for three-dimensional objects) | The book is on the table.   |
| c. contiguity<br>(for one or two-<br>dimensional objects)                | A stain is on my shirt.     |
| d. <b>at</b> : coincidence of two points                                 | The store is at the corner. |

Dirven (1993) lays out similar minimal requirements for the prepositions: *on* requires contact, *in* requires some kind of enclosure, and *at*, the most “neutral” place preposition, requires neither contact nor enclosure, merely that one point is oriented off the other. Because *on* alone requires that the two objects actually touch in space, Dirven sees *on* as the most spatial of the set: “Although *at* and *in* can be used to fulfil purely spatial functions, they do so in a less concrete or less ‘spatial’ way than *on*, and therefore they may be more apt to go beyond spatial conceptualisations” (1993:75). That is, *at* and *in* are more likely to be used in extended non-spatial senses, e.g., temporal, manner.

### 3.1.2 Moving Beyond Geometry to Interpretation

However, despite the factors that Herskovits, Dirven, and others note as common threads in the meanings of spatial prepositions, Herskovits (1985: 348) notes a major shortcoming of the simple-relations

models—those models which see prepositional meaning strictly determined by the configuration of actual objects:

the simple relations would not, in any case, apply to the objects themselves, but rather to parts of space, to geometric images matched onto the object, to what I call geometric descriptions of the objects. And even with the same preposition, different geometric descriptions may be applicable.

In other words, the relevant part of a location object may be perceived and indicated in different ways. This can be seen by the different physical areas picked out as the location in the PPs in (55).

- (55) a. the crack in the vase                      (Herskovits 1985:348)  
       b. the water in the vase                      (Herskovits 1985:348)  
       c. the beauty in the vase

In (55a) the vase is conceptualized in terms of the substance of the container, while in (55b) the relevant space is the volume that the container surrounds. In (55c), on the other hand, it is elements such as the vase's proportion or its manufacture that are being pointed out, and not an actual space.

By examples such as (55a) and (55b), Herskovits points out that it is not real-world objects (like vases) which we manipulate in our spatial perceptions and descriptions, but modified geometric descriptions: "geomet-



ric description involves viewing or conceptualizing an object as a point, a line, a surface, or a strip—in other words as some simple geometric figure” (1985:349). So, she argues, speakers do not use prepositions to locate a real-world entity with a constant meaning, but are influenced by a filter of geometric perception that allows them to indicate the relevant perspective of an object; this ability to highlight various possible perspectives helps speakers to figure out which aspect of the meaning of a preposition and an NP is meant, even among utterances containing the same preposition and NP.

Thus, according to Herskovits, our geometric conceptualization interacts with the variation in the spatial meanings we can apply to the same spatial prepositions. But beyond variations in how we conceive of the ideal meaning of a particular spatial relation, there are ordered extensions into non-spatial domains as well. Dirven (1993) analyses 12 spatial prepositions (*in, on, at, from, off, out of, by, with, under, through, about, over*) by separating them into groups related by meaning, and showing the patterns of radial meaning extension that lead from the spatial sense out into other domains such as time, state, area, manner, circumstance, and cause. His approach resembles that of Lakoff (1987) in showing a core meaning for a word with a series of shifts and extensions that lead

to related word senses in other domains. In this case, the spatial sense is core, but through extension to other domains, non-spatial senses emerge. As Dirven notes, “the extensions of the meanings of a preposition from physical space via time into more abstract domains do not occur in any haphazard way but follow a path of gradually increasing abstractions, whereby the link with each prior meaning remains obvious and may account for most, if not all, co-occurrence restrictions” (1993: 76) between *locatum* and *location*.

The use of domains is helpful in contrasting many sets of related PP meanings. The examples in (56) provide some instances of connected senses of the preposition *at* (Dirven (1993:20-21)).

- (56)
- a. point as place: at the station
  - b. time-point: at six o'clock
  - c. manner: at full speed
  - d. circumstance: at these words, he left
  - e. state: at work

Dirven's assignment of phrases to domains seems to be determined partly by the intuitive categorization of the location NPs (e.g., a station is a place, six o'clock is a time, etc.). Rauh (1993) makes this claim more explicitly: she says that in the same way that selectional restrictions on verbs require objects of certain types (e.g., animate, concrete), so prepo-

sitions allow only complements which are marked with certain semantic features (e.g., spatial, temporal, scalar). “The preposition *above* does not take a complement which is marked as temporal. It does, however, take complements which allow a spatial or a scalar interpretation. The preposition *at*, on the other hand, allows spatially and temporally interpretable complements... which means that there are lexical variants” (Rauh 1993:108). In other words, there are distinct senses for the same prepositions.

It is useful to consider the types of constraints on nouns that can occur in locative PPs. For example, *in* in its basic spatial sense requires enclosure of one object in another, which in the spatial domain requires physical objects. However, if following a domain shift such as those in (56), the domain is shifted to a state, a new set of NPs become possible objects for a spatial preposition. For example, abstract nouns can be used if they identify a condition or an emotional state; by metaphorical extension, this term is considered to surround the locatum, at least emotionally: *in danger, in trouble, in agony*. Thus it is important to note that each domain, not just each preposition, would take a different set of NPs.

Dirven contrasts meanings of two prepositions from different domains used with the same verb and object:

The difference between means and instrument stands out most clearly in the pair *write in pencil* and *write with a pencil*: the *in*-phrase conceptualises the way (manner or means) in which things are done; here the idea of an enveloping state or substance is clearly present, which also accounts for the use of *pencil* as an uncountable noun; the *with*-phrase stresses the use of an accompanying instrument and since this is concrete, *pencil* is used as a countable noun here. (Dirven 1993:90)

The reason for the syntactic contrast in object forms between *in pencil* and *with a pencil* has to do with *in* being able to have either a substance or material noun as its object, thus allowing us to interpret the word *pencil* as *pencil lead*. The word *with*, on the other hand, allows artifacts, and especially tools, among the types of referents its objects might be, so a countable NP like *a pencil* is possible with *with*. The metonymy of *pencil* as a tool (with a count noun interpretation), to *pencil lead* as a substance (mass noun) is what allows *pencil*, but not other substance nouns to show up after both *in* and *with*:

- |      |             |                   |
|------|-------------|-------------------|
| (57) | in charcoal | * with a charcoal |
|      | in blood    | * with a blood    |
|      | in ink      | * with an ink     |

We saw evidence of this contrast in object types earlier with the two sets

of Recording Media expressions discussed in Section 2.1.2 above. There we saw bare singular NPs such as *on disk*, *on radio*, *on video* contrasted with PPs in which the object NP was a mass noun, such as *in ink* and *in memory*. With *in ink* and *in memory*, the referent of the object is a substance or encompassing storage situation, while with *on* we expect more physical placement as onto a section of the tape, disk, etc.; that is, the location NP for *on* is viewed as more of a discrete location. Therefore, it is not surprising that Recording Media occurring with prepositions like *in* are interpreted as more masslike than expressions that follow *on*.

Quirk et al. (1985), for example, address this difficulty of determining whether a spatial preposition is used in a locative phrase, observing that “certain nouns have the zero article, especially as complement of *at*, *in* and *on* in quasi-locative phrases ... We call them ‘quasi-locative’ because, although they appear to have locative meaning, their function is rather more abstract” (p. 277). In fact, it is this appearance of locative meaning that makes these forms so hard to classify. I propose that while all these PPs appear to have locative structure (i.e., spatial preposition + location NP), not all of them have locative meaning. In the next chapter I will show that although some of the NPs in certain contexts (e.g., *in town*, *on campus*) are referring expressions and thus pick out

physical referents as part of being spatial expressions, many of the PPs (e.g., *in prison*, *in court*) involve more extended senses of the prepositions and are used with prepositions not from the spatial domain but from manner or state domains. The lack of article in the NP can be an indicator that a hearer should choose a non-spatial sense for the preposition, or that the referent is identifiable.

## **3.2 From Senses to Extensions of Spatial Prepositions**

### **3.2.1 Use Type Patterns**

Rauh (1993) notes that the semantic roles THEME, LOCATION, SOURCE, PATH, and GOAL are independent of the domains of space, time, manner, etc., though these roles were probably originally relevant to the spatial domain and were later transferred to other domains, a development that she notes has been observed for many prepositions diachronically (by, e.g., Closs-Traugott 1985) and in language acquisition (by e.g., Clark 1973). Rauh explains the process by which a new sense of a preposition develops:

It is easy to see how variants ... may develop. If it is assumed that primary spatial prepositions exhibit selection properties on the basis of which they select a spatial unit as their internal argument, then it is possible to imagine that deviant marked sequences can be generated by inserting non-spatial complements, thus violating the selection properties and thus inducing a meta-

phorical interpretation. As Kittay (1981; 1987: 214ff.) has demonstrated, one of the relevant principles of metaphor is the transfer of structural or organizational properties from one semantic domain to another. (Rauh 1993:123)

Many prepositions of spatial origin are used non-spatially, though Rauh notes that only a few of these may be identified as distinct lexical prepositions, for while numerous examples exist of temporal lexical variants of originally spatial prepositions, including *before*, *after*, or *until*, of these, “*before* used as a spatial preposition is rare in Modern English, and *after* as well as *until* have completely lost their spatial properties” (Rauh 1993:124). She indicates that such changes confirm that reanalysis of lexical properties is possible, indeed documented. Rauh suggests that one can observe changes in the sense of these prepositions from the “marked metaphorical use of a form to a lexical variant characterized by reanalyzed lexical properties” (p. 124).

Other uses of spatial prepositions, Rauh claims, have become highly lexicalized, but are merely reinterpreted rather than reanalyzed. I am not suggesting that the prepositions used with bare singular NPs are reanalyzed as having new non-spatial senses, but only that the prepositions in some uses are easily reinterpreted non-spatially, especially with certain sets of objects.

Herskovits (1982, 1985) proposes that factors in addition to metaphorical extension create variants of prepositional meaning. She suggests that the central sense of each preposition's 'ideal meaning' is somewhat elastic and she describes the allowable variations as different 'use types' for each preposition:

A use type is, thus, a phrase pattern centered around a preposition, together with the interpretation, or meaning, associated with the pattern. Most often, the phrase pattern is simply a preposition with selection restrictions for the subject and object of the preposition, but sometimes it involves a specific word as subject of the prepositions. (Herskovits 1985:370)

In Herskovits's description, "subject and object of the preposition" correspond to what I have been referring to as the locatum and the location NPs. A typical example of a use type would be "Person *at* Artifact," which would be interpreted pragmatically to mean the person is using the artifact.<sup>20</sup> From this use type, one can generate examples such as those in (58):

- (58) a. Tomeka was at the computer.  
 b. Joe was at the Xerox machine.  
 c. The temp was at his desk.

In these constructions, the locatum is understood to be not just in the

---

20. As we'll see in Chapter 4, Section 2.1.2, the meanings conveyed by these use types qualify as R-Implicatures.



proximity of the location (which is all that *at* alone would semantically entail) but involved in the activity associated with that artifact. Hence in (58a) Tomeka is sitting at the computer typing; in (58b) Joe is making copies; in (58c) the temp is using the desk surface (to write or to sort papers), etc. Even if they are not doing the activity, *at* is used to imply that they are positioned on the side where one could work, as compared to the examples in (59), where only nearness, not orientation is implied:

- (59) a. Tomeka is by the computer,  
 b. Joe was by the Xerox machine.  
 c. The temp was by his desk.

Use types, then, are a way to point out common interpretations of certain prepositions in certain uses. But of course, as Herskovits observes, the agreed upon meaning may not be attached to just any locatum, but generally takes in a very constrained set of objects. In (58), for example, artifacts such as wall, mailbox, poster, etc., could not be used to convey that the locatum was using the object. So, use types, while they are described as patterns of meaning centered around a preposition, really reflect an interaction of the meaning of the preposition, the meaning of the NP, and socially agreed upon expectations about how the referents of such NPs are typically used.

In summary, simple geometric relations among the referents of NPs are often taken to be key to understanding the meaning of a preposition (for a critical review of past approaches, see Cienki 1989:4-14), but often these relations are just a starting point, with semantic extension and pragmatic factors such as context and the speakers' expectation of the object's function having a fairly predictable influence as well.

### 3.2.2 Dialect Differences Between *in* and *at*

Other differences in prepositions are more localized in their use. One dialectal difference between British and American speakers, for example, is illustrated in (60), which shows a contrast used by British speakers.

- (60) a. He's at school (Brit) = He attends/ is attending school  
[=Quirk et al. (1979), p. 310]
- b. He's in school (Brit) = He's actually inside the building  
--not, e.g., on the playing fields  
[=Quirk et al. (1979), p. 310]

Quirk et al. (1979) note the contrast between some *in* and *at* expressions which reveals separate senses for the PPs, which again differ from the core spatial sense distinguishing each preposition.

American English, they point out, uses "in school" for both the activity sense (60a) and the location sense (60b). This American usage can be

verified from the many attested examples of *in school* that I have collected, two of which appear in (61). In neither case is the school building meant, but instead the time period during which the locatum was attending school is indicated.

- (61) a. The beauty of Burnett's story (the novel, which was published in 1905, is an expanded version of an 1888 novella) is that it presents the battle of youthful fancy against adult "realism" as a kind of epic struggle, fought where it is usually fought—**in school**.  
(Terrence Rafferty, "The Current Cinema," *The New Yorker*, May 29, 1995, p. 92-3)
- b. When I was **in nursery school**, some girls fed me hot sauce.  
(Matt Groening, *Life in Hell* cartoon, *Chicago Reader*, Aug. 16, 1996, Section 4, p. 1)

However, the British meaning difference in (60) is the same one expressed in many American locative PPs by the contrast between the articulated and anarthrous forms, as shown in (62)-(64).

- (62) a. to be at church = to be taking part in the service  
b. to be at the church = to merely be in or near the building, for any purpose
- (63) a. to be in school = to be taking part in attending or teaching a class  
b. to be in the school = could apply to any person (visitor, parent, janitor, voter) who was physically inside the building
- (64) a. to be in prison = to be held there for committing a crime  
b. to be in the prison = to be in the building, for any reason (e.g., as visitor, cook, cockroach)

Since I posit in Chapter 4 that the meanings of the bare forms in (62)-(64) are created by Activity Implicature, the (a) examples can be said to convey the Activity sense. The meanings in the (b) examples, which contain articles in the NP, are used to convey the more straightforward locative meaning, and can therefore be said to convey the Locative sense.

To summarize, prepositional meaning is interpreted through basic geometric information, through our conceptualization of the relevant part of the referents, and through certain implicated contrasts concerning the referentiality of the location NPs.

### **3.3 Orienting a Spatial PP**

Previously, in Section 2, I discussed the meanings of the bare singular NPs analyzed in isolation, i.e., by looking at what *school*, *university*, and *college*, for example, have in common. In this section, the NP as part of a PP is considered, and I will use a categorization that looks at the influence of the verb, the preposition, and the location NP in specific sentences to identify two perceptions of the referents when they are referred to in PPs.

PPs with bare forms are often considered in their adverbial function, but

as noted in Chapter 1, like other locative PPs, they can also serve as modifiers of NPs or as nominals. With locative PPs such as *downtown*, *offstage*, and *out of state*, the use of a PP rather than an NP to name a location allows for a new patterning of the bare singular NP uses, creating a system that takes into consideration the information that the PP presents about the shape of the location and what the locatum does at that location. I will show that with some PPs, the location is presented as a particular point to which the locatum travels or at which the locatum is positioned (Section 3.3.1). In other, sometimes identical PP structures, the location is presented as a type of path. This second perspective has two instantiations: (1) the path as a direction of movement—a path with no specific endpoint required, or, (2) the location as a traversable area within which the locatum travels (Section 3.3.2).

### 3.3.1 Location as a Point

In Section 2.1, *in*, *on*, and *at* were shown to be the most basic spatial prepositions, appearing with verbs of location or position (e.g., *be*, *stay*, *sit*). The NPs in these PPs identify the stationary point at which the locatum is positioned. The same NPs that appear with *in*, *on*, and *at* generally can appear in a PP after a motion verb (e.g., *go*, *travel*, *arrive*)—rather than a location verb—to name the source or goal end point at

which the locatum was or plans to be; in that case they appear with the prepositions *to*, *toward*, or *from*:

- (65) a. She got up and walked slowly **toward camp**.  
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./ Nov. 1996, p. 118)
- b. Seventeen-year-old Junko Furuta was riding her bike home **from work** last spring when a gang of teen-age boys kidnapped her.  
(Damon Darlin, "Japanese Fear New Juvenile Violence Is Sign of Spreading 'American Disease,'" *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 2, 1989)
- c. He bought books at auctions, he bought them C.O.D., and every week he came **to town** with Roman and hauled a bagful out of the library.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 84)

A new set of prepositions can be brought into play, but not as prepositions with NP objects; instead, some prepositions, such as *up*, *down*, *on*, *off*, and *out of*, combine with Ns to create P+N compounds. The terms *downtown*, *uptown*, *downstate*, and *upstate*, for example, are such nominals that name the location point. Similarly, by itself, *home* as an object can name a point without using a preposition.<sup>21</sup> With the lexical-

21. Cf. Fillmore's (1991)' treatment of the word *home* in which he shows that it often has the behavior of a bare intransitive preposition containing an anaphoric element. As we saw in Chapter 1, Sect. 3.3, many of the bare NPs can follow the verb *leave*, but only *home* appears bare after all motion verbs:

- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| (i) flew home | (ii) *flew school |
| arrived home  | *crawled prison   |
| crawled home  | *arrived church   |

ized P+N compounds as well as with *home*, both verbs of location and verbs of motion can occur.

The following three scenarios indicate the presence of a Location Point Nominal. These are illustrated in (66)-(68).

- (66) PPs without prepositions: the NP is either the word *home*, or a lexicalized P+N compound made of *up* or *down*:
- a. When school came out my sisters **went home** in different groups, each supposing I was with the other.  
(Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of the Island*, 1915, Gutenberg etext)
  - b. Why don't you meet me at the Parasol on top of the Sunbelt Plaza on Peachtree? Food's not all that hot, but the view is spectacular, and there's really not any place **downtown** that doesn't cater to tourists.  
(Anne River Siddons, *Homeplace*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, p. 239)
  - c. The shrubs bounced against the ground again and again, and **upslope** the trees howled.  
(=13))
  - d. He called Singer first, finding him finally **downstate** at the Seventh Division construction office.  
(Tony Hillerman, *The Fly on the Wall*, 1971, New York: HarperCollins, p. 247)
-

- (67) PPs (containing NPs that are either lexicalized P+N compounds or bare singular NPs) with verbs of motion and following the prepositions *from*, *to*, *toward*, or *through*:
- a. Instead of his usual monologue, Mr. Hall just shouts “I’m back!” **from offstage** and introduces Ms. Abdul.  
(Leon E. Wynter, “Ghetto and Suburb Go to a House Party,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 1989)
  - b. Although most of the apartment complexes on the auction block were built by Texans, most of the buyers are **from out of state**.  
(Christi Harlan, “Apartment Complex Sales Brighten a Dark Market,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 5, 1989)
  - c. It was only much later, when we were driving away **from camp** and I was trying, not very successfully, to still my pain and anger at the scant notice that Mrs. Spectorisky had taken of me, that I realized that I had of course invited just such rejection by dropping in at Lenore this unexpectedly.  
(Diana Trilling, “The Girls of Camp Lenore,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 12, 1996, p. 68)
  - d. Mr. Thompson [the principal] sometimes prevails upon the parents to **come to school** and do the paddling, which is limited to two licks with a nine-inch long oval wooden paddle, kept in the school office.  
(Susan Sheehan, “Kid, Twelve,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 56)
  - e. A Brinks truck raced **through town**, hit a bump, and a bag fell out at my feet.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 227)
  - f. She could hear the tinny, diminishing burr of the Toyota as it turned out of the driveway and disappeared down Pomeroy Street **toward town**.  
(Anne River Siddons, *Homeplace*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1987, p. 282)



- (68) Bare Singular NPs following verbs of location/ positions and the prepositions *in*, *on*, or *at*:
- a. There she was, **standing on stage** in a pink strapless gown that she and her mother bought, used, for \$20 at a bridal shop, to be crowned with a cut-glass studded tiara, four inches high.  
(Clare Ansberry, “Perhaps 900 Queens Reign Over Ohio And Its Bounty,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 5, 1989)
  - b. If you **live on campus** in a dorm or networked Greek house, and you’re having difficulty connecting your computer to the network, please press six to receive a referral to a rescon [residential networking consultant].  
(Northwestern University Information Services, outgoing voicemail message. Dec. 1996)
  - c. We weren’t restaurantgoers — “Why pay good money for food you could make better **at home**?” was Mother’s philosophy — so we weren’t at all sure about restaurant custom: could, for example, a person who had been seated in a restaurant simply get up and walk out? Would it be proper? Would it be legal?  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 109)

The types of examples in which Location Point Nominals are found are summarized in Table 12.

**Table 12**  
**Location Point Nominals**  
 Locatum Moves To or Is Situated At the Location Point

<b>Location Appears with no preposition</b>	
He went home. Is your father home? She went downstate for the weekend. She lives downstate. She works downtown. We learned it without leaving campus.	
<b>Moveable Locatum with  <i>from, to, or toward</i></b>	<b>Stationary Locatum with  <i>in, on, at or across, up, down</i></b>
She went to school. She came from camp. She returned from downtown. The car traveled toward town.	He stayed at home. She lives up river. They are on shore. We sat in church. The store is across town.

### 3.3.2. Traversable Locations

While *in*, *on*, and *at* can be used with positional or movement verbs when the endpoint location is specified, we should also now consider additional prepositions used to describe the location as a directional path, or to describe the location as a traversable expanse. This use only occurs with motion verbs. Here the location is viewed not as a point, but rather as a traversable area through which the locatum moves. *Up*, *down*, *across*, and *through* are examined here as typical of the prepositions that can be used for expressing a locatum's movement through a

location area.

In these cases, unlike the Location Point Nominals, directional PPs have similar meanings to PPs with an indefinite article in them. To move up hill is to move up a hill, to travel down river is to travel down a river, to run across town is to run across a town, etc. Here, *up* and *down* serve more typically as directional prepositions, with the bare singular NPs serving as objects. That is, the contrast between *up* and *down* uses has to do with whether the locatum is moving or stationary; i.e., whether the locatum is progressing up the state rather than being located upstate, is moving up the length of the town or is being situated uptown. Table 13 below gives examples of PPs that contain Traversable Location Objects.

**Table 13**  
**Traversable Locations**

Locatum Moves Along the Location

<p>up/down island  up/down stream  up/down river  up/down hill  up/down slope  across/through town  across/through campus</p>
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Example (69) below contrasts the two uses of bare nouns with *up*.

- (69) a. Our people're already **upriver**, so, tonight, you'll be the guest of a bunch of centipede enthusiasts.  
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./ Nov. 1996, p. 117)
- b. Leveritt and Brinkman stepped aboard the boat that was to carry them **upriver**.  
(Steven Utley, "The Wind over the World," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct./ Nov. 1996, p. 22)

In (69a) the term *upriver* refers to a point where people are located; *river* is not the location, *upriver* is. In (69b) *upriver*<sup>22</sup> refers to the path along which they will travel; here *river* is the location along which the traveling occurs.

In (70a) *offshore* is used to refer to a point just off of the shore; in contrast, in (70b) *on shore* is used to describe the path of the clouds towards the shore:

- (70) a. A ship--a huge ship, so big that for a second I thought it was just **offshore**.  
(=15))
- b. The next day a heavy wall of clouds moved **onshore**.  
(Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Wild Shore*, New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984. p. 127)

In (71), the highlighted phrases describe the direction of the travel:

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22. One factor adding to the ambiguity is that, as with many compound forms in English, there is little consistency in whether the term is written as a single orthographic word or as two words.

- (71) Down at Alley's Store, I could shell out for an autographed jar of one of Carly Simon's You're So Vain skin care products. I could ride my bike **up island** to John Belushi's or Lillian Hellman's grave at Abel's Hill Cemetery, or **down island** to the zillion-dollar mausoleum-cum-mansion that the ghostly-looking Mike Nichols and Diane Sawyer have built at Tashmoo.  
(Pete Karman, "Ferry Tales," *In These Times*, Aug. 5-18, 1996, p. 40)

Here *island* names the location that is being traveled through, while the actual endpoints are named in separate phrases. In other words, *island* is not where the locatum is headed, but is the area that he is traversing.

A use of *down* with one of the bare singular NPs occurred eight times in the corpus in a collocation which I at first judged odd. In their original settings they were attributed to older rural speakers; the OED indicates that it is only an American usage. The examples in (72) show uses of *down cellar*, which, if they were Traversable Point Locations, would be different than the other data examined because they lack not only an article, but also another preposition--i.e., down [into the] cellar. But seen as Location Point Nominals they are more consistent with other bare singular forms—e.g., [to] down cellar, [at a point which is] down cellar. This Location Point reading is reinforced by the parallel structure shown in (72b) with "upstairs, downstairs, and in the pantry," in which each phrase names a point that was checked during the search:

- (72) a. Raymond went **down cellar** to putter away the afternoon in his workshop.  
(Barbara Mater, "Delving in the Dark," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, mid-December 1994, p. 121)
- b. Well, her and me starts to lookin' upstairs, downstairs, in the pantry, **down cellar**, Ronnie still listenin' to the radio, then Doris sees the porch door is open and we look out there, then look in the barn.  
(E. Annie Proulx, *Postcards*, New York: Collier Books, 1992, p. 67)
- c. I wonder if it wouldn't help you out to go **down cellar** and stir the ice-cream.  
(E. S. Ward, *Story of Avis*, 1877, p. 141, [=OED Online])

At least one other directional preposition can be used to create ambiguities between the Location Point and Traversable Location senses — *across*: e.g., 'ride your bike across town', or 'live across town'. A more limited set of bare nouns is used with *across*, however; *town* and *campus* are two, perhaps because they both generally involve a larger, more expansive space than the other NPs.<sup>23</sup> Examples of these are shown in (73) and (74).

- (73) a. Mr. Smith actually hangs out **across town** at the Bloomfield Hills Country Club, but that club isn't as photogenic.  
(Paul Ingrassia, "This Time, GM's Innocent," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 29, 1989)

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23. Some other constraints than sheer size of the referent select the nouns that are found with this preposition. These NPs are also used to pick out an identifiable referent for the speaker and hearer; as I'll show in Chapter 4, besides the constraint on the physical shape, it is only those bare singular NPs that are used for Familiarity Implicatures that are also used with *across*.

- b. I told him it would be insane to bicycle **across town** during a massacre.  
(Jan Wong, *Red China Blues*, New York: Doubleday/ Anchor, 1996, p. 260)
- (74) a. Meanwhile, **across campus** at the Gallery of Design, Tana Bana: the Woven Soul of Pakistan will illustrate that country's textile heritage and regional artistic diversity.  
(<http://www.wisc.edu/news/thisweek/Events/Y98/sep/asiaart.html>)
- b. As Weisberger later put it in his appeal to his tenure committee: On or around November of 1994, we were walking **across campus** when she told me she had a dream about me.  
(Ruth Shalit, "The Man Who Knew Too Much," *Lingua Franca*, Feb. 1998, p. 35)

In (73a), *across town* denotes the point at which Smith is found, while in (73b), *town* is the area across which the cyclist moves. Similarly, in (74a) the gallery is located at a point which is across the campus from an earlier named location, while in (74b) *campus* is the area crossed by the speaker.

*Uphill* can also be used to point out a traversable location:

- (75) In another moment the colossal mechanism went striding by me, and passed **uphill** towards Pyrford.  
(H. G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*, 1898, Gutenberg etext)

Here the hill is the location up which the locatum travelled. In other tokens, however, *uphill* examples are largely metaphorical—used to

mean ‘difficult’. Out of four occurrences taken from the *Wall Street Journal*, all were adverbial uses modifying the verbs *run*, *flow* and *jog*, and none were used to refer to an actual hill; such metaphorical uses are illustrated in (76).

- (76) a. But is he so clever that he has achieved the political equivalent of making water run **uphill**?  
(Marjorie Brady, “The Fascist Element in Perestroika,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 31, 1989)
- b. But at Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp., new-venture money flows **uphill**—into the poverty-ridden villages and backwoods shacks of the Appalachian Mountains.  
(Sue Shellenbarger, “Stimulating a Pocket of Appalachia With Venture Funds,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 15, 1989)

In (76) the hill, though metaphorical, is still traversed by the locatum; it is just that *hill* is not used referentially.

#### 4. Larger Lexical Chunks

So far I have presented several subsets of location nouns that can serve as bare singular NPs and looked at the spatial prepositions that often occur with these NPs. The meaning that a speaker intends to convey by using such NPs in PPs can be partially understood through a lexical semantic analysis of the particular nouns and prepositions; understanding a speaker’s full meaning, however, as will be seen in the next chapter, also requires a set of pragmatic factors. For the Familiarity and



Generic senses, it is the nominal form that is used to convey a marked meaning, but the Activity sense is conveyed by the whole PP predicate together with assumed semantic constraints on the nouns. Treating non-literal or noncompositional PPs (e.g., *over the hill*, *out of sorts*) as idiomatic lexical entries has traditionally been a way to set these expressions aside as exceptions to the general meaning-creating compositional rules of linguistic structure, thus treating each phrase as a lexical exception to be individually memorized. A difference must be noted, however, between such single occurrence idioms and larger patterns of set expressions, such as *be in prison*, *be in church*, *be in school*.

Several recent approaches have begun examining patterns of combined structure and meaning, looking at productive patterns of lexical chunks that are larger than the word unit. Recent examinations of phrasal idioms, such as Nunberg et al. (1994), several practitioners of Construction Grammar, including Fillmore et al. (1988), Lambrecht (1994), Michaelis and Lambrecht (1996), and Goldberg (1995), as well as the analysis of prepositional use types in Herskovits (1985), all present examples of more complex approaches to meaning construction that suggests a useful approach to the interpretation of PPs containing bare singular NPs. In this section I suggest that looking at the words alone—whether they

be nouns or prepositions—is an inadequate way to understand the uses of these bare NPs. In Section 4.1 to 4.3 I will briefly review three approaches to attaching meaning to larger lexical chunks, which suggests a better way to tackle bare singular NPs in use.

#### 4.1 Constructions

Fillmore, Kay, and O'Connor (1988) use a Construction Grammar (CG) approach to explaining the use of utterances containing *let alone*, as illustrated in (77a). This example shows that the meaning for an utterance containing the conjunctive phrase *let alone* is dependent on the two NPs and negative element that frame it, so that the actual lexical entry for the construction is more like that shown in (77b).

- (77) a. We didn't have a slice of bread, let alone sandwiches.  
 b. Neg X, let alone Y (where X is lower on some scale than Y)

CG includes components that differ from those of traditional phrase structure grammars by allowing larger groupings than mother and daughter nodes as constructions; these may specify “not only syntactic but also lexical, semantic, and pragmatic information” (Fillmore et al. 1988:501). Constructions may consist of lexical, phrasal, clausal, or sentential units, or even prosodic contours (cf. Lambrecht 1994, Hirsch-

berg and Ward 1995). Lexical items may count as full constructions themselves, or constructions may be idiomatic, including ‘formal idioms,’ which Fillmore et al. (1988:505) define as follows: While substantive or lexically filled idioms have wording that is rather set (e.g., *kick the bucket*), formal or lexically open idioms are “syntactic patterns dedicated to semantic and pragmatic purposes not knowable from their form alone.” As an example of a formal idiom, they provide the unexpected pairing of the definite article and the comparative form illustrated in (78a-c), which is shown more abstractly in (78d).<sup>24</sup>

- (78) a. The more you practice the better you’ll be.  
 b. The bigger they come the harder they fall.  
 c. The more you tighten your grip, the more star systems will slip through your fingers.  
 d. *The Adj1-comparative S1 the Adj2-comparative S2*

Goldberg, in her 1995 book on CG, claims that while a great deal of information does come from lexical items themselves, an entirely lexically-based approach fails to account for the full range of English data: “particular structures together with their associated formal expression must be recognized as constructions independent of the lexical items which instantiate them” (p. 1). This description applies not only to

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24. Another formal idiom suggested by Fillmore et al. (1988:58) is the bare use of *home* where a direction or locative complement is normally required. As we saw in Table 12, the bare use of *home* patterns like other Ns such as *downtown* and *upstate* but lacks the overt preposition of these compounds.

expressions like those in (77) and (78) but to many uses of bare singular NPs in which [+human NP—V—locative preposition—bare singular NP] can be construed as a unit, with many possible instantiations and a special meaning attached to the whole phrase. Regarding examples of the comparative constructions in (78), Fillmore et al (1988:507) note, that “in spite of the fact that it is host to a large number of fixed expressions, the form has to be recognized as fully productive. Its member expressions are in principle not listable: unlimitedly many new expressions can be constructed within its pattern, their meaning constructed by means of semantic principles specifically tied to this construction”.

CG assumes that form-meaning constructions are the basic units of language, and the theory is intended to account for subtle meaning differences between alternations or sentence variations with the same lexical items.<sup>25</sup> This would certainly apply to expressions containing bare singular NPs, since, for example, bare vs. definite vs. indefinite vs. plural NP forms can be used in PPs to create many different nuances of meaning. However, the selection of nouns for each bare singular use is more semantically constrained than the construction patterns in (77) and (78), since, as we saw earlier, the marked Familiarity and Activity

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25. Lambrecht (1994:6), quoting Daneš (1966), calls such sets ‘allosentences’.

senses only occur with bare location nouns that are Social/ Geographical Spaces.

## 4.2 Idioms

The more constrained the items that fill the variables, the more the expression type is perceived as idiomatic. The constraints on the referents of bare singular NPs has been noted by most earlier discussions of PPs containing these forms, most of which dismiss the expression as 'frozen' or 'idiomatic'. Nunberg et al. (1994), however, suggest a more comprehensive account of idioms, noting that phrasal idioms involve special conventions; these conventions are not just noncompositionality, but can be conventions attached to the use of the idiom constituents (p. 499). They note that the majority of phrasal idioms are compositional, but that idiomatic phrases can be divided into two types: idiomatically combining expressions, which are conventionalized, but have a meaning put together from their parts, vs. idiomatic phrases, which are not compositional but only conventionalized. They contrast idioms based on metaphoric transfer of meaning from literal words to representational word (e.g., *pull strings*, or *let the cat out of the bag*) in which certain actions and their objects remain in the same relationship, as opposed to other idioms that are totally noncompositional, i.e. the meaning is not

distributed among the parts (e.g., *to saw logs*, *to kick the bucket*).

However, neither category of idiom quite accounts for bare NPs in locative phrases. While the meaning conveyed by bare singular NPs is not literal, no metaphor is required to decode it; instead, further information about the utterance's context is what allows the hearer to understand the phrase. Thus, while PPs lacking articles are often said to be idiomatic (cf. Meyer-Myklestad 1967, Hall and Hall 1969, Quirk 1979:277), this means only that a particular meaning is conventionalized with the form. On the other hand, the bare forms are not as opaque in relation to their component word meanings as the ideas of sleeping and dying are to sawing logs or kicking buckets. The meaning conveyed by the expressions *on campus*, *up river*, or *on site* is not far from the meaning of the articulated phrases, but the meaning varies in a particular direction; in these expressions what is conventionalized by the lack of article is the deictic or activity sense, not a whole new meaning for *campus*, *river* or *site*.

### **4.3 Use Types**

As mentioned earlier, Herskovits (1982, 1985) also suggests a phrasal approach in her examination of the semantics and pragmatics of locative

expressions. She suggests that the idea of prepositions denoting simple spatial relations between two objects (e.g., containment, support, contiguity) is inadequate. Her approach is to suggest that each preposition has a singular ‘ideal meaning’ that is manifested in some way in all of its uses, although this meaning may be shifted or extended in various ways—in particular via two kinds of transformations applying to the ideal meaning: sense shifts and tolerance shifts (Herskovits 1985: 355). Recall that the ideal meaning does not apply to the referents of the noun phrases, but to geometric descriptions associated with these referents. Each prepositional category is structured by resemblance to an ideal relation, a kind of prototype of the preposition’s sense. “The whole set of uses of the preposition can then be subcategorized into use types (corresponding roughly to different senses), each such subclass manifesting the ideal meaning, but usually after some transformations” (Herskovits 1985: 343).

Like constructions and formal idioms, Herskovits sees use types as “complex entities, more elaborate than senses as linguists usually conceive of them. One might specify in a use type a whole range of elements of meaning, anything that holds true for any phrase generated by the use type pattern” (Herskovits 1985:371), i.e., the referents are all

used for a specific purpose or found in a particular circumstance. However, calling these use types implies a shift in meaning of, for example, one of the prepositions, while it is not the case that these locative PPs with bare form NPs present a special subsense of *in*, *on*, or *at*. What is needed is a use type that allows a variety of locative prepositions as well as a variety of NPs.

To understand bare singular location NPs in locative PPs, we need a system to identify meaning that is neither solely word-based nor solely sentence-based. Nunberg et al. (1994), Goldberg (1995), Fillmore et al. (1988), and Herskovits (1985) all present a direction to follow. Constructions such as formal idioms suggest ways in which phrasal or idiomatic uses can be included as lexical entries and, further, not just as individual phrases, but as patterns or templates that allow a number of different variables to be inserted.

Earlier in the chapter I discussed the characteristics of the variables (i.e., the bare singular NPs with distinct referent types); in this section I looked at ways to group together NPs that occur with the same preposition which together convey related meanings. Constructions, formal idioms, and use types are all attempts to include patterns of related



phrases that speakers use in conventionalized ways. Constructions and idioms share the aspect of including more than lexical material, and even more than phrasal material, as lexical units. Use types add the pragmatic aspect of grouping the constructions according to the locatum's function and incorporating a way for assumptions about the place to be expressed.

In short, PPs conveying the Activity and Familiarity senses are like the Location Point constructions shown in (91) and (92) in that they involve a number of words in collocations unexpected by the grammar. PPs with Activity and Familiarity senses, however, have different kinds of constraints that can be inserted into the template than the Location Points constructions do. We could say that the Activity and Familiarity PPs are idiomatic, but only in that the bare form is conventionally associated with an inference: about the typical activity of a referent (for Activity senses) or indicating an indexical function (for Familiarity senses). Finally, our PPs containing bare singular forms are also like use types in relying on a socially determined function of the referent, but a use type inaccurately suggests a variation on the meaning of one of the words involved.

Nonetheless, it is useful to recognize the behavior of locative PPs that contain bare singular NPs as involving not just isolated nouns, but as more complex patterns creating conventionalized extensions of meaning. The unit involved for some of the marked meanings is not just a noun, but a bare noun phrase within a locative PP. Some sense of ‘construction’ is called for as a way to incorporate into the meaning of the bare singular NP patterns of semantic constraints as well as the shared patterns of expectations by the speaker and hearer.

### **5. Conclusion to Chapter 3**

A lexical semantic analysis reveals several patterns for the types of nouns that are used as bare singular NPs: five types of Social/ Geographical Spaces, as well as Recording media, Framing expressions, Temporal Interruption events, and certain purely metaphorical uses. In addition, lexical semantics assists in grouping the types of PPs in which the bare singular NPs are most often found into those denoting the location point and those depicting the path across the location which the locatum traverses. This last section showed that the linguistic unit under examination is best considered some form of template-based construction: one whole unit made of the locative preposition and the bare singular NP and the semantic constraints on the referents for the loca-

tion and locatum. Further, we see that the conventionality associated with such PPs involves not the transfer of each phrasal unit to a metaphorical equivalent, but the attaching of meaning to the use of the bare form. Finally, the use type model was presented as a way to suggest that recognizing the locatum's activity at a location is a common way to cluster constructions; in the Activity sense this identifies the location referent's expected use. However, a fuller explanation of the meaning and use of these anarthrous forms requires an analysis of the sets of conventionalized meanings that such NPs and PPs involve, an understanding of the discourse uses to which these structures are put, and an awareness of the contexts in which they are found. These pragmatic factors are explored in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Pragmatics: Uses of the Bare Singular NPs<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

Several works examining English count nouns that denote places have noted that when location nouns occur without a determiner, they are used to refer to institutions rather than physical spaces (Quirk et al. 1985, Cienki 1989, Soja 1994). These works all make note of one of the sets of bare singular NPs described in Chapter 3—the Social/ Geographical Spaces. In this chapter I will show that bare singular NPs are used to convey a wider range of meanings than the nonphysical institution sense. In Section 2, I detail two types of inferences that can be produced by the use of PPs containing bare singular NPs: Activity Implicatures and Familiarity Implicatures. Then I contrast these two meanings with generic senses, which can also be conveyed by the use of bare singular forms in PPs. In Section 3, I examine the types of meanings produced when bare singular NPs occur in subject and direct object positions,

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1. Earlier versions of parts of this chapter were presented at the 29th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (see Stvan 1993) and the 1997 Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (see Stvan 1997).

comparing them with their senses when they are prepositional objects. Finally, in Section 4, I lay out some constraints on the domains or genres in which bare singular NPs are found and note how the use of bare singulars can take part in reinforcing mutual knowledge.

### 1.1 Traditional Schematic for Bare Form Uses

Articles are used in English NPs in a number of predictable ways to add information that helps a speaker clarify the referent of an NP, such as through indefinite, definite, or generic uses, as shown in (1)–(3).

- (1) a. We generally meet at **a restaurant**—the Royal Pancake House.  
(indefinite, specific)
- b. They generally meet at **a restaurant**—whichever one is open.  
(indefinite, nonspecific)
- (2) We met at **the restaurant**. (definite)
- (3) **The restaurant** is a sit-down eating establishment. (generic)

When no overt article appears before a noun, the nouns tend to be either mass, abstract, proper, or plural, as in (4)–(7).

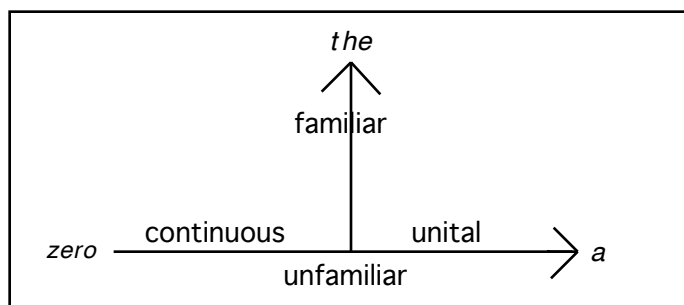
- (4) **Water** filled the tunnel beneath the city.
- (5) **Silence** filled the hall.
- (6) **Tom** reported on the bill's progress.

(7) **Cats** were sunning themselves in the front windows.

Christophersen (1939) groups the seven uses of English noun phrases shown in (1)-(7) along two intersecting continua of qualities. The first axis, described as “continuous to unital,” ranges from mass and plural forms to singular count forms. The other axis, described as “unfamiliar to familiar,” encompasses the shift from indefinite to definite, abstract to concrete, and generic to specific.<sup>2</sup> According to Christophersen’s system, shown in Figure 1, zero and *a* contrast with *the*, with the zero-form used with more continuous concepts and *a* used with more unital ones. This means that zero-form NPs should be interpreted as less familiar and less unital than NPs with articles. While this accounts for some actual uses of bare singular location forms, I will show that in other cases, just the opposite holds true: some bare singular NPs are used to identify a definite, specific place.

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2. Christophersen’s system conflates information from different linguistic components: syntactic markers of definiteness and number, semantic qualities of abstract/ concrete, cognitively determined but syntactically marked categories of mass/ count, and pragmatically influenced distinctions of generic and specific reference.



**Fig. 1. Uses of English Articles. (Christophersen 1939:76)**

### 1.2 Three Special Uses

As predicted by Christophersen's model, it is common for the three more "continuous" noun types to occur with the zero-form after a preposition, namely, mass nouns, abstract nouns, and plurals, as in examples (8)-(10):

(8) **In space** no one can hear you scream.  
(ad for the film *Aliens*, 1979)

(9) **in sickness** and **in health**

(10) I feel sick when I read **in cars**.

In addition, however, as was shown in the groupings in Chapter 3, count-like bare singular NPs also occur quite frequently following a locative preposition. Examples of such forms are shown in (11a-d):

- (11) a. The sermon is about Saint Jeremy, who like Mr. Mazowiecki was **in prison** and "needed to be rescued." (Amity Shlaes, "Solidarity Assumes Awesome Task of Reviving Poland," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 21, 1989)
- b. Watson & Hughey has denied the allegations **in court**; officials decline to comment further. (Robert Johnson, "Give and Take: Many Fund-Raisers Think Charity Begins at Home -- Their Home," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 20, 1989)
- c. As long as Columbus remains **at sea** aboard the Santa María, one can almost imagine him to be the mythic Renaissance navigator one formerly supposed him to be: full of the new Florentine science, exhorting his men to ignore superstition and homesickness, cutting a brilliant route—a real find—across an unfamiliar ocean. (Verlyn Klinkenborg, *The New Yorker*, Nov. 11, 1991, p.120)
- d. Look out, America, the world's smallest con artist is **in town**. (Billboard for the movie *Curly Sue*, 1991)

Christophersen (1939:81) notes that it is often believed that "the shifting between zero-form, *a*-form, and *the*-form is as regular as a case-distinction." This approach would seem to indicate that a simple semantic or referential determination is required in deciding among article forms.<sup>3</sup> In the case of locative PPs such as those in (11), however, I suggest that neither a truth-functional semantics nor existing the typology of definite referring expressions adequately captures the full meaning conveyed by the

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3. The fact that sentences used without full speaker-hearer feedback provide inadequate information by which to choose just one correct article form is seen by studies such as Wachtler (1988) in which native speakers of English were asked to fill in the spaces before nouns with either *the*, *an* or  $\emptyset$  from the text of a *Time* magazine article from which all determiners had been removed. None of the 24 informants chose all the same words that had been deleted from the original passage.



expressions. Information conveyed by these NPs through their lack of determiner is not purely semantic, but is also the result of one of three pragmatically distinct interpretations. The following section presents a more formal analysis of the three bare form uses.

## **2 Three Pragmatic Inferences**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Lyons (1977:648) notes that speakers refer to objects in two ways—on the one hand we describe or name objects, as shown in (12a), and on the other hand we locate objects, as shown in (12b):

- (12) a. my computer, Josephine, that book about goldfish  
 b. in the doorway, over here, next to the blender

As I will show, however, when concrete English nouns denoting locations occur with the zero form of the article, they are used to convey three versions of location-related information: instead of merely naming a location, these NPs are used either to evoke an activity that is associated with that place, to specify the particular location which is relevant to either the speaker, hearer, or locatum, or to refer generically to an entire class of places. So in addition to Lyons' dichotomy between naming and locating, I will show that objects expressed as bare singular forms can be used to predicate a state of the locatum, as well to name a specific place,

and a kind of place.

I show three types of pragmatic inferences that are licenced by a speaker's use of a bare singular NP. With one bare NP use, which I call an Activity Implicature, the main purpose is not to locate the referent of the object NP, but to predicate the activity or state of the referent at such a location. In both (13a) and (13b), for example, the highlighted NPs are used to indicate the location of the Congressman, while in (13c), it is information about the activity of the locatum that is conveyed—i.e., the speaker of (12c) asserts that Rostenkowsky is serving time as a prisoner (which in itself presupposes that he spends some time located in a prison. Cf. Section 2.3.2).

- (13) a. Congressman Rostenkowksy is in **a prison**.  
 b. Congressman Rostenkowksy is in **the prison**.  
 c. Congressman Rostenkowksy is in **prison**.

The second type of inference licensed by a speaker's use of PPs containing location NPs without articles I shall refer to as a Familiarity Implicature. Not only does this use convey a sense of location, but it is used to pick out a specific location relevant to the locatum, speaker, or hearer. This type of implicature relies on the type of shared knowledge that

would occur if a possessive determiner or deictic determiner were included in the NP. For example in (14a) and (14b), where articles are used, the Johnsons can be interpreted as being located in some town, while in (14c) the town referred to is in particular the town of the speaker, of the hearer, or of the Johnsons themselves—that is, a town connected to one of the discourse participants:

- (14) a. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **a town**.  
 b. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **the town**.  
 c. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **town**.

The PP in (14c), therefore, could be paraphrased as “in this town,” or “in our town,” or “in their town.”

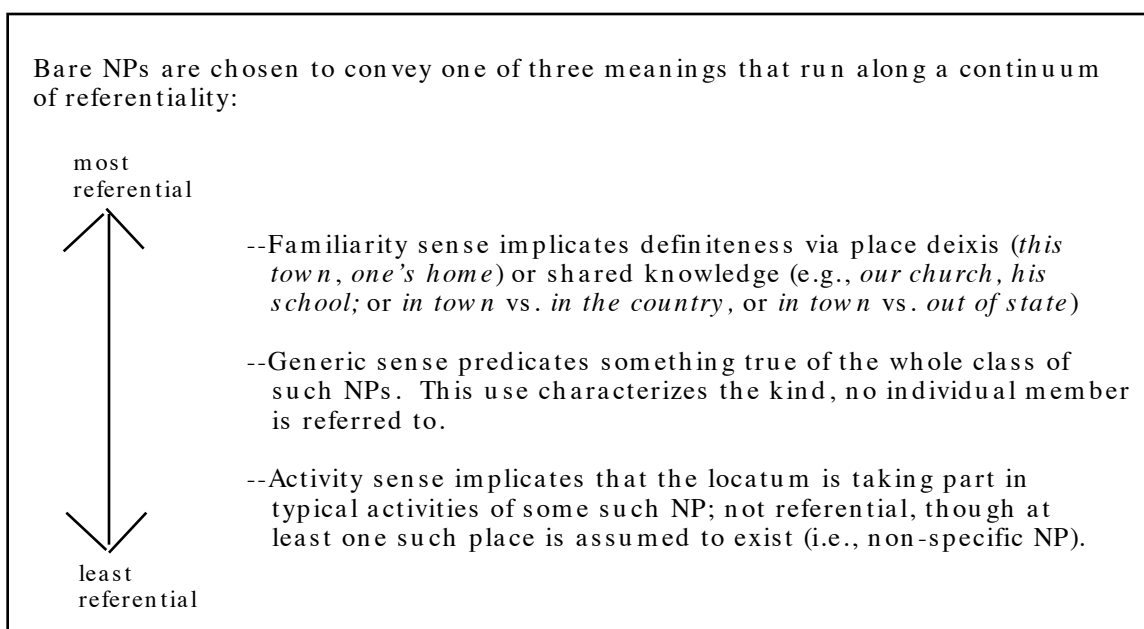
The third use of the zero form is used to refer more broadly to all members of the class named by the NP. Thus in (15), *campus* is intended to stand for all campuses under the jurisdiction of the Senate’s law:

- (15) An amendment to the Senate's anti-drug bill would have barred alcohol companies from sponsoring any sort of event at all **on campus**.  
 (Joanne Lipman, “Alcohol Firms Elude Senate Move To Restrict Presence on Campus,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 6, 1989)

These three uses of the zero form are not wholly in agreement with the

properties expected from Christophersen's chart in Figure 1. Activity Implicatures do create a more continuous or "less familiar" sense, thus the PP *in prison* is used to refer not to an actual prison, but to the main purpose or activity that such a place would typically involve. But the Activity sense is just as much like the unital meaning created by an indefinite article; it is used to create a non-specific sense, plus some conventionalized information about the noun's function. Likewise, the Familiarity Implicature creates a sense different from that which the chart predicts—it creates a "more familiar" sense in the NP not merely as definite (as it would be with the article *the*) but as being the one location known to belong to one of the people involved in the discourse. The Familiarity sense, then, represents a kind of definite reference. Generic expressions, however, are truly less unital and less familiar, treating the NP as part of a larger mass so named. Since only Generic expressions fit the zero form behavior of Figure 1 adequately, the meanings conveyed by the zero form cannot be as simply categorized the chart suggests.

A better depiction of the functions of the zero form are shown in Figure 2.



**Fig. 2. Three Functions of Bare Singular NPs**

Of these three uses, the expressions cover a spectrum of referentiality, as shown in Figure 2. The Activity sense is a non-referential use, the Generic sense refers, but only to a whole class, while the Familiarity sense picks out a most precise referent. Reference grammars and ESL texts often give lists of PPs containing bare singular NPs, noting their marked syntax, and observing that in such constructions the nouns have a less concrete or more generic sense (e.g., Christophersen 1939, Quirk et al. 1985). To restate, the problem with such an approach is that the group of PPs containing bare singular NPs is heterogeneous, consisting instead of NPs that can be used in three distinct types of reference.

### 2.1.1 Diagnostics for Separating Activity and Familiarity Senses

In order to identify which type of inference is generated when a bare NP location is used, it should be possible to substitute different grammatical phrases which more overtly express each implicated meaning without losing the semantic meaning each bare NP location conveys. (Unlike the test of non-detachability in section 2.1.2.2 below, in which I substitute a paraphrase of what was said, in this test I will substitute a paraphrase of what is implicated.) For phrases used to generate Activity Implicature, either an adverbial phrase which explicitly states the action or situation of the locatum<sup>4</sup> or a temporal PP in which the NP is interpreted as a durative event (*before/ during/ after school*) can be substituted for the PP. On the other hand, felicitous substitution of a possessive or deictic determiner within the PP should verify that the phrase gives rise to a Familiarity Implicature. (Substitution tests for Generic expressions will be detailed in section 2.4.) Note that for Activity senses, the whole PP is involved in the meaning, while for Familiarity and Generic senses it is only the NP.

Examples of the Activity and Familiarity substitution diagnostics are shown below. For the example in (16), substitution of a VP maintains

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4. Cf. Perez (1973), who she suggests that adnominal PPs following the verb *be* should be considered cases of verb deletion.

the meaning conveyed by the phrase *in jail*, but including a possessive in the phrase does not.

- (16) In September, she pleaded guilty and paid a \$500 fine. Her alternative was 90 days **in jail**.  
 (Gary Putka, "Classroom Scandal: Cheaters in Schools May Not Be Students, But Their Teachers," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 2, 1989)  
 = **servicing as a prisoner in a jail**  
 ≠ **in her jail**

The substitutions show that the use of *in jail* creates an Activity Implicature.

In (17), on the other hand, *at home* functions to indicate whose home, so substitution of a possessive in the PP maintains the meaning, while replacing the PP with a VP does not. Thus, *at home* creates a Familiarity implicature.

- (17) I work **at home**, and I have found that this arrangement has a tremendous potential for personal growth, because nobody will notice if you eat as many as 20 lunches per day.  
 (Dave Barry, usenet group clari.feature.dave\_barry, May 9, 1992)  
 = **in my home**  
 ≠ **while being/ sitting/ working in a home**

Some NPs allow both types of inferences, as shown in (18) and (19), where substitutions are possible for both Activity and Familiarity paraphrases:

- (18) "Did you notice Mr. Boldwood's doings **in church** this morning, miss?" Liddy continued, adumbrating by the remark the track her thoughts had taken.  
 (Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874, Gutenberg etext)  
 = **in our church**  
 = **in a church as a worshiper/ during church services**
- (19) During their first year **at school**, children become Octobrists and wear the badge of Baby Lenin.  
 (Peter Gumbel, "Soviet Youth Organization Is in Crisis," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 21, 1989)  
 = **at their school / at this school**  
 = **at a school as students/ while attending school**

The results of these diagnostics on representative Social/ Geographical Spaces in the corpus are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14**  
**Implicature Types Conveyed by Bare Singular NPs in PPs**

Activity	Familiarity	Activity OR Familiarity
court	campus	bed
jail	district	camp
prison	home	church
sea	state	class
	town	college
	work	school

Because their referents are not the kinds of places people assume a locatum would want to lay a personal claim to, the nouns in the first column of Table 14 are not used to create Familiarity readings. That is, while



there may be a town that is *his town* or a school (or two) that is *her school*, the people involved in the typical activities of the locations in the first column, perhaps because the activities are unpleasant or not as intentionally habitual (*jail, prison, court*), or the place is too public to personally claim (e.g., *sea*), are not referred to as having their own sea, jail, etc.<sup>5</sup> All the words in The words that are used in the familiarity sense, however, are more personally connected in a long-term way to the possessing locatum.

### 2.1.2 Conversational and Conventional Implicature

Pragmatics provides a vocabulary for discussing the different uses of bare constructions. A number of works, notably Grice (1967), have attempted to characterize the distinction between the way utterances can sometimes be used to convey only a constant literal meaning and sometimes be used to successfully communicate other less transparent information as well. Grice divided these meanings into ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated,’ respectively. ‘What is said,’ or the ‘conventional force’ of an utterance, can be determined by examining the truth conditions that hold for it, while what is implicated must be inferred by

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5. This holds true for the *in court* data in the corpus, which were all presented from the perspective of either the prosecuting or accused parties in a trial; I found no tokens of judges using *in court* to mean ‘my court’, though this usage may well occur.

assuming that one's interlocutor is attempting to communicate cooperatively.

The examples in (13), repeated here as (20), all convey some of the same information: that is, they can all be used at some point to talk about Rostenkowsky when he is located inside some prison.

- (20) a. Congressman Rostenkowsky is in **a prison**.  
 b. Congressman Rostenkowsky is in **the prison**.  
 c. Congressman Rostenkowsky is in **prison**.

The three utterances, however, do not share the same truth conditions, since (in addition to the definiteness variation in the (a) and (b) examples) if Rostenkowsky happens to be a visitor touring a prison, (20c) would not be true, while (20a) and (20b) still would be. Likewise, in (14), repeated here as (21), there is some set of semantic information shared by the three sentences: each is true some time when the Johnsons are located in some town.

- (21) a. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **a town**.  
 b. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **the town**.  
 c. I just heard that the Johnsons are in **town**.

Here, however, the difference is that only the speaker of utterance (21c) is conveying whose town the Johnsons are visiting. Thus (21c) is the most specific in picking out a town, and also the most context-depen-

dent; it would be false, for example, if the Johnsons are in some random city unknown to both speaker and hearer.

However, while the truth conditions are not the same within each set, the meaning differences for each group are not calculable merely by examining the semantic content contributed by each of the utterance's elements. Pragmatic information is necessary to capture the additional meaning conveyed by the lack of article, since this meaning depends on the discourse context as well as on shared knowledge assumed by the speaker and hearer.

So, what kind of implicature is generated when no article is used? Grice subdivides what is implicated into either conventional or conversational implicature. Conventional implicatures result in "non-truth-conditional inferences that are *not* derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but are simply attached by convention" to particular words or phrases (Levinson 1983:127). Traditional examples include the conjunctions *but* and *however*, which not only convey the semantic sense of conjunctivity which they share with *and*, but are also used to implicate contrast. Similarly, discourse-deictic terms such as *still* and *although* are used conventionally, but non-truth-conditionally to indicate

the relationship of ideas expressed in different parts of a discourse (that is, their felicitous use does not require altering what holds true if *and* were used instead). To summarize, conventional implicatures are non-truth-functional, but are context-independent. Conversational implicatures, on the other hand, involve arriving at a meaning beyond what is expressed by the truth conditions by assuming the use of Grice's conversational maxims in a given instance. Grice suggests a number of necessary criteria for distinguishing the two types of implicature. Hirschberg (1991) modifies Grice's diagnostics and comes up with three tests for distinguishing conventional from conversational implicature:<sup>6</sup> cancelability, nondetachability, and reinforceability.

### 2.1.2.1 Cancelability

The ability to cancel or deny the content of an implicatum without a sense of contradiction (as opposed to merely calling it into question, a difference noted by Horn (1972)) is evidence of conversational implicature. In (22) and (23), the (a) sentences contain a locative expression

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6. Relevance theorists (e.g., Sperber and Wilson 1986, Blakemore 1987, Carston 1993) disagree with Grice about conventionalized forms being implicature at all, but rather see such uses as decoding of explicit content (i.e., explicature) which can be both linguistically encoded and contextually inferred. Thus words or constructions that a Gricean theory sees as being used for conventional implicature, within relevance theory would be considered examples of enrichment of semantic representations.

without an article, the information it conveys appears in (b), and in (c) this implicatum is overtly denied:

- (22) a. My husband is **in prison**—I visit him every day.  
(Ken Follet, *Pillars of the Earth*, 1989, p. 370)
- b. being held as a prisoner in a prison
- c. # My husband is in prison, not being held there as a prisoner.
- (23) a. A union spokesman said, ‘We’ll discuss the matters **in court.**’  
(Ann Hagedorn, ‘Teamsters Administrator Tells Judge Leadership of Union Is Uncooperative,’ *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 12, 1989)
- b. as part of a trial
- c. #We’ll discuss the matters **in court**, but not as part of a trial.

Both (22) and (23) are examples of Activity Implicatures. The oddness of the (c) examples here indicates that the implicata created by uttering (22a) and (23a) cannot be felicitously canceled. This result indicates that these inferences are not conversational implicatures.

The sentences in (24) and (25) contain examples of Familiarity Implicature:

- (24) a. And even the bride is torn between the desire not to have bags under her eyes the next day and the feeling that it’s stupid to do nothing, especially if there is anyone **in town** involved in a form of entertainment that does not feature her at its center.  
(Miss Manners, usenet group clari.feature.miss\_manners, May 16, 1992)

- b. in this town, where the wedding is being held
  - c. # It's stupid to do nothing, especially if there is anyone in town—although not this town where the wedding will be ...
- (25) a. Years ago, he had a back problem and was stuck **at home** for a while.  
(Mike Royko, usenet group clari.feature.mike\_royko, May 11, 1992)
- b. at his home.
  - c. # He had a back problem and was stuck at home for a while, but he did not remain in his own home.

For this second type of inference, cancellation again does not seem possible, since canceling the implicated information in (24c) and (25c) creates anomalous utterances.

### 2.1.2.2 Nondetachability

The ability to felicitously substitute one truth-conditionally equivalent utterance for another is another test for conversational (vs. conventional) implicature. Obviously a difficulty with this test is determining the exact conventional force of an utterance, as well as finding a synonymous phrase for that meaning. In (26) and (27) when the prepositional phrase with the location, shown in (a), is replaced with a presumably synonymous phrase, shown in (c), the implicated meaning of (b) is no longer conveyed:

- (26) a. My husband is **in prison**. [a=b]  
 b. being held as a prisoner in a prison.  
 c. My husband is inside [some] building for holding criminals. [c≠b]

- (27) a. There was scarcely a family **in town** that was not [a=b]  
 represented in the confirmation class, by a cousin, at least.  
 (Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*, 1913, Gutenberg etext)
- b. in our town / in that town
- c. There was scarcely a family within [some] small metropolis. [c≠b]

The implicated Activity meaning in (26b) is not necessarily conveyed by (26c). For the Familiarity meaning in (27) the same is true; in (26) and (27) the implicature disappears when the wording of the utterance is changed. Thus the implicatures of these bare singular NPs are not non-detachable, and therefore they are not conversational.

### 2.1.2.3 Reinforceability

The third key test for conversational implicatures is based on observations by Horn (1972) and Sadock (1978). This test relies on the fact that, since conversational implicatures are not a part of the conventional force of an utterance (but are instead part of each particular context), it should be possible to make them explicit without being redundant. This means it should be possible to overtly conjoin the information implicated in (28a)-(30a) to what is said without producing a redundant utterance.<sup>7</sup>

The results of reinforcing the implicata in this way are shown in (28c)-(30c):

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7. Again, note that this is different than substituting the implicated information for the bare form, as I did with the earlier diagnostics; instead, this test is meant to see if giving both forms together is infelicitously redundant.

- (28) a. My husband is **in prison**.  
 b. He is being held as a prisoner in a prison.  
 c. ? My husband is in prison and is being held as a prisoner.
- (29) a. A union spokesman said, “We’ll discuss the matters  
**in court**.”  
 b. We’ll discuss them as part of a trial.  
 c. ? We’ll discuss them in court and as part of a trial.
- (30) a. There was scarcely a family **in town** that was not  
 represented in the confirmation class, by a cousin, at least.  
 b. There was scarcely a family in our town ....  
 c. # There was scarcely a family in town, and in our town,  
 that was not represented ...

Here the addition of information making the implicata more explicit creates less felicitous sentences. This test is particularly difficult for the Activity Implicatures since, as I will show, it is less clear what the separate conventional force is for these phrases. However, bare singular NP inferences for both Activity and Familiarity Implicatures fail the test for reinforcement without redundancy and do not qualify, therefore, as conversational implicatures by this third diagnostic.

Notice, however, that it is possible for the implicated information to be conveyed along with the PPs containing bare forms if the PP is not simply conjoined as equal information, but is instead added at a different level, explicitly as clarification. This is shown in (31), where the underlined phrase does not just restate that the locatum was in bed due to illness,



but relates the kind of sickness from which he suffered.

- (31) While his sons have been on the acquisition path, the elder Mr. Sada has been **in bed** recovering from a coronary bypass operation three weeks ago.  
(Matt Moffett, "Vitro Strives to Reach Across the Border," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 11, 1989)

Likewise, in (32) the underlined phrase does not merely restate that the locatum was held in jail for committing a crime, but instead specifies the crime:

- (32) And in a case filed in federal court in August, a lawyer is arguing that Missouri authorities are wrongfully imprisoning the fetus of a pregnant woman who is **in jail** for theft and forgery.  
(Stephen Wermiel, "Supreme Court Ruling in Abortion Case Has Unforeseen Effect on Other Laws," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 23, 1989)

For some PPs, non-redundant restating of information can also occur if the activity is stated before the PP, in which case the PP is interpreted in the locational, Familiarity sense. This is illustrated in (33) where, since the activity of falling asleep is already spelled out, *in bed* is used to convey that Ryan was in his own bed:

- (33) a. One night in late September, I looked in his room as he was falling asleep in bed and said, "I love you, Ryan."  
(Ronald G. Shafer "Stolen Future: Drug Abuse Exacts its Most Tragic Toll From Nation's Young," *Wall Street Journal*, July 31, 1989)

In summary, neither Activity nor Familiarity Implicatures withstand cancellation, nor are they non-detachable, and both seem at least mildly odd when the implicatum is explicitly reinforced through conjunction. Thus, it seems that the additional meaning of NPs without articles is conveyed by conventional rather than conversational implicature.

#### **2.1.2.4 Introducing Q vs. R Implicatures**

While Grice's distinction between conversational and conventional implicature captures an important distinction within these inferences, this division can be approached in another way. Horn (1984) rearranges these categories, proposing that all implicatures where the implicatum consists of information in addition to what is said fall into the category of R-Implicature, while implicatures which convey that the semantic meaning is the most that can be said are categorized as Q-Implicature. Under this system, NPs that trigger Activity Implicature, which convey not only location information, but also information about what the locatum is doing there, would seem to fall clearly into the category of R-Implicatures; NPs that trigger Familiarity Implicature, giving more specific detail about a location, are likely candidates for R-Implicature as well.

In the case of the Q-Principle, the hearer assumes that what is said is

the most that can be truthfully be claimed. With the R-Principle, the hearer assumes whatever additional information is needed to fill out the stereotypical case if the speaker did not indicate otherwise. The ability of a speaker to successfully use this latter, more indirect form is based on the idea that there are certain circumstances that will be assumed by the hearer to be the unmarked case. This understating technique is similar to Atlas and Levinson's (1981) Principle of Informativeness, which also puts the burden of filling in the details on the hearer.

#### 2.1.2.5 Testing for Q and R Implicatures

Horn (1984) suggests that Q and R implicatures can be distinguished by their ability to be canceled by negation. Specifically, an utterance conveying a Q-based implicatum can be metalinguistically negated or questioned without affecting what is said, while an R-based implicatum cannot be canceled by negating what is said. This accounts for the difference between the negated (c) examples in (34) and (35).

##### (34) Q-based Implicature

- a. He ate **some** of the cookies.
- b. He didn't, however, eat all of the cookies.
- c. He didn't eat some of the cookies...
- d. [Not just "some" of the cookies] In fact he ate all of them.

## (35) R-based Implicature

- a. She **was able to** solve the problem.
- b. And she did, in fact, solve the problem.
- c. She was not able to solve the problem.
- d. She was able to solve it, but, in fact, she did not.

In (34), the implicated information brought about by the use of *some* in (34a) is stated fully in (34b). What was said in (34a) is negated in (34c). If reinterpreted metalinguistically via a special intonation emphasizing *some*, the implicata in (34b) can be cancelled. Otherwise, it is what is said in (34a) that is negated. The example in (35), however, does not work the same way. Here again the implicated information is shown in (35b). The negation of what is said is shown in (35c). However, in this case, regardless of prosodic prominence, negating what is said does not cancel the implicated information in (35b), so that the negative form in (35c) does not convey the cancelled form in (35d). This contrast is due to the different types of implicatures associated with *some* in (35a) and *be able to* in (35a).

Additionally, Horn notes that when an R-based implicatum has become conventionalized as part of the literal meaning, negation of an utterance can cancel the conventionalized meaning, but may still leave intact the original sense of “what is said”. As an example, he cites the socially narrowed meaning of “drink” (Horn 1984:22), illustrated in (36).

- (36) a. Tom had a **drink** at the party.  
 b. Tom had an alcoholic drink at the party.  
 c. Tom didn't have a drink at the party.  
 d. Tom drank some soft drinks at the party.

The word *drink* has become conventionalized to mean an alcoholic drink, so that uttering (36a) implicates (36b). However, negating what is said, as in (36c), still allows the more general reading in (36d) to be true, while cancelling the implicated sense in (36b).

Another general predicate which is used to implicate a more particular stereotypical instance is shown in (37), but this time not involving a conventionalized implicatum:

- (37) a. The surgeon saved the patient's life.  
 b. The male surgeon saved the patient's life.  
 c. The surgeon didn't save the patient's life.  
 d. A woman saved the patient's life.

Here the information some hearers might infer from (37a) is that the surgeon is male, as shown in (37b). However, negating (37a)—as shown in (37c)—does not cancel the implicatum (the surgeon's sex); only what is said is negated.

To see whether Activity and Familiarity implicatures are examples of R-

Implicature, I apply Horn's negation diagnostic, as shown in (38)-(41).

- (38) a. My husband is **in prison**.  
 b. being held as a prisoner in a prison  
 c. My husband is not in prison—he's just cleaning it.
- (39) a. A union spokesman said, "We'll discuss the matters **in court**."  
 b. as part of a trial  
 c. We won't discuss the matters in court—we'll discuss it over lunch.

Examples (38) and (39) show PPs that give rise to Activity Implicatures. (38a) contains the implicature trigger, the bare singular NP and (38b) gives the implicated information. Negating (38a) produces the first clause of (38c), which cancels the implicatures connected to the phrase *in prison*. In other words, a speaker uttering (38c) would be taken to deny that the husband is being held as a prisoner. Similarly, the speaker who utters (39c) would be saying that the discussion is not to be part of a trial. Given Horn's claim that only conventionalized R-based implicata can be canceled by negation, the examples in (38) and (39), which both involve Activity Implicature, must be conventionalized R-Implicatures.

Familiarity Implicatures behave similarly, as illustrated in (40)-(41):

- (40) a. "We pay more than other people **in town**," says Mr. Hoffman.  
(Kathleen A. Hughes and John R. Emshwiller, "Fuzzy Picture: Beverly Hills Murder Of Executive and Wife Haunts a Video Firm," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 25, 1989)
- b. here in this town
- c. We don't pay more than other people in town.
- (41) a. After delivery I have visited students in the hospital or **at home** to keep their work current.  
(Marion E. Kabaker, "Double Life Keeps Pregnant Students and a Comedy on Track," *Chicago Tribune*, Monday Dec. 21, 1992, Tempo, p. 3)
- b. in their homes
- c. I have not visited students at home.

Examples (40) and (41) show PPs used to convey Familiarity Implications. The example in (40a) can be used to implicate the information shown in (40b). Negating the (40a) utterance produces (40c), by which the speaker denies the aspect that is implicated. That is, a speaker uttering (40c) would be denying that they paid more than people in the designated town. Likewise, in the negated utterance shown in (41c) the speaker is denying a visit to the students' homes.

With a conventionalized form, when the implicatum is denied, what is said can still be true. This means that the conventional force of (40)—that the locatum is in a location—can still be true. That is, a person can still be "in some town" even if she is not "in (her/ this) town." The extra Familiarity sense has become a conventionalized meaning in

these NPs, just as the meaning of “alcoholic beverage” has become conventionalized as the meaning of *drink*. For Familiarity Implicatures this works just fine. The problem is that “what is said” is not always clear for Activity Implicatures. That is, while we still have an idea that being “in X” entails being located in the denoted place, in fact that may not always be true—at times, no location is being asserted. For example, in uttering “When I was in school I used to go to the Wednesday matinees” speakers would not be talking about being in a school building, but about the stretch of time the time during which they attended college classes. This might be compared to what could happen if people began to ingest powdered alcohol: we might continue to say they had a drink, meaning that they had some alcohol, even when they might not have had what was the original semantic sense of a drink—that is, a liquid.

For Familiarity Implicatures, however, the results of negation are clear. In (40) the speaker is still speaking of one designated town, whether his brother is in it or not. In (41) the speaker will visit or not visit the students in their own homes; either way *at home* refers to the same place—it refers deictically to the student’s homes.<sup>8</sup> Thus, because the sense of

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8. Negating what’s implicated is demonstrated in the following joke:

Salesman: Young man, is your mother home?  
 Boy: She sure is.  
 Salesman: Could you get her please.



what is said is not affected while the implicated deictic sense is negated, these implicatures qualify as conventionalized R-Implicatures.

It is interesting that the lack of article seems to create a conventional type of implicature since Grice (1967) describes the use of the English indefinite article as a typical example of generalized conversational implicature. Grice suggests that the indefinite article is used to implicate that the referent of a direct object does not belong to or is not associated with the referent of the subject NP. Hence a speaker uttering (42a) can implicate (42b):

- (42) a. I walked into a house.  
 b. The house was not my house.  
 [=Levinson (1983:126) ex. 103/ 104]

Grice suggests that “an X” means ‘not [the] one connected to the speaker’. This only applies for a small set of nouns, however (perhaps

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Boy: I can't--she's not here.  
 Salesman: I thought you said she was at home!  
 Boy: I did, but this is not my home.

I will show in Section 2.2.1 that part of this ambiguity is due to the boy anchoring the meaning of *home* off of himself and the salesman anchoring it off of the house he is currently at. But, cancelation features are illustrated here, too. If the boy claims his mother is *not at home*, he would be canceling the implicated information that she is in *his home*. (Or from the salesman's point of view the boy would be canceling the information that she is in *this home*) because *at home* conventionally implicates the specification of the location. This is not limited to the word *home*, but, in the appropriate setting, would also apply e.g, to

overlapping with the Familiarity NPs), since, for example, it is quite possible to “pick up a glove,” and have it be one of your own gloves. Birner (1988) explores this choice of indefinite article and points out that *John broke his finger yesterday* should not be felicitous since it does not provide more information than *John broke a finger today* and therefore would be expected to be avoided under Horn’s R-Principle. Birner proposes that the choice of the determiner (*a* vs. *his*) “appears to be a function of syntactic construction, extralinguistic context, and number of the relevant body parts” (1988:138). Thus, following Herskovits (1985) it might be more accurate to call this construction a ‘use type’ for the indefinite article, along the lines of “*a* + noun for which a single token is owned by a person.” This use type, involving the “can’t say more” nature of the Q-principle, would come into play in contexts involving certain NP referents, rather than requiring a separate class of implicatures or a separate lexical item for *a*.

## 2.2 Familiarity Implicature

This section looks more closely at the NPs involved in Familiarity Implicature and the aspects of deixis and definiteness that influence this use. The inference that I am calling Familiarity Implicature is licensed when a bare singular NP is used to pick out a location which is not just the cur-  
*at work*, and *at campus*.

rently most relevant place named by the noun, but is the particular one made salient due to its being connected to the speaker, hearer, or locatum. I suggest here that this connection is due to the NP's serving as a deictic anchor. Levinson (1983) notes that "place or space deixis concerns the specification of locations relative to anchorage points in the speech event" (1983:79). Bare singular NPs which can generate Familiarity Implicature have this anchor built in. Because they are a type of deixis, they therefore involve a type of definite reference as well since, as Levinson notes, there are "fairly close connections between deictic determiners, third person pronouns and the definite article ... All three categories are definite, and definiteness may perhaps be an essentially deictic notion" (1983:83). More specifically, as I will show in the next section, these bare forms qualify as the type of place deixis that Fillmore (1975) calls 'symbolic'.

In the examples of Familiarity Implicature listed in (43)-(49), note that locative PPs that contain bare forms are not restricted to any particular syntactic positions—they may be complements of *be* (as in 43a), adjuncts to another verb (as in 44a), or modifiers of nouns, as in (45a).<sup>9</sup> The

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9. As in (43b), 18 of the 53 tokens of *in town* in the corpus occurred following a noun that was modified with a superlative adjective, indicating that "the Xest Y in town" is a set construction (but not a use type, since it provides no variation in meaning for *in* or *town*).

examples include *work*, *home*, *town*, *campus*, and *state*—the NPs that were found to create only a Familiarity, not an Activity sense—as well as such NPs as *school* and *camp*, which can be used to convey either meaning.

- (43) a. Look out America, the world's smallest con artist is **in town**. (=11d)
- b. Mr. Deaver is trying to reclaim his reputation as one of the savviest image makers **in town**.  
(Jill Abramson, "In Nation's Capital, Scandal Needn't Cut One's Speaking Fee," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 26, 1989)
- (44) a. I work **at home**, and I have found that this arrangement has a tremendous potential for personal growth, because nobody will notice if you eat as many as 20 lunches per day. (=17)
- b. He likes watching TV at his grandmother's. "We don't got cable or a remote control **at home**," he says, hopscotching the channels from "Family Challenge" to "Let's Make a Deal" and on to "Rugrats."  
(Susan Sheehan, "Kid, Twelve," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 53)
- (45) a. My father, partly to avoid having to answer my questions, spent most of his time in his book-lined office **on campus**, joining my mother and me only at mealtimes, so that we could speak of dogs as a family.  
(Richard Russo, "Dog," *The New Yorker*, Dec. 23 and 30, 1996, p. 75)
- b. The following week should work. Which days will you be **on campus?**  
(G. Ward, email correspondence, Aug. 25, 1996)

- (46) a. Bailiffs claimed they were required to chauffeur him to and **from work**, mow his lawn, chop his wood, fix his car and even drop by his house to feed his two grown mutts, Dixie and Husky.  
(Milo Geyelin, "Village Ruler: How a Rural Judge Wielded Kingly Power Over Abject Subjects," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 1, 1989)
- b. Stephen Young, a self-employed piano technician, had just returned **from work** and was looking forward to taking a nap when Sam called with the news that Andrew had been shot.  
(Tori Marlan, "Dealing Death," *The Chicago Reader*, June 6, 1997, Section 1, p. 24)
- c. I brought a portable radio in **to work**.  
(Radio talk show transcript)
- (47) a. At the same time, tens of thousands supposedly are moving **out of state** to escape the hubbub.  
(Tim W. Ferguson, "Trip Down Memory Freeway," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 7, 1989)
- b. He called Singer first, finding him finally **downstate** at the Seventh Division construction office.  
(Tony Hillerman, *The Fly on the Wall*, 1971, New York: HarperCollins, p. 247)
- (48) It was the end of her first year teaching, and since she wasn't going to be returning to school in the fall my parents had invited her to spend the long holiday weekend with us at our summer house, about two hours **from school**.  
(Peter J. Smith, "Ethics," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 62)
- (49) a. When, many years later, I would return **to camp** for a quick, anxious visit, there she would be.  
(Diana Trilling, "The Girls of Camp Lenore," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 12, 1996, p. 60)

- b. You walk **into camp** just around dinner time tonight, ragged and emaciated after an epic trek, and tired of subsisting on moss and invertebrates, but alive, whole, and proud of yourself.  
(Steven Utley, “The Wind over the World,” *Asimov’s Science Fiction*, Sept./ Oct. 1996, p. 130)

In all of the examples of Familiarity Implicature, the bare singular NP provides information that the location is the particular one mutually known by speaker and hearer—as if the NPs contained a possessive determiner or deictic determiner. In (43a), for example, *town* is understood as *your town*, used to refer to the hearer’s town; in (43b) *town* denotes *his town*, or at least the town picked out by both the speaker and hearer as the one that Deaver works in; while in (44a) *home* means *my home*, that is, the home of the speaker. These examples show that it can be any of the discourse participants—the speaker, hearer, or the locatum—who is the anchor for Familiarity Implicature.

### 2.2.1 Deixis

Because the meanings of expressions involving Familiarity Implicature often function like ones containing deictic determiners (e.g., *in town* = *in this town*), it is useful to examine which elements these PPs might share with other indexicals, that is, expressions which have a fixed sense but a reference that shifts depending on the context in which it is uttered (Bar-

Hillel 1954). In his talks contrasting different kinds of deixis, Fillmore (1975:44) contrasts expressions that are deictic because they contain personal pronouns (e.g., *in front of me*) with instances of the deictic use of an orientational expression itself; the area picked out by the phrase *to the left of the oak tree*, for example, varies in its reference depending on the orientation of the speaker and hearer relative to the tree. Fillmore identifies gestural, symbolic and anaphoric uses of place deixis. The three examples below, taken from Fillmore (1975:41), illustrate these different types by using the indexical *there*:

(50) I want you to put it **there**. [gestural use]

For (50), Fillmore notes that the hearer has to know where the speaker is pointing in order to know what place is being indicated.

(51) I drove the car to the parking lot and left it **there**. [anaphoric]

In (51) the word *there* refers to a place which has been identified earlier in the discourse, namely the parking lot.

(52) Is Johnny **there**? [symbolic use]

In (52), used while speaking on the telephone—where obviously the hearer can see no gesture—*there* is understood as ‘in the place where

you, the hearer, are.’ The last two uses also represent a division in the kinds of reference objects that speakers can use in locating something. Locata can be positioned relative to a reference object (one that is physically present or one named through the discourse) as in (51); reference objects can include discourse participants. Another aspect is that the anchoring can be attached to a place at the coding time (the time the speaker/ writer utters the phrase), the decoding time (when the hearer/ reader receives the utterance), as in (52), or a place continuously associated with the participant regardless of where they currently are. Not just deictic proforms such as *here* and *there* can be used in these ways. The examples contained in (53) provide additional examples of gestural and symbolic uses, which include nouns with deictic determiners:

- (53) If during my lecture you hear me use a phrase like “this finger,” the chances are fairly good that you will look up to see what it is that I want you to see; you will expect the word to be accompanied by a gesture or demonstration of some sort. On the other hand, if you hear me use the phrase “this campus,” you do not need to look up, because you know my meaning to be “the campus in which I am now located,” and you happen to know where I am. The former is the gestural use, the latter the symbolic use.  
(Fillmore 1975:40-41)

Bare singular NPs can be used for the ‘symbolic’ use of deixis as well. In (53), Fillmore’s use of *this campus* pinpoints a location by referencing it



off of the place in which the speaker and hearer are both currently situated. In other words, it is deictically picked out relative to the speaker and hearer at coding time. This contrasts with the bare singular example in (45b) in which the campus referred to is not (necessarily) one that either interlocutor is on at the time of the utterance, but is instead the campus location continuously associated with the speaker and/or hearer across time. Thus some ambiguity is possible in using Familiarity Implicature, due to two possible deictic uses—*in town*, for example could be used to mean *this town* (anchored by time to the current location) or *our town* (anchored to the participants no matter where they are, across time).

It is useful to remember that for Familiarity Implicature expressions (e.g., *out of town*, *in town*, *in state*, *at work*) it is not the location named by the whole PP (whether that be a location point or a traversable location) which the bare form marks as known; it is just the referent of the NP that is made more precise. That is, if people move *out of state*, the point to which they move may not be precisely known by the hearer, but the state out of which they move is taken to be identified by knowing the location of the anchor.<sup>10</sup>

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10. This is true even in cases where the anchor is a variable. For example, though (i) applies to people from any number of states, the state which one is 'out of' will only be an anchor to one state for each given

As an example of the possible interpretations of a single PP, consider again (48), repeated in (54).

- (54) It was the end of her first year teaching, and since she wasn't going to be returning to school in the fall my parents had invited her to spend the long holiday weekend with us at our summer house, about two hours **from school**.

Because the author mentions the distance between his home and school, the NP *school* can be taken to refer to a physical place and not a social institution; under traditional descriptions of bare noun uses—in which the bare form is only used to denote an institution—we would expect a concrete referent to have a determiner in the NP. We have seen, however, that several bare singular NP interpretations are possible. Since the referent of *school* in (54) is neither an institution, a generic class of buildings, or an activity (such as attending school), here the use of a bare form would indicate that it is the Familiarity sense that is intended rather than the Activity Sense, both of which are possible with the word *school*.

Most of the Social/ Geographical Space NPs have human anchors, but in

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person.

- (i) Out-of-state tuition is higher in the West than in the East.

a few cases, such as *deck*, the immediate deictic anchor is a location at the coding time. The NPs are indirectly connected to people, however, since the objects that are located *on deck* are located on the deck of a particular ship, one made salient by the presence of the discourse participants, as illustrated in (55):

- (55) a. Do you think they're monitoring us, right now? Up **on deck**?  
(Greg Egan, *Distress*, New York: HarperPrism, 1995, p. 325)
- b. Up **on deck**, thinking of spending five days on the Dolphin, I began to be seized by feelings of panic and pain I couldn't explain.  
(Diane Johnson, "Great Barrier Reef," *The New Yorker*, Sept. 7, 1992)

In (55), then, *deck* does not mean 'my deck' but rather 'the deck of the ship I am on.'

The reflexive deictic qualities of a few NPs used to generate Familiarity Implicature have been previously studied. The use of *home*, in particular, has been examined in detail in Fillmore (1991). His corpus-based study shows that *home* has a core relational sense in which, in possessive forms, it tends to indicate the home's residents, rather than its architects, brokers, etc. More to the point, he also claims that in its use as a PP with an empty preposition (cf. Ch. 1, footnote 16), *home* contains an anaphoric element, so that it must always mean the home of someone.

Jackendoff et al. (1993) elaborate on this point, showing that the someone is determined by Principle A of Government and Binding theory (Chomsky 1981); that is, when used in anaphora, the antecedent of *home* must (roughly speaking) occur in the same clause as the locatum who lives in there. They note that *school*, too, is anaphoric, though less locally; for other Familiarity bare nouns the possessor can be in a higher clause. This looser anaphoric sense that Fillmore and Jackendoff et al. describe correlates with the ability of *home*, *school*, *town*,<sup>11</sup> *work*, *state*, and *campus* to serve as deictic anchors for Familiarity Implicature. Examples of the looser syntactic constraints mentioned by Jackendoff et al. are illustrated in (56):

- (56) a. I<sub>i</sub> heard that Grace<sub>j</sub> will be in town<sub>i/j</sub> in July.  
 b. Do you<sub>i</sub> know if Jeff<sub>j</sub> will bring the car to school<sub>i/j</sub>?

In (56a) the anchor of *town* can be Grace, or it can be *I*, located in a higher clause. In (56b) *school* can be anchored off of *Jeff*, but also off of *you*, located in the higher clause. In addition to the entities mentioned in the discourse, the anchor in (56a) can be *you*, the unmentioned

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11. Judgments show two possible meanings for *in town*: one uses it to establish a contrast with *in the country* or *in the suburbs*, that is, it is used to mean *inside the town proper*; the other is the Familiarity implicature reading of *in my/ your/ his town*. Since this does not seem to affect the division (i.e., both meanings are R-Implicated, but do not convey an Activity sense), I have not pursued this distinction here.

hearer, and in (56b) the anchor can be *me*, the unmentioned speaker. So not just syntactic constraints, but discourse elements determine the anchor.

Jackendoff et al. propose that the binding of ‘intransitive *home*’ could be accounted for with an empty preposition, though this does not specify when *to* rather than *at* should be interpreted. They also posit a bound pronoun or PRO in the determiner position. They note that such an empty determiner cannot freely occur in all determiner positions (they suggest it occurs only for *home* and *school*). As we have seen, not all bare nouns can be used to convey the Familiarity sense; likewise, they question "how particular nouns can license empty bound determiners" (Jackendoff et al. 1993:76). Leaving aside the empty preposition situations, we have seen that as the object of a preposition, *home*, like other NPs used in Familiarity Implicature, has special anchoring uses. The phenomenon is more widespread than just *home* and *school*, though still quite constrained. While it is not clear why only *home*, *work*, *school*, *campus*, *state* and *district* are used in this way (if it were solely a question of maximal relevance, for example, one would expect all habitable locations to be used in Familiarity Implicature, but #*in dormitory*, #*at hotel*), but between implicit possessor binding and symbolic deixis, we can

begin to see how this implicature works.

### 2.2.2 Definiteness

In considering how the speaker indicates which particular location is the one that should form the anchor of a Familiarity Implicature, it is useful to consider the workings of definiteness in discourse. Formal definiteness is marked on an NP to show that the speaker believes the hearer can identify the particular referent the speaker has in mind (Clark 1974, Halliday and Hasan 1976, Chafe 1987, Prince 1992, Gundel et al. 1993, Birner and Ward 1994, Ward and Birner 1995, Lambrecht 1994). Chafe (1976:39) suggests that “identifiable” would be a more accurate label than definite, while Lambrecht (1994) notes that cognitively, definiteness is a combination of identifiability and uniqueness. The following list shows ways in which a speaker is licensed to assume that the addressee is able to identify the referent:

- (57) -- unique referent (e.g., the first atomic bomb detonation)
- uniquely salient one (e.g., the earth, the moon, the sky)
- identifiable in a physical context (cf. physical copresence)
- identifiable in a social group (cf. community, family)
- prior mention in the discourse (with indefinite article; using modifiers)
- entailment of one particular to another  
         (sale » money; house » door)  
         (Chafe 1976: 39-40)

Rochester and Martin (1977) suggest that a speaker marks an NP according to whether or not the hearer needs to look further for complete referent identification information; however, since the instructions encoded in the NP don't say precisely where to locate referents within the context of the utterance, a really successful communicator would be one who assists the hearer by "placing referents for definite NPs in accessible locations" (Rochester and Martin 1977:249).<sup>12</sup> Rather, we might say that a speaker marks an NP in a way that allows a hearer to locate the most relevant referent or antecedent.

The definite article is one clue about what the speaker expects the hearer to know (or how far the hearer needs to look). Use of the bare form can indicate definiteness too, but it narrows the range of identifying contexts. When a speaker utters *in town*, the town referred to must be not just a town known to the speaker and hearer according to one of the criteria listed in (57), for example, but a town that is bound to one of the current discourse participants.

If we apply Rochester and Martin's analysis to bare singular nouns, we see that using the bare singular form provides another way to lead the

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12. Confusingly, Rochester and Martin use 'referent' to mean both antecedent in the discourse and real world referent.

hearer to the right referent—to indicate either that there is not an individual referent meant (through Generic or Activity Implicature) or to lead the hearer deictically to the specific referent (through Familiarity Implicature).

### **2.3 Activity Implicature**

The second type of inference that bare singular NPs may be used to generate is the one in which the PP containing the NP is used to predicate the activity of the locatum. There are at least three constraints on an NP used to generate Activity Implicatures: it must be a Social/ Geographical Space, it must have a stereotypical activity associated with it, and it must identify a location attended by people who typically do that activity for a set duration. These features will be addressed in Section 2.3.1. An analysis of “what is said” by a PP used in Activity Implicature is examined in Section 2.3.2. Models for assessing activity information from a lexical entry are discussed in Section 2.3.3.

#### **2.3.1 Which Activities Are Involved**

While a noun’s having an “associated activity” is necessary for it to be used in this type of implicature, this association is not sufficient. Many location nouns which seem to belong to the same semantic category as



Social/ Geographical Spaces, e.g., those in (57), do not occur in the bare singular form, as illustrated in (58).

(58)	clinic	office	stadium
	gymnasium	park	station
	library	pool	store
	museum	resort	theater

- (59) a. # Pat was at library for six hours.  
 b. # Lou just got back from gymnasium.  
 c. # She spent the day at museum.

Likewise, not just any activity can be felicitously conveyed without an article, even though it might be one that is associated with the location.

For example, a person who works at a jail, as a warden or janitor, could not be referred to as being “to jail.” This is illustrated in (60), where the located person is not being imprisoned, but is visiting her husband who is a prisoner.

- (60) She went immediately **to the jail**, but it wasn't a visiting day and she was put off until the next visiting day.  
 (Alec Wilkinson, “Midwest Murder,” *The New Yorker*, June 8, 1992, p. 55)

Using no article here would be misleading. For the reader to find the correct interpretation, the prepositional phrase must contain an article.

However, for some bare NPs for which an Activity Implicature *is* possible,

more than one activity may be implicated for a single location. Both *at school* and *in class*, for example, may be used to convey that a person is either teaching or attending classes. Likewise *in bed* can convey that someone is sleeping, having sex, or suffering an illness—all of which are stereotypical *in bed* situations.

With Activity Implicature, the locative PP is used to predicate that the located entity is involved in some activity. These PPs may occur as complements to the *be*, as in (61a), or they may follow a verb that already specifies some action of the subject, as in (61b).

- (61) a. “If Nicomedes Zuluaga with all his power has been **in prison** for months, who is going to cry for you?” asks Vincenzo D’Elia, general manager of a SmithKline Beckman Corp. Venezuela unit, who hasn’t been implicated.  
(Jose de Cordoba, “Illegal High Jinks at Recadi,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 24, 1989)
- b. Off and on since then, the companies have skirmished **in court**.  
(Jeffrey A. Tannenbaum, “Tiny Firm Faces Legal Might of Wrathful Multinational,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 16, 1989)

The forms in (61) are used to assert information about the locatum, while not, necessarily, referring to any particular location. Thus, for example, in (61a) the reader infers not that Zuluaga is located in some particular prison, known or unknown, but rather that he is serving time as a pris-

oner (although this, of course, generally presupposes that he served that time in some actual prison). Likewise, in (61b) what is asserted is not that the skirmishing took place in a specific court room, but that this occurred as part of a trial (although again, the process of a trial typically occurs in a court room).

Many nouns which denote a place when used with spatial preposition, have an event sense when used with temporal prepositions, so, not surprisingly, many of the same Social/ Geographical Space NPs that can be used in Familiarity and Activity Implicature can also be found in PPs with temporal prepositions:

- (62)
- a. Did you brush your teeth before bed?
  - b. That summer, before camp I bought a new compass.
  - c. The teacher made him stay after class.
  - d. What are you going to do after college?
  - e. Did you stop at the store before school?
  - f. We will meet in the basement for coffee after church.
  - g. He stopped off for a drink after work.

### 2.3.2 Presupposed Information

So far, I have identified two distinct meanings that can be conveyed by using a bare singular NP form in a locative PP. The Familiarity sense, to use Christophersen's (1939) terminology, produces a "more familiar"

sense and specifies, through symbolic deixis, that the location is the one most salient to the speaker, hearer or locatum; the Activity sense conveys the activity of the locatum, based on culturally determined stereotypes concerning certain locations, which are part of in the lexical entry for each noun. Although I have claimed that what is inferred by hearing an Activity Implicature is information that is in addition to what is said, in fact, sometimes denotation of a location is not part of the truth-conditional meaning at all. For example, during the time when people are “in college,” they may not be physically at a college location the whole time (or any of the time) that they are enrolled in courses. The bare singular NPs used in Activity Implicature are not used to refer directly to an actual location. This is demonstrated by the varying anaphoric possibilities shown in (63).

- (63) a. Pat is in **prison**.  
?It is a 3-story concrete building.
- b. Pat is in **a prison**.  
It is a 3-story concrete building.
- c. Pat is in **the prison**.  
It is a 3-story concrete building.

If the NP does not have a deictic sense of possession or time/ place coding, then the zero-form of the article, as seen in (63a), functions to

mark the NP as non-referential. While NPs used in Familiarity Implicature are referring expressions, the PPs used in Activity Implicature are predicates. Although a person who is *in prison* or *in college* may in fact be in a building with that designation, this is understood via lexical presupposition, or some other subsequent inference, since among the things assumed by the *in prison* scenario, for example, is that there is some place typically used to contain the prisoner.

In keeping with this piece of shared information, bare singular NPs can sometimes be used in talking about a place, but only through a chain of related inferences. In (64), a child asks about the status of workers in a detention center car wash:

- (64)            Child: Are these people **in jail**?  
                   Parent: Yes, this is sort of a jail.  
                   (M. Schub in conversation, 10/ 24/ 92)

If the people referred to in (64) are *in jail* (i.e., serving time), then there must be a jail, and so the parent can answer yes, even if the car wash is not a stereotypical jail location.

Lexical presupposition could also account for the temporal sense of some activity-evoking NPs. One of the things presupposed by being *in school* is that the experience lasts for a set length of time (e.g., from 9 a.m. to 3:15

p.m.; Monday through Friday; from September to June; until graduation/ retirement). The asserted aspect of this predication, however, is that the locatum is directly involved in the activity; any other information (including the location) is inferred, through presupposition, and depends both on how detailed the mutual stereotyped scenario is for being in a school and on the context of the utterance. Thus it is possible to imagine a situation such as (65) in which the locatum is *in prison*, although he is not at the moment inside a prison:

- (65) The new employee at the grocery store can't work the night shift since he's really still in prison—till the end of August; he's on a work furlough and has to go back at 5:00.

### 2.3.3 Activity: Duration at the Location

One aspect of the pragmatics of bare nouns used to convey the activity sense has to do with the duration of time spent in the relevant location. Not just regular attendance at a location is required but, crucially, a set duration of time must be applicable to the activity in question. Also, this schedule is assumed to be not unique to a single person, but is regarded as holding true for any person who would attend the location. The relevant interval depends on the particular community, i.e., the length of time spent at the location would be different for *church*, *school*, and

*prison*, but people who attend those places do so for a set time each time they attend. With *library*, *store*, or *park*, however, while people may go there every weekend, there is no fixed time that one typically stays in these places.<sup>13</sup> The perception of the stereotypical activity of a location seems to be based on the viewpoint of an off-the-street patron of the location, since libraries, stores, and parks all have employees who work at those places for regular hours; their activities, however, do not seem part of our perceived use of the location.

This generalization, fits at least the core examples contrasting *in church*, *in school*, *in prison* with *\*at store*, *\*in library*, *\*in garden*. This would lead one to expect that workplaces such as offices would also be likely to be associated with Activity Implicature since a typical office seems like a place with a most predictable schedule. And indeed such usages are attested. Consider, first, (66):

- (66) “Why did you call me **out of office**, then?” enquired Martha sullenly.  
(Doris Lessing, *Martha Quest*, New York: Signet Books, 1952, p. 141)

The first office token concerns a young woman who has been called away

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13. For *in hospital*, which occurs in British English usage, the hours of the hospitalization activity may not be set, but I suspect that some minimum time, say an over-night stay, is required to qualify a person as being *in hospital*.

from her job as a legal secretary to spend the day helping her sick father.

Another example of *office* used as a bare singular NP involves a temporal rather than locational sense:

- (67) By now Martha was nearly hysterical, for she had been sent a letter, by office boy, from Donovan, saying she must meet him at McGrath's immediately **after office**, because it was very urgent. (Doris Lessing, *Martha Quest*, New York: Signet Books, 1952, p. 143)

While *office* does not show up without an article very often (and (66) in particular, sounds odd in American dialects unless office refers to an elected office), it is clearly the same kind of stereotypical action associated with a location that is found in other instances of Activity Implicature. However, in American dialects, (66) and (67) are infelicitous. One possible explanation for this is that the bare form use of *work* blocks more specific subtypes of work spaces (cf. *Why did you call me away from work; she must meet him at McGrath's immediately after work*).

#### 2.3.4 Models for Accessing Stereotypes

Several models have been suggested to describe the ways in which hearers make the connection to information that is conveyed implicitly. In their work on definite reference and mutual knowledge, Clark and



Marshall (1981) touch briefly on the connection a hearer makes between a referent that is copresent with the speaker and hearer and something that is already mutually known:

To understand Ann's *I wonder where the city hall is*, Bob doesn't need to believe that the city hall is mutually known, but merely that he and she mutually know about that town (the anchor) and that they mutually know that towns of that size ordinarily have a single city hall (the anchor cable). (Clark & Marshall 1981:26)

In other words, Bob must check what is stereotypical of towns and make the connection to the town he is presently in; that connection is the cable leading from the anchor. In another model for knowledge based on community membership, Clark and Marshall discuss a way of cross-referencing information from an 'encyclopedia' of mutual knowledge which is divided into sections for each person with whom a speaker shares a subcommunity.

Both the anchor cable and the encyclopedia models attempt to describe how related information about a particular object can be successfully communicated without being actually said. Accessing such information relies on the intersection of the lexicon and real world knowledge. Pustejovsky (1991) posits an additional model for storing such associated aspects of a noun's denotation in what he calls the noun's 'qualia

structure'. In this model, each noun's entry in the mental lexicon contains different types of information about the referent of the noun and its use in the world, which would be available for synecdoche, implicature, and other non-literal uses. This qualia structure, Pustejovsky suggests, captures the "system of relations that characterizes the semantics of nominals, very much like the argument structure of a verb" (1991:22). Under this system, verbs would no longer be the main determiners of meaning. Instead of simply treating arguments as input to a verb's function, where they are limited to being affected by the verb, arguments can be seen as taking an active role in the semantics of the predication, allowing what Pustejovsky calls "co-compositionality" in meaning determination. Thus, just as a verb can select for an argument type, Pustejovsky suggests that an argument is in turn able to select the predicates that govern it.

In setting up his model, Pustejovsky provides a set of slots within each noun's lexical entry filled with information concerning different aspects of our basic knowledge about the entity in question, i.e., information about the noun's meaning that is taken to be stereotypical in a discourse community. The four basic roles that he suggests should make up the qualia structure for a lexical item are the following: 1) the constitutive role—this

tells the form and components of the referent; 2) the formal role—this tells the entity’s placement in a larger hierarchy of categorization, i.e., how it differs from co-hyponyms and what its own hyponyms might be; 3) the telic<sup>14</sup> role—the purpose and function of the object in the world, i.e., who uses it and for what; and 4) the agentive role—how the object is brought about, i.e., whether it is an artifact, a natural kind, part of a causal chain, etc. These four roles cover a number of things speakers are expected to know about the referents of nouns, although it could certainly be argued that additional roles might come into play. For the purposes of capturing the stereotypical or prototypical use of Activity Implicature, however, it seems like the most appropriate role would be Pustejovsky’s telic role, since this would be where information on the usual use of the noun’s referent is stored.

Pustejovsky uses a person’s ability to access information in a noun’s qualia structure as an alternative to positing a number of polysemous verb entries in the lexicon. For example, instead of suggesting two different structures for a verb such as *begin*, one of which takes a complement which is semantically an activity (as in (68a)) and one of which takes a different complement type, as seen in (68b), Pustejovsky suggests a case

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14. This is a separate meaning than the use of “telic” to mean ‘having an endpoint,’ as in the work on aspect by Vendler (1967), *inter alia*.

of what he calls “type coercion”: a verb may coerce the meaning of an NP into the semantic type it requires of its arguments if it can find the required event type among the attributes of the noun listed in its qualia structure.

- (68) a. Tom began eating at 6:00.  
 b. Tom began dinner at 6:00.

Thus one can say *begin dinner* even though *begin* usually requires an activity as its complement, because the verb *begin* is able to access the qualia structure of *dinner* and find the activity *eat* listed as its telic attribute. Since *eat* satisfies the semantic type required by *begin*, and *dinner* satisfies the complement type required by *eat*, then *to begin dinner* can felicitously be interpreted as *to begin to eat dinner*.

A similar kind of process can be said to underlie the different meanings available for PPs containing bare singular NPs. A qualia structure would again allow us to avoid multiple entries for the same word, but this time for prepositions that occur with location nouns. For example, rather than positing multiple entries for the word *at*, one that requires a location for its complement, another that takes a complement conveying an activity meaning, and a third whose complement indicates to whom the

location belongs, we can use the qualia structure as a place to search for more information until we have found a felicitous match.

We saw in Chapter 3 that one preposition can be interpreted differently depending on the semantic domains to which its complement belongs, as in (69):

- (69) a. at the train station  
 b. at 6:00 o'clock  
 c. at her wit's end

But to interpret a complement with a bare singular NP is a different task. In this case, as shown in (70), the complements are all NPs containing the same noun; thus, all have complements from the same domain:

- (70) a. Mike is at school.  
 b. Mike is at a school.  
 c. Mike is at the school.

The presence of an article in the NP, therefore, might indicate that the noun was to be interpreted as naming a concrete location. If there is no article, a hearer may need to delve into the noun's qualia structure to satisfy the need for a location, since a locative preposition, such as *in*, *on*, or *at*, normally requires a locative NP complement. With bare singular NPs, while the noun does denote an entity which in some uses is

identified with a place, without an article to point out the entity as a particular instance of an entity at the denoted place, other information about the noun's referent might also be asserted. Further information can be found in the qualia structure so that the requirements of the preposition are met. In other words, the inclusion of an article indicates that the NP is to be interpreted foremost as a location; but the absence of an article indicates that location information may need to be searched for. In a sentence such as (71), what is said fulfills the need for a location, while in (72), without an article to clarify the assumption of a unique referent, no denoted location is immediately picked out:

- (71) John was at the school.  
(concrete referent, spatial *at* is satisfied)
- (72) a. John was at school.  
(more information needed-->
- b. school allows a familiarity anchor, *school* = 'his school'
- c. school is used for habitual activity,  
PP gets reanalyzed as a predicate, *at school* =  
'attending school'

In the case of (72), where the complement of the preposition is a bare singular NP, although the noun appears to be of the category "location," the NP is not treated as a location unless it is marked in some way, such

as with an article. However, further information is available in the qualia structure. As indicated above, the most relevant section of the qualia structure is the telic attribute: here information about the use of *school* is listed, including the fact that school is a place stereotypically used for both teaching and learning, and that one typically attends a school on a regular basis.

### **2.3.5 Putting the Implicatures to Work**

With many bare NPs, it is possible to contrast pairs and triplets of forms that do or do not have articles, in order to demonstrate the range of meaning bare NP implicature will convey for a speaker. Below, I illustrate ways in which a speaker exploits the two inferences created by the bare form.

The first example involves the hearer's expectations of the use of the Familiarity Implicature. Often the use of the word *home* with an article in English has the separate euphemistic meaning of an institution (which is in fact not the person's own house), so that to "put someone in a home," means in a nursing home, a home for the elderly, etc. An example that plays with our expectations of the Familiarity Implicature comes from an ad for the United Way/ Crusade of Mercy. The billboard features

a photograph of an old woman, underneath which appears the text in (73):

(73) Like most people her age she belongs **in a home**. Her own.

The reason (73) makes the reader do a double take is because the presence of an article leads one to expect it will be the euphemistic reading rather than the Familiarity-evoked reading one would get without the article. However, the second sentence of the text emphasizes that the Familiarity reading is intended and is truth-conditionally still possible. The ad exploits the fact that both *at home* and *in a home* are possible ways to refer to a location; the writers intend the reader to believe at first that they do not mean the woman's own home since they did not choose the available construction that would implicate that (i.e., *at home*).

An example of avoiding Activity Implicature is provided in (74):

(74) "I guess like every human being for a fleeting moment as you walk **into the prison**, as you glance down death row, you pause to think about the faces you see," Dole remarked after visiting the gas chamber at San Quentin. After this little reverie, as Reuters reported, Dole quickly went on to reaffirm his support of the death penalty.  
(Bob Dole, *In These Times*, April 15-28, 1996, p. 7)

In (74), the use of *prison* in the bare singular NP form could convey that Senator Dole was commenting on what it was like to walk into prison as



a prisoner. Instead, he is a visitor talking about visiting a particular prison which contains death row prisoners; use of the article avoids the unintended interpretation.

A triplet of tokens involving Activity Implicature appears within twelve pages of each other in a novel about the building of a cathedral. In (75), the speaker (who has just received a kiss) is on the construction site of a cathedral, and is therefore not taking part in a regular church service; hence the use of an indefinite article in the NP.

(75) He pulled away from her and said, “We’re **in a church!**”  
(Ken Follet, *Pillars of the Earth*, p. 437)

Likewise, in (76) the locatum is again not in the church building for a religious service, so an article here, a definite article, is appropriate:

(76) King Stephen was holding court **in the church**, for there was no castle or guildhall here.  
(Ken Follet, *Pillars of the Earth*, p. 449)

In (77), on the other hand, the speaker is actually attending a mass—the stereotypical activity of a cathedral—thus his use of the bare NP is felicitous:

(77) He wondered if it was a sin to have an erection **in church**.  
 (Ken Follet, *Pillars of the Earth*, p. 439)

In fact, the construction of the utterance requires the reader of (77) to interpret the locatum as taking part in the stereotypical activity of a church, thus adding to the irony of the sentence.

#### 2.4 Generics

Previous work examining bare singular NP forms has usually suggested that PPs containing these bare NPs are only interpreted generically—that is, the NP can be used only to refer to a whole class rather than a specific entity. (Cf. Christophersen 1939, and Hall & Hall 1969.) While the existence of Familiarity Implicature argues against bare forms having only non-referential uses, and the Activity Implicature represents a non-referential use, I propose that there is also a generic sense that can be conveyed by the use of certain PPs containing bare singular NPs. This third sense is distinct from the Activity sense since it does not predicate an activity of the locatum, yet it is also distinct from the Familiarity sense in not linking the location to a specific discourse anchor. Examples of this generic use are provided in (78).

- (78) a. The contrast is apparent **on campus**, too. Unlike their predecessors in the Vietnam era, many ROTC students today can be seen wearing their uniforms and boots—not just to military classes, but all day long.  
(Jill M. Bullock, “ROTC Regains Respect on Campuses As Graduates Fare Well in Workplace,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 11, 1989)
- b. These joint ventures suggest that there are opportunities **in prison** for many kinds of companies.  
(James K. Stewart, “Some Businesses Put Prisons to Work,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 1989)

Krifka et al. (1995) distinguish generic NPs (kind-referring NPs, as opposed to individual-referring NPs)<sup>15</sup> from generic sentences (characterizing sentences, rather than particular sentences) and detail diagnostics for identifying generic NP uses. This division allows them to reject earlier generalizations about generic uses, e.g., that indefinite singular forms are per se generic uses (they show that this is so only in characterizing sentences). Their approach provides a way to pinpoint when genericity is due to the sentence form and when it is due to the form of the NP.

As the verbs found in the corpus represent many different kinds of predicates, and since I will show that a generic reading of a locative PP depends on qualities of the locatum, it appears that bare singular NPs

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15. When considering bare NPs as possible kind-referring generics, however, their examples use only plurals or mass-noun materials such as *gold* or *bronze*, or count nouns in plural forms, and do not specifically include the kinds of singular count nouns examined here.

themselves are the source of genericness, rather than their occurrence in characterizing sentence types. In short, while the NPs used in Familiarity Implicature are individual-referring expressions, Generic uses of bare singular forms are kind-referring NPs.

Previous analyses of kind-referring NPs have identified generic uses associated with a number of distinct nominal forms: bare plural count nouns (*cats*), bare mass nouns (*furniture*), definite singular count nouns (*the cat*), indefinite singular nouns (*a cat*), proper names (*Felis catus*) and NPs with demonstrative determiners (*those alley cats*). Each of these types of kind-referring NPs has been shown to be sensitive to distinct constraints of semantics, pragmatics, and syntactic distribution (Burton-Roberts 1976; Carlson 1977a,b; Declerck 1991; Langacker 1991, Krifka et al. 1995, Bowdle & Ward 1995, inter alia). The bare singular count noun as another type of kind-referring NP has received much less scrutiny.

One notable difference between the kind-referring Generic sense and the individual-referring Familiarity sense of bare singular NPs concerns the deictic link between the location and the speaker, hearer, or locatum. In the Generic sense, this link is not available. As illustration, I will exam-

ine two different uses of *on campus* found in my corpus. These two uses, however, do not divide into Activity and Familiarity; rather, one use represents a generic expression, while the second exemplifies the Familiarity sense. For the generic use, *campus* is used to refer more broadly, to indicate the set of all college campuses. This use is typical of news reports that describe trends on campuses across the country, as illustrated in (79):

- (79) a. An amendment to the Senate's anti-drug bill would have barred alcohol companies from sponsoring any sort of event at all **on campus**. [= (15)]
- b. "Free speech," "Question authority," and "Leave us alone" are now conservative and libertarian battle-cries **on campus**. (Alan Charles Kors, "It's Speech, Not Sex, the Dean Bans Now," *Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 1989 )
- c. The contrast is apparent **on campus**, too. Unlike their predecessors in the Vietnam era, many ROTC students today can be seen wearing their uniforms and boots — not just to military classes, but all day long. [= (78a)]

Evidence that the use in (79) is generic can be seen by the way that the meaning of these examples would remain the same even when we replace the bare singular forms with another NP form that is often used in generic reference, such as the bare plural form *campuses*:

- (80) a. An amendment to the Senate's anti-drug bill would have barred alcohol companies from sponsoring any sort of event at all **on campuses**.
- b. "Free speech," "Question authority," and "Leave us alone" are now conservative and libertarian battle-cries **on campuses**.
- c. The contrast is apparent **on campuses**, too. Unlike their predecessors in the Vietnam era, many ROTC students today can be seen wearing their uniforms and boots — not just to military classes, but all day long.

In contrast, the Familiarity sense of *on campus* is used to indicate a particular campus. It is only used in situations where the speaker expects the hearer to identify which campus is meant; in particular, the campus indicated is made salient by being the one attended by (at least) one of the discourse participants. Examples of this use are shown in (81).

- (81) a. Have you been back **to campus** lately?  
(UIC Alumni Association membership flyer)
- b. If you are interested in the game, are in a group, are looking for someone **on campus** to play with, or know someone who is... give me a call.  
(Ad recruiting people to play Magic, posted in a university student union building)
- c. The following week should work. Which days will you be **on campus**?  
(G. Ward, email correspondence, Aug. 25, 1996)

For the examples in (81), the bare plural form would not work, as shown

by the infelicitous substitutions in (82) below:

- (82) a. #Have you been back **to campuses** lately?
- b. #If you are interested in the game, are in a group, are looking for someone **on campuses** to play with, or know someone who is... give me a call.
- c. #The following week should work. Which days will you be **on campuses**?

When bare singular NP locations are used generically, the stated locatum is an abstract non-human referent, as in (79), where *event*, *battle-cry* and *contrast* are the located entities. Further, no particular speaker or hearer is designated in the text, as opposed to the Familiarity examples in (81), where the pronouns *you* and *me* are used to pick out the speaker and hearer. In generic uses of the bare singular form, neither a human locatum, a speaker, or a hearer is available for anchoring an indexical bare singular NP, leaving it to be used to refer more broadly to the whole class of entities.

Notice that even though *campus* (in its academic, not corporate sense) might seem to have a particular activity associated with it, perhaps studying, the phrase *she's on campus* is not used to convey what the locatum is doing, but where she is, including which campus she is on.

Thus, as noted in the Section 2.3, the association of a Social/ Geographical Space with an activity is not sufficient to license an Activity Implication.

The distinction between Activity, Familiarity, and Generic senses—showing that the Familiarity sense requires a salient human onto whom the location can be attached—is illustrated with another NP in (83).

- (83) a.     Sitting **in class** as another student discusses the life of Justin Martyr, Jason Malave is framed by a floor-to-ceiling portrait of Cardinal George Mundelein that hangs behind him.  
(Steve Mills, “A Calling That’s Hard to Heed,” *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 16, 1996, Sect. 1, p. 16)
- b.     Previously the rivalry had been rather onesided, but there was no longer any doubt that Gilbert was as determined to be first **in class** as Anne was.  
(Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, 1908, Gutenberg etext)
- c.     English teachers have long used printed advertising when they teach argumentative writing. Ads provide a catalog of persuasive techniques that can be analyzed **in class**—an exercise increasingly valuable as advertisements, especially TV commercials, play an ever more prominent role in politics.  
(David Hechler, “Whittle Foes Miss Medium's Message,” *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 1, 1989)

In (83a) the locatum is named and the location is inferred to be his classroom, i.e., the Familiarity sense is conveyed; in addition, the PP could be



replaced by a temporal PP such as *during class*, making the Activity sense more explicit. Thus (83a) could be an example of either the Familiarity or the Activity sense. In (83b), the bare form can be replaced by an NP with a possessive determiner, such as *their class*; also, two humans located in the class are specifically named. Further, substituting *in class* with such temporal PPs as *before class*, *during class* or *after class* does not keep the same meaning; (83b), therefore, is an example of only the Familiarity use. In (83c), no particular human locatum is mentioned—only the analysis of ads is located in the class. Further, a bare plural location such as *classrooms* can be felicitously substituted here for the word *class*. Example (83c), then, shows a kind-referring generic use of *in class*.

We have seen, then, that three distinct uses of bare singular NPs in PPs are found in a corpus of naturally occurring data: Activity, Familiarity, and Generic senses. Some of the nouns, however, are used in only one of these uses, while others work in two, or all three of the uses. While only some of the PPs in the corpus are found in contexts that indicated a generic use, a sentence with an abstract locatum, such as that in (84), serves as a tool for trying out the bare singular NPs to see if they can be used generically:



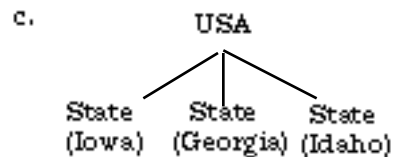
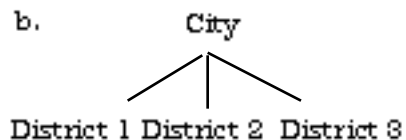
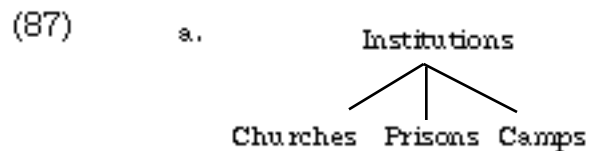
**Table 15**  
**Uses of Bare Singular NPs in PP**

A	work		Familiarity	Generic
	home		Familiarity	Generic
	town		Familiarity	Generic
	campus		Familiarity	Generic
B	state		Familiarity	? Generic
	district		Familiarity	? Generic
C	jail	Activity		Generic
	prison	Activity		Generic
	court	Activity		Generic
	sea	Activity		Generic
D	church	Activity	Familiarity	Generic
	bed	Activity	Familiarity	Generic
	school	Activity	Familiarity	Generic
	college	Activity	Familiarity	Generic
	class	Activity	Familiarity	Generic
	camp	Activity	Familiarity	Generic

As seen in groups C and D, words that give rise to Activity Implicatures can also be used in a kind-referring Generic sense. This is not surprising since both the Activity sense and Generic sense are uses that refer to aspects shared by the whole class of locations rather than to a trait specific to one particular referent. For those NPs not used in Activity senses, however, the scope of the template sentence affects our interpretation of their kind-referring abilities, as shown in (86):

- (86) a. ? A federal law exempts transactions which occur in state.  
(? in states)
- b. A local law exempts transactions which occur in state.
- c. ? A county law exempts transactions which occur in district.  
(? in districts)
- d. A district ruling exempts transactions which occur in district.
- e. ? A city ordinance exempts transactions which occur at camp.  
(? at camps)
- f. A boy scout council ruling exempts transactions which occur at camp.

What accounts for the less felicitous examples in (86) is that the location must be presented as a member of a kind with distinct subtypes, rather than simply being part of a space physically divided into subunits. When the division is into units of only one kind of place—as seen in (87b) and (87c)—a generic use is infelicitous.



In the template sentence in (84a), the words *state* and *district* do not allow a generic reading since any area within a federal jurisdiction would be a state. Yet (86a) and (86c) cannot be interpreted as Familiarity readings, either, since as we saw, to be used in a Familiarity sense a bare form must be used in an utterance involving a human anchor. In the case of states and districts (and presumably other words such as *ward*, *parish*, and *borough*), since those units divide a larger region completely into the same kind of units, one cannot specify a location in that larger region that is not in one subunit or the other. For the sentences of (86a), for example, a federal law would apply to the country as a whole, yet no location within a country would not be within some state. (86b), however, is felicitous since at a local level, if the locatum is in another state (i.e., not the anchored one) the jurisdiction is appropriate; thus, (86b) is felicitous, but as a Familiarity reading. That is, for words which denote a subordinate category that is one of a complete heterogeneous divisions, as in (87b) and (87c), the Generic sense cannot be used in the domain of the superordinate category. In other words, it is possible to refer generically to an event that occurs on all campuses, and as long as there are also potential locations that are not on any campus; but reference to a location within a state is not possible unless there is some contrasted location assumed that is not in a state (such as a territory or commonwealth,

for example). The words *state*, *camp*, and *district* in (86a) (86c) and (86e), then, are infelicitous in a generic reading because of their position in a taxonomy of fully complementary municipal units, yet also infelicitous in the template sentence as a Familiarity reading, due to the requirement that there be an anchoring human. However, in a setting that covers a range of location types, generic readings for all bare singular NP locations are possible.

For the relationship described by (85c), for example, *in state* is a felicitous phrasing to convey the Familiarity sense, but infelicitous for the Generic sense. For contexts affecting bare singular forms as generics, it is not the hierarchical level per se that matters, but whether the denoted NP unit is the only kind into which its superordinate is divided.

In the right context, most bare singular NPs can be used generically to refer to a kind, but not all can be used to generate Activity or Familiarity implicatures; these require more specific contexts and have more semantic constraints on the NP type.

### **3. Bare Singular NPs in Other Sentence Positions**

So far I have been discussing the functions of PPs that contain bare sin-

gular NPs, but recall from Chapter 1 that these bare forms can appear as subjects and objects as well. In this section I will examine the different types of meanings that are conveyed when bare singular NPs appear in these positions. Using nouns from the category of Social/ Geographical Spaces, I will investigate whether Activity, Familiarity, and Generic uses are found in these positions as well. In sections 3.1 and 3.2 I discuss Social/ Geographical Spaces as subjects direct objects. Section 3.3 checks for syntactic differences that reflect the distinct pragmatic uses of bare singulars. Then Section 3.4 will look at Recording Media NPs in subject and direct object positions.

Just as most count nouns do not occur in the bare form in PPs, so too do they not serve in the bare singular form as subjects or direct objects.

This is shown in (88).

- (88) a. \***Library** was busy today.  
 b. \*I dreaded going to **store** on Saturday afternoon.  
 c. \*I always hated **restaurant**.  
 d. \*They were friends from **park**.

Recall from the results of applying the diagnostics for genericity, shown in Table 15, that some bare NPs are used only in the Familiarity sense, while others are used only for Activity senses. Inserting members from these different sets of nouns into subject and object position, we find

that both types of bare NPs are possible. In (89) and (90) I show that some of the nouns which are used to produce a Familiarity sense when used as prepositional objects could easily serve in other positions:

- (89) a. **Home** is where the heart is.  
 b. Mike thought **school** was boring.  
 c. Karl left **church** early.

Other nouns, from the set showing only an Activity Sense in PPs, are unable to serve subject or direct object positions, as shown in (90).

- (90) a. #**Prison** was busy.  
 b. #She left **sea** and settled here.  
 c. #**Stage** was filled with ropes and boxes.

Examples such as those in (89) and (90) suggest a distinction between the nouns themselves — that there are separate classes of Familiarity nouns and Activity nouns, and that one of their distinguishing characteristics in their distribution. The sentences shown in (89) and (90), however, are constructed examples. To see if the possibility of Bare NPs occurring in subject or direct object position supports a distinction between Familiarity nouns and Activity nouns, I sought out naturally occurring tokens of bare singular nouns in these positions. For bare singular NPs in subject position I found 33 tokens, consisting of ten noun types; for direct object position I found 39 tokens, 14 noun types. These are listed in Table 16. (See Appendix A for type/ token distribution.)



**Table 16**  
**Social/ Geographical Spaces as Subjects and Direct Objects**

as Subjects	as Direct Objects
bed	camp
camp	campus
church	church
college	court
court	downtown
home	hospital
jail	jail
prison	kindergarten
school	prison
town	(high) school
	seminary
	town
	work

My goal was to explore how much of the Activity, Familiarity, or Generic sense is tied to PP position and how much is due to the bare noun form itself. In Section 2.1.2 I showed that the implicated meanings are conveyed via conventional and not conversational implicature, partly due to a speaker's inability to use an utterance having the same conventional force in place of the bare forms without losing the implicated information – that is, Grice's test of non-detachability. Since the implicatures of these bare singular NPs are not non-detachable, their ability to be used to create implicatures is clearly tied to their form. It is not clear, how-

ever, whether these bare forms keep their implicated meaning in all NP positions.

### 3.1 Social/ Geographical Spaces as Subjects

We have seen that as the object in a PP, a bare singular NP can be used to either indicate a specific familiar referent, to refer generically to a whole kind, or to be used in a non-referential Activity PP. In this section I will show that in subject position bares singular NPs are not used to convey the same range of meanings as that they do as prepositional objects. One major difference is that as subjects, bare nouns are not used to convey the deictically determined Familiarity sense; instead, they are used only in ways that don't pick out an individual referent. Thus, they may be used to convey an activity done at the place, used as synecdoche (using a more inclusive term to refer to one aspect of the location), used generically —referring to an institutional type or natural kind, or used metalinguistically. These uses are shown in (91)-(94).

(91) Activity sense:

- a. **Church** is a comfort, all right, but your water and your sewer, those are necessities.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 209)  
**= attending church**

- b. He didn't want to give the impression that “**prison** was only for those not socially advantaged.”  
(Arthur S. Hayes, “Ex-Fed Official Gets Jail Term For Data Leak,” *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 14, 1989)  
**= serving time for a crime**
- c. **Home** should have felt like a sanctuary after the night’s events, but I hesitated outside the front door, key in hand, for something like a minute.  
(Greg Egan, *Distress*, New York: HarperPrism, 1995, p.13)  
**= arriving home**
- d. It seems **college** isn't what it should be. I refer to the attire worn by the students.  
(Brown Corpus, Aug. 4, 1961)  
**= attending college**

## (92) Generic subject:

- a. I started going to church for the first time in my life about four years ago. Since then, **church** has become very important in my life.  
(Stephen Collins quoted in article by Bart Mills, “All That Love Leaves Cast in Hug ‘Heaven,’” *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 24, 1996, sect. 5, p. 5)
- b. **Prison** is much different than movies and TV portray it to be.  
(*All Things Considered*, Oct. 19, 1997)

## (93) Synecdoche:

If only there were a way to connect air-conditioning to health or education... But **school** is out, and Mother thinks air-conditioning causes colds.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 133)  
**= the school year**

## (94) Metalinguistic use:

- a. For many of us, **school** doesn't summon up happy memories.  
(Roy Harvey, "Chicago Books Reviewed," *Chicago Books in Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, Fall 1996, p.13)  
**= the word "school"**
- b. **Home** becomes a hotel room, a trench, the arms of someone you don't know, a bar, a taxi. Me, I made the clean break and accepted the fact years ago.  
(Ian R. MacLeod. "Swimmers Beneath the Skin," *Asimov's Science Fiction*, Oct/ Nov. 1996, p. 89)  
**= what serves the function of "home"**

Because bare singular NPs (of both 'Familiarity type and 'Activity type') appear in subject positions, but can't pick out a concrete identifiable location, it becomes clear that two factors interact to prevent certain bare forms from appearing in subject position. On the one hand, the inability of certain predicates to pick out a concrete subject makes sentences such as (95) infelicitous, but allows the uses in (96).

- (95) Predicates that take subjects with concrete referents  
 a. #**Prison** was busy.  
 b. #**Stage** was filled with ropes and boxes.  
 c. #**Home** is on fire!  
 d. #**Work** is looking very dusty.
- (96) Predicates that take events or durations as subjects  
 a. **Prison** taught her self-reliance.  
 b. **College** brought out her tendency to procrastinate.  
 c. **Work** seemed to go on forever.  
 d. **School** doesn't sound very good to me.

Then in addition, even if a predicate does allow a concrete referent, the subject cannot be instantiated as a bare singular form; when in subject position bare forms are interpreted non-spatially, as sense extensions of their location denotation.

The sentences in (95) require a concrete location sense for the subject, which is what would be provided with the Familiarity sense. In (96), on the other hand, the sentence allows subjects that name a period of time or an activity rather than a point in space, which being in prison and attending college both provide. What emerges, then, is that it is not subjecthood that is a barrier, but being the subject of a predicate with subcategorization requirements of naming a point in space. Other noun interpretations, however, with less concrete extensions from the location meaning, as in (96), may suffice.

### **3.2 Social/ Geographical Spaces as Direct Objects**

As a direct object, a bare singular NP can have the Familiarity, Activity, or Synecdoche uses shown in (97)-(99).

## (97) Familiarity sense:

- a. If you'd really rather have a Buick, don't leave **home** without the American Express card.  
(Melinda Grenier Guiles, "Buick, American Express Link Up Their Cars and Cards," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 2, 1989)  
**= your home**
- b. They—whichever they is—think I've left **town** and I want to keep it that way.  
(Tony Hillerman, *The Fly on the Wall*, 1971, New York: HarperCollins, p. 171)  
**= my town/ this town**

## (98) Activity sense:

- a. Before government regulations... children ruined their health in ghastly sweatshops, instead of attending **school**  
(Steve Frederick, "Good Old Days," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 18, 1996, Sect. 1, p. 18).  
**= attending schools as students**
- b. The author deserves thanks for insuring that Manson will undoubtedly never leave **jail**, but the book that maintains his infamy also maintains his fame.  
(Alex Ross, "The Shock of the True," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 19, 1996, p. 71)  
**= stop being a prisoner**
- c. [X] believes that he may be able to leave **hospital** at the end of the week.  
(BBC World News, broadcast, Oct. 8, 1996)  
**= stop being a patient**

## (99) Synecdoche:

- a. He told everyone at the beginning he might cut **church** very short.  
(D. Stvan, phone conversation, Nov. 28, 1994)

**= church service**

- b. A long drive during which they all talked about **college** and how much harder it was than high school.  
(Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days*, New York: Viking, 1985, p. 239)  
**= college courses/ college study**

In being used to convey an Activity sense, the object is also generic; these constructions are similar to noun incorporation (cf. Mithun 1983, 1986; Di Sciullo & Williams 1987; Rosen 1989) in which the verb and object act like a morphologically complex verb. With *leave*, the activity done at the location is evoked; with other verbs that name their own activity (as in (98a), the noun is just a kind-referring generic.

After looking at the distribution of bare singular NPs, we see that, as subjects, these bare singular NPs are not used to convey the more specific Familiarity sense; instead, they are used to convey information about the kind of place denoted by the noun. However, as direct objects, these bare nouns can be used to convey either of the three senses (Familiarity, Activity, generic) that were found in PP uses. Again we see that the Familiarity forms are more restricted—earlier we saw that there are fewer Familiarity NP types, here we see that they are also used in fewer positions.

Originally, I had hoped to find either a syntactic test that would support the separation of bare singular NPs into Familiarity NPs and Activity NPs, or evidence that syntactic position itself reinforced these meaning differences. It turns out that both Familiarity-only nouns (such as *town*, *home*, and *campus*) and Activity-only nouns (e.g., *college* and *prison*) showed up in other NP positions. But they are not used to convey the same meanings in all of these cases. Bare singular NPs as subjects cannot be used to pick out both specific and non-specific referents. In this position bare singular NPs are not used to convey the Familiarity sense; instead, all the nouns found in this position are used only in ways that are non-specific. As for bare singular NPs serving as direct objects, these can be used to convey either the specific Familiarity sense, or one of the other non-specific senses (including Activity, kind referring generic, and synecdoche senses).

Krifka et al. (1995:73) show that bare plurals are interpreted as indefinite unless they appear as subjects in sentences where the subject acts as the topic, or as the object of a stative verb, so it would not be surprising if the bare singular forms showed a similar subject-object asymmetry for English. This chapter shows that indeed, the interpretation of a bare singular NP varies in referentiality depending on its position.



Looking for bare nouns that follow a spatial preposition, follow the verb *leave*, or serve as a subject has aided in identifying those location nouns that can serve as full NPs. The meaning a speaker intends to convey by using the bare singular form, however, reflects the speaker's beliefs about community membership of the discourse participants and is reflected in the speaker's placement of the NP within the sentence.

### **3.3 Determining the Status of Social/ Geographical Space NPs**

Because we have observed pragmatic distinctions conveyed by Social/ Geographical Space nominals, we might wonder if there are syntactic differences that reflect this. We saw in Chapter 2 that N-bars, not nouns or NPs, are the unit assigned the feature +CT. Following distributional evidence such as that in chapter 2, we saw that bare singular nominals are not nouns, but some higher projection of nominal. At this point let us consider whether it is possible to determine whether bare forms are N-bars or NPs, and whether bare singulars with different pragmatic uses have different syntactic structures.

#### **3.3.1 Nominal Constituent Distribution**

For most nominals we could check the projection level by looking at co-occurrence with particular plural or singular forms of articles and modifi-

ers. The lack of such indicators makes these tests inapplicable in the case of bare singular nominals, however, since they are defined by their very lack of determiners, plural markers, and modifiers. Recall, however, that the diagnostics in (20)-(22) of Chapter 2 showed that these words had the distribution of a maximal projection. While I spoke earlier of Soja's term 'NP-type nouns', to name words that had the distribution of noun phrases rather than nouns. We see from the examples in (100) that some bare forms have full NP distribution, since the bare form can take the place of a phrase containing a determiner or possessor:

(100) Subject position (Activity senses only)

- a. His time at the lake went by too quickly.
- b. The summer went by too quickly.
- c. Camp went by too quickly that year.
- d. # Car went by too quickly.

(101) a. #His the time at the lake went by too quickly.  
 b. # The/ #his camp went by too quickly that year.  
 c. The/ his car went by too quickly.

In (100) bare nouns used as subjects fill the position of an expression containing a determiner or possessor (as seen in 101), and so must be considered NPs. As seen in (100d), regular count nominals cannot serve as subjects in bare form if they are nouns that allow an event reading.

However, not all bare singular nominals have this full NP distribution. The nominals used in Familiarity Implicature keep the same meaning when a determiner is added, indicating that those bare referring expressions used only in the Familiarity sense are N-bars:

(102) Familiarity only

- a. They would not be in town for Memorial Day.
- b. They would not be in this town for Memorial Day.
- c. They would not in their own town for Memorial Day.

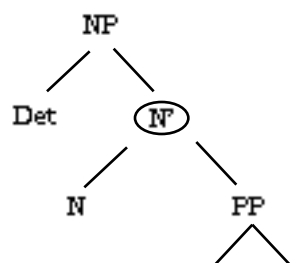
Regular count nominals, which are also referring expressions, must have either an article or a possessor, (as seen in (103):

- (103) a. #They would be at family picnic.  
 b. They would be at the family picnic.  
 c. They would be at that family picnic.

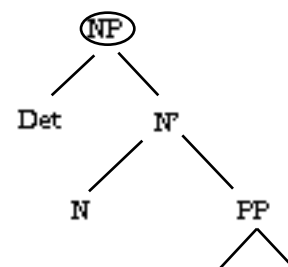
Both Activity and Familiarity forms of bare singular nominals should be distinguished from Ns, but they are not nominals of the same projection level. Looking at the trees in (104) we can see that the level at which a nominal is considered to be a mass or count form is as the complement to Det—as an N-bar. Some bare singular nominals act like N-bars, but others have the distribution of constituents containing determiners or possessors—that is, they are full NPs.

(104)

a. unit where count/ mass is marked  
and unit of Familiarity NPs



b. unit representing  
Activity NPs



### 3.3.2 *One* Substitution

As we have seen, it is hard to show syntactically whether a bare singular nominal is in fact an N-bar or an NP because the bare form prohibits many syntactic tests involving modifiers. Another possibility, then, might be to check the meaning created when attempting to substitute *one* for a bare singular nominal since we know that *one* only felicitously substitutes for a count NP. As shown in the examples in (105), varying degrees of acceptability arise when substituting *one* for a bare singular form:

- (105)a. \* I was at school with him and Tom was at one with him too.  
 b. I was at a school with him, and Tom was at one with him too.  
 c. ? Tom attended church in Iowa and I attended one in Florida.  
 d. Tom attended a church in Iowa and I attended one in Detroit.  
 e. He was in prison for six years, then in another one for one year.  
 f. There was no store in town, only in the one five miles away.  
 g. The store is not far from campus, the one I attend, not Jeff's.

Several substitution issues are conflated in (105). First, we can see evidence of two different pro-form senses for *one* (cf. Halliday & Hassan 1976:88-104). One is a pro-NP and one is pro-N-bar, as seen in (106).

(106)

- a. I bought a car and she's going to buy one too.  
pro-NP    one=a car
- b. I need a car, and that's the one I want.  
pro-N'    one=car

Thus, the proform *one* in (105b) and (105d) is a Pro-NP, while *one* in (105e), (105f) and (105g) is a Pro-N-bar.

In addition, while there seems to be a contrast between the ability of *one* to substitute for a bare singular nominal in (105a) and for an articulated noun in (105b), other semantic constraints on *one* may make the pro-form's use inappropriate. Besides replacing two different kinds of nominal constituents, as seen in (106), there is a difference in the definiteness of the two *ones*. In (106a) *one* is an indefinite non-specific use, meaning any one item out of the category 'car,' just as the NP *a car* would be.

With PPs used in Familiarity Implicature, the bare singular nominal is used in definite reference, so when *one* is used without a definite article, in the nonspecific indefinite sense (as seen in 106a), it is inappropriate to fill in for Familiarity uses. For example, in (107) the word *campus* is

used to mean *my campus* and so *one*, an indefinite non-specific form, is inappropriate because a particular campus has already been introduced, though substitution by other definite proforms, as seen in (107b), is grammatical.

(107) Familiarity Use

- a.\* I left campus right after class, but he didn't leave one till later.
- b. I left campus right after class, but he didn't leave it/ there till later.

Moreover, other elements of anaphora may be demonstrated in (108) making a reading with *one* felicitous for another reason.

(108) Activity Uses

- a. Her father was in prison for murdering her mother, [but now he is in one for forgery.]
- b. If a company is charged with doing wrong with the nation's money, that company's top executives can sit in prison —[one without a sauna]—while the case lumbers through an unwieldy legal system.
- c. If the chimpanzees romped on stage, [the toddlers wanted to romp on one too. ]
- d. If your kids are in daycare, make sure it's one that stresses hand washing.

In (108a) the second underlined term makes sense because of the referential bridging triggered by an earlier predicate (cf. bridging in Halli-

day & Hasan 1976, Clark & Marshall 1981; and ‘inferrables’ in Prince 1981, Ward & Birner 1993, Birner & Ward 1994, Lambrecht 1994). That is, just as an NP like *my house* can set the stage for the felicitous use of *the door*, in (108a) the Activity sense of *in prison*, meaning to be imprisoned, makes relevant an actual prison location. Likewise in (108d), the mention of daycare service, triggered by the PP *in daycare*, makes accessible a daycare center referent.

The uses of *one* are summarized in Table 17.

**Table 17**  
***One* Substitution Senses**

<b>Type of antecedent</b>	<b>Type of <i>one</i></b>	<b>Judgement</b>
<b>W</b> activity sense	inferred definite	ok
familiarity sense	definite <i>one</i>	ok
familiarity sense	indefinite <i>one</i>	*
familiarity sense	inferred definite	? redundant

We can see, then, that the *one* diagnostic actually gives us evidence of several kinds of interacting information: whether the constituent contains a noun with a count sense, whether the constituent is an N-bar or

an NP (but not an N), whether the constituent has an indefinite reading, or whether the replaced constituent has a meaning created by referential bridging from an earlier predicate. In other words, because *one* is used in a number of senses, the judgments in (105) and (108) do not establish one syntactic constituent that is replaced by the word *one*. This reinforces our sense that Activity and Familiarity NPs are different; they are syntactically distinct just as we saw that they were pragmatically distinct. So, when referring to the whole group I will call them bare singular noun phrases, but we now know that some are N-bars while others are NPs.

### **3.4 Recording Media NPs as Subjects and Objects**

While the bulk of the bare singular NPs in the corpus are Social/ Geographical Spaces (55 out of 101 NP types), it is also worth noting the distributional behavior of another set of bare NPs, the Recording Media expressions. Since they do not have a human locatum (although sometimes the recorded image referent is the depiction of a human), it comes as no surprise that these PPs are not used to implicate information about the activity of the locatum. Although they name the place where information is stored or displayed, these bare singular forms also are not used deictically to specify the particular television, radio, or cassette on



which the information is located—as in the Familiarity sense. As noted in Chapter 3, however, an ambiguity can occur in PPs, concerning whether the locatum is the entity originally recorded or a depiction of it. Bare Recording Media NPs were also shown to refer to the apparatus and the means of broadcasting. None of the bare singular NPs found in subject position are used in an object-referring sense (which would be the apparatus sense, such as *television set*). For this, an article is required with the noun, as seen in (109).

(109) Subject position—apparatus sense prohibited:

- a. **The television** sat in the corner.
- b. \***Television** sat in the corner.

However, bare NP subjects can be used to convey a sense of a professional field (i.e., the television industry) or to name the media/ broadcast format, as seen in (110).

- (110) a. **Television** came to India in 1965, when black-and-white broadcasts began in New Delhi.  
(Ajay Singh, “Indian Government's Use of Television Sparks Controversy As Elections Near,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 13, 1989)

- b. "In a country with our measure of literacy, **television** is becoming a serious impediment in the way of free and fair elections," says Lal Krishna Advani, an opposition-party leader and a former minister of information and broadcasting. (Ajay Singh, "Indian Government's Use of Television Sparks Controversy As Elections Near," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 13, 1989)
- c. It's time we recognized that **television** is educational, whether or not we like what it teaches. (David Hechler, "Whittle Foes Miss Medium's Message," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 1, 1989)

In direct object position, too, while the NP might generally name the means of listening (e.g., *we heard the news on radio*), or name the industry, the lack of article does not allow an object-referring sense:

(111) Direct object--media format:

- a. It was taught by a teacher who shocked his colleagues by confessing right from the top that he actually likes (gasp) **TV**. (David Hechler, "Whittle Foes Miss Medium's Message," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 1, 1989)
- b. A sizable portion of illiterate Indians now rely on **television** for news they used to hear third or fourth hand, if at all. (Ajay Singh, "Indian Government's Use of Television Sparks Controversy As Elections Near," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 13, 1989)

(112) Direct object—profession sense:

After stints in such diverse fields as mechanical engineering, computer programming, real estate and advertising, he was looking for a fast-growing business and settled on **video**. (Bob Hagerty, "Video Firm Fast-Forwards Into Ripening U.S. Market," *The Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 25, 1989)

(113) Direct Object—object-referring sense prohibited:

- a. She wanted a video to watch at home.
- b. \* She wanted video to watch at home.
- c. She wanted cable (to watch) at home.

Table 18 shows which of the Recording Media NPs can be used in subject or object positions.

**Table 18**  
**Recording Media Terms as Subject and Direct Object**

<b>Bare Token</b>	<b>Subject Position</b>	<b>DO Position</b>
cable	industry	industry/service
*cassette	-----	----
*CD	-----	----
*disk	-----	----
*film	-----	----
*line	-----	----
radio	media/industry	media/industry
radar	media	media
*record	-----	
*screen	-----	
tape	-----	media sense
television/TV	industry sense	media/industry
video	industry sense	industry sense
*videocassette	-----	-----
videotape	media sense	media sense

What we can conclude from examining the Recording Media data is that, as with Social/ Geographical Spaces, in subject and direct object position these bare singular NP forms cannot be used to refer to a specified concrete object, but can only be used for more extended metaphoric senses of the nouns. (Cf. Table 8, count noun uses of media terms.)

#### 4      **Good Bare Nouns and Better Bare Nouns: The Influence of Domain of Use**

One last point related to bare singular nominals and context concerns the pragmatic and perhaps also stylistic influence of the domain or genre within which an utterance occurs. While I showed in Chapter 3 that bare singular nouns can be grouped according to shared semantic features (religious building, educational building, nautical setting, etc.), the domain or genre in which the bare singular NPs are uttered also has an influence. Within subcommunities, use of the bare singular NPs can reinforce, or even create, shared world information. While many of the PPs (e.g., *in school*, *at camp*, *at home*) are quite widely used by most speakers, certain PPs are only found in particular domains. For example, *in theater* and *in country*, with the sense of being on assignment or on a tour of duty, are generally only spoken by members of the military (and militarily structured groups such as the Peace Corps). Examples specific to this domain are shown in (114), which relates a Viet Nam veteran's recollection of the war:

- (114) a. "And there was the Armed Forces Radio too." He paused and gazed dreamily at a balloon hanging from the basketball hoop. "When you're **in country**, there's so little connection to the World, but those songs—that was as close as we came to a real connection."  
(Bobbie Ann Mason, *In Country*, New York: Harper & Row, p. 111)

- b. We expect to have 1400 police officers **in theater**.  
(*All Things Considered*, Jan. 29, 1996)

Two other PPs restricted to a certain genre are *off world* and *off planet*, typically found only in science fiction settings. Their use is attested in discourse communities that assume that interplanetary travel is an everyday event, making the particular world or planet referred to clear, by means of Familiarity Implicature:

- (115) a. Inadvertently Ken had lengthened his stride in the Corridor and trodden on the heels of a citizen in front of him. “Your number?” the man rasped out indignantly. “I’ll be **off-world** before you can bring it to Court,” Ken replied in a loud, carefree voice.  
(Anne McCaffrey, *Decision at Doona*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1969, p. 10)
- b. They’re going to try to blast their way **off world**.  
(*Return of the Jedi*, radio broadcast, WBEZ, Jan. 13, 1997)
- c. Some of this I understand, but not the part about ice interfering with takeoffs. We’ve been **offplanet** nearly ten months. Has something unusual happened?  
(Suzette Haden Elgin, *Earthsong: Native Tongue III*, DAW Books: New York, 1994, p. 121)
- d. She didn’t have much crystal, so every speck she had cut was precious to her. If she didn’t earn enough credit to get **off-planet** this time...Killashandra ground her teeth as she hurried her carton into the Sorting Shed.  
(Anne McCaffrey, *Killashandra*, New York: Del Rey, 1985, pp. 1-2)

Many real-life workplaces can also serve as subcommunities whose membership is partly marked by the use of Familiarity and Activity implicatures to designate certain work-related places. Consider the examples in (116):

- (116) a. I've been **in kitchen** since I was sixteen years old.  
(Chef! (c) 1993, PBS broadcast 1996)
- b. Senator Paul Simon joins me **in studio** this morning.  
(Mara Tapp, *The Mara Tapp Show*, WBEZ, May 6, 1996)

The example in (116a) is from a British sitcom; the character speaking is a professional chef. Here his profession and his hearer's knowledge that it is his profession allows him to use the PP *in kitchen* to create an Activity Implicature conveying that he has been working as a cook (and not, for example, a plumber) in various kitchens. In (116b), *in studio* is often used by radio hosts to indicate that a guest is present live in the studio with them, rather than being interviewed by phone. While on the one hand *in studio* is a manner adverbial (e.g., contrasting with *by phone*), it is also a Familiarity use, indicating that the guest is in our studio/ in this studio.

The examples in (117) are used by workers in the hospitality industries:

- (117) a. Here's a package of things to do **on property**.  
(Check in clerk at a resort in Cape Cod, overheard on July 28, 1996)

- b. For Disney's employees, however, this is only a rough distinction; their perception is that anyplace they might go "**on property**" is always a workplace, a stage, whether or not they are actually at work.  
(The Project on Disney, *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995, p. 114)

In both examples in (117), the speaker is referring to the particular property maintained by their employer, not property that the speaker owns, but the entire park or resort complex in which the employees work, and in which guests might enjoy themselves.

In the military, among co-workers at a workplace, and within a science fiction story are three typical domains in which a smaller community sense is created—a shared world which includes the speaker and hearer. The speaker's sense of the hearer's Familiarity with the location plays a large part in determining what makes a good bare singular NP. The use of these phrases in certain domains may even coerce the expected meaning of shared community membership, even in the absence of actual past shared community membership. That is, it can be a signal that the speaker considers the hearer to share the same assumptions. It is likely that, as with *on property*, or *in clinic*, many workplace communities create special anchored senses of common words with more traditional uses.

## **5. Conclusion to Chapter 4**

Bare singular NPs are used in all NP positions. In PPs, some of these NPs are used non-referentially to convey information about the locatum through Activity Implicature, while other PPs contain bare NPs used to particularize a location referent that is already known to the hearer, through Familiarity Implicature. These PPs can also be used as kind-referring generic expressions. In subject and object position, bare forms include more metaphoric senses than they have in PPs, but are restricted to uses with nonspecific referents. Because they are limited to non-referential senses when used as subjects, clearly some aspect of the subject position limits the referring ability of these NPs.

The pragmatic importance of bare singular NPs arises not from the detailing of a set of nouns in unexpected collocations, but rather in their connection to both deictically determined reference functions and types of non-referential information, which are signalled by the lack of an expected article. These types of information, which mark a location word as having a non-locating function, show up in other languages too, although the morphosyntactic markers of the functions vary. These cross-linguistic aspects will be explored in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Cross-linguistic Methods for Marking NPs

#### 1. Introduction: Seeking Non-English Data

Because speakers of different languages have different sets of language-specific syntactic options available to them, we would expect there to also be language-specific constraints on the mapping of discourse function to syntactic constructions. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that similar syntactic forms may be used for different pragmatic purposes in different languages or dialects (cf. Prince 1981, 1986; Epstein 1994; Ward to appear). In order to explore the ways that other languages might express the functions served in English by bare forms in PPs, I examined similar types of locative contrasts from other languages. Through queries on the LINGUIST listserv and discussions with native speakers, I collected locative PP uses that paralleled the functions of my English examples. I chose as a starting point the contrasts in which the lack of an article before certain singular count nouns inside of PPs created an Activity meaning that was not present when an article was there, as seen in (1)-(3).

- (1) a. to be at church = to be taking part in the service there  
 b. to be at the church = to merely be in or near the building,  
 for any purpose
- (2) a. to be in school = to be attending or teaching a class  
 b. to be in a school = to be located in a school—could apply to  
 any person (visitor, parent, janitor, voter)  
 or object physically inside the building
- (3) a. to be in prison = to be held in a prison for committing a crime  
 b. to be in the prison = to be in the prison building for any reason  
 (e.g., as visitor, cook, weapon, etc.)

The (a) examples, which lack articles in the NPs, are used to convey a sense of the locatum's activity at the location. Since I showed in chapter 4 that these meanings are created by Activity Implicature, these (a) examples can be said to convey the Activity sense. In contrast, the meanings in the (b) examples, which contain articles in the NP, are used to convey the more straightforward locative meaning of placing or positioning the locatum; thus these articulated forms can be said to convey the Location sense.

## **2. Five Methods of Marking Location NPs for Contrasting Information**

In looking at data from other languages I was hoping to find similar examples of the Activity vs. Location variations in PPs, involving the use of articles or perhaps using some other morphosyntactic ways of marking the NPs for different semantic/ pragmatic functions. And

indeed I found numerous types of examples that showed either marked locative syntax (similar to the anarthrous English constructions) or dual meanings for locative forms with the same syntactic structures. Collecting those examples for which I found a correlation between the syntactic forms and the meanings, I began to track the ways in which the meaning contrast between the Activity and Location sense of PPs is expressed.

Five patterns were found. First, in languages that require articles to be used with common nouns, the presence or lack of an article is a widely used method to show locative and non-locative senses with location nouns. Second, some languages use constructions in which the article is not entirely eliminated; instead, one of the senses is represented through a contraction of the article with the preposition, while in the other sense the full forms of the article and preposition appear. As a third method, contrasting selections of synonymous spatial prepositions revealed a similar sense shift (sometimes occurring along with the article contrast, sometimes alone). The fourth method was found in languages that don't use articles; here the use of locative case marker as opposed to some other case marker on the same location nouns shows the contrast in question. Finally, whether the sentence contains a verb expressing position or direction, rather than a verb with a non-spatial

sense, can also influence the number of senses of the locative PPs. Sections 2.1 through 2.5 detail the data from the languages for which semantic contrasts were found, arranged according to the type of syntactic contrast. Section 2.6 summarizes my findings. (See Appendix B for a summary of the methods of contrast with representative examples.)

### 2.1 Lack of Articles with Count Nouns

In a number of Romance languages, as in English, singular count nouns normally require determiners; and just as we have seen in English, these languages include a set of exceptions, bare location NPs that occur inside of PPs. For example, Graziana (1987) notes that in Italian, “the preposition alone is used in common expressions referring to places and rooms of a house” (p. 53). Examples of such forms are shown in (4).

- (4)
- |    |                      |                                   |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. | <i>in campagna</i>   | ‘in, to the country’              |
| b. | <i>in montagna</i>   | ‘in, to the mountains’            |
| c. | <i>in città</i>      | ‘in, to the city/ town, downtown’ |
| d. | <i>in paese</i>      | ‘in, to the village’              |
| e. | <i>in camera</i>     | ‘in, to the bedroom’              |
| f. | <i>in salotto</i>    | ‘in, to the living room’          |
| g. | <i>in biblioteca</i> | ‘in, at, to the library’          |
| h. | <i>in giardino</i>   | ‘in, to the garden’               |
| i. | <i>in chiesa</i>     | ‘in, to the church’               |
| j. | <i>a teatro</i>      | ‘at, to the theater’              |
- (examples from Graziana 1987, p. 53)

To see whether these anarthrous forms were representative of either the

Activity or the Location sense, I queried a native speaker of Italian. He reported that with location NPs one does not usually use an article, “unless one wants to specify a particular location” (Lucio Chiappetti, p.c.). My informant felt that the choice of when to use an article is quite similar to the situation in English. Pairs of Italian examples with and without articles are listed in (5) - (10).

- (5) a. *È in prigione.*  
 3rd-sing-BE in/ at prison  
 ‘He is in prison.’
- b. *È nella prigione.*  
 3rd-sing-BE in/ at+the prison  
 ‘He is in the prison.’

(5a), without an article, is used to convey that the locatum is condemned to prison—it does not matter where the prison is; while (5b) is appropriate when, for example, the locatum is in a castle and within that particular building he is in the prison and not in the kitchen, the court, the cellar or anywhere else. So here speakers’ judgments of (5) match up with the meanings shown for similar sentences in English: (5a), using the PP without an article conveys the Activity sense, while (5b), which uses an article, conveys the Location sense. In addition, the articulated form in Italian is used for a kind of specification which is slightly different than the Familiarity use seen in English. (5b) may be used to indi-

cate that, of the other places in which the locatum could be, it is the prison in which he will be found.

The examples in (6) show a similar contrast, but with different types of locatums:

- (6) a. *È in chiesa.*  
 3rd-sing-BE in/ at church  
 'He is at church.'
- b. *È nella chiesa.*  
 3rd-sing-BE in/ at+the church  
 ? 'He is at the church.'  
 'It is in the church.'

(6a), which lacks an article, is used to indicate that the locatum went to a church for a mass or ceremony—the Activity sense. For (6b), my native speaker informant found it difficult to create an example using *he* as a subject, but found it more felicitous to say “*It is in the church,*” when, for example, talking of a painting which is in the church proper and not on the porch, or on the outer walls, etc.

My speculation on speakers’ difficulty in using *he* as the subject for (6b) relates to the discourse requirements for Activity implicature; when a person is the locatum he or she is typically in the church for the purpose of a religious service, while a non-human object such as a painting need

not be construed as participating in the church “activity.” To investigate this possibility, I asked my Italian informant which form would be used in a context where a group of people are taking an architectural tour of a church. In such cases, I wanted to know whether a speaker who was referring to a tour guide (a person in the church for a non-typical activity) by saying, “He is in church right now,” would do so by using an NP with or without an article in Italian.

Speakers felt they would use *e' in chiesa* for visiting a church for any reason. “The other form will not be “wrong,” but will sound unusual” (Lucio Chiapetti p.c.). In some cases, however, it may sound less unusual: if talking of a tourist group, one could say “*il gruppo e' nella chiesa (e non nel palazzo)*”—‘the group is in the church, and not in the palace,’ if, for example, they are visiting a monumental complex comprising a church and other buildings, that is, if the church was one of several possible co-hyponym locations.

In Italian, then, the presence of an article in a PP not only functions to indicate an actual location (the Location sense), but also shows a contrast with other possible locations. So, here the use of the article is more like the Familiarity sense created by the bare form in English in

that it specifies the particular instance of a location that is relevant to a given utterance, although it differs in that it is not necessarily tied to the discourse participants, but instead contrasts the place with other types of locations. All three of these contrast possibilities are shown in the Italian examples in (7).

- (7) a. *Andava a scuola.*  
 3rd sing. go (imp.) to school  
 ‘She went to school.’ Activity sense
- b. *Andó a scuola*  
 3rd sing. go (pret.) to school  
 ‘She went to school.’ Familiarity sense
- c. *Andava/andó alla scuola.*  
 3rd sing. go to+the school  
 ‘She went to the school.’ Specified Co-hyponym sense

In (7a) the imperfect form is used to indicate that the locatum used to go to school every day, i.e., that she was a schoolgirl, while in (7b), with the preterite form, the utterance is used to indicate that on a particular day she went to her usual school.<sup>1</sup> Thus depending on the verb tense, one of two senses can be conveyed by the bare singular NP’s form—the Activity sense and the Familiarity sense. The form in (7c), on the other hand, is

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1. The three possible interpretations show that in Italian, as in English, certain location words, such as *scuola/school*, allow both Activity and Familiarity readings (cf. Ch. 4, Table 11 on p. 177). In this case, both the going-to-school activity and the particular known school of the locatum can be indicated by the bare form.



used to indicate that the locatum went to that particular building, and not to another building type; this holds true for either past tense form.

So in Italian, we see that two kinds of locations are distinguished formally, in addition to indicating the Activity sense. There is a contrast between a deictic, familiar form where the school is one out of a set of the same location types—the one connected to the locatum; for example, it might be used to indicate “her school, as opposed to my school, your school, or someone else’s school”; this use is also seen in English. In addition, Italian uses a form that picks one from a set of co-hyponym place types, for example, that chooses the kitchen from among the porch, the bathroom, the bedroom, etc. This co-hyponym selection is shown again in (8).

- (8) a. *in cucina*  
       in kitchen  
       ‘in the kitchen’
- b. *nella cucina*  
       in/ at+the kitchen  
       ‘in the kitchen’

The example in (8a) is the usual way to say something is in the (only) kitchen of the house. The example in (8b) would be used more often to indicate that, for example, a particular appliance is in the kitchen and

not in the bathroom, though *in cucina* will also work for both meanings. Likewise, (9a) is the usual way to use the word for *garden*, while (9b) is used to mean ‘in that particular garden’ or ‘in the garden and not elsewhere.’

- (9) a. *in giardino*  
in/ at garden  
‘in the garden’
- b. *nel giardino*  
in/ at+the garden  
‘in the garden’

Not only English and Italian show a meaning difference involving a lack of article. The following French construction from Dutra and Ross (n.d.) shows a correlation between implicated meaning and lack of article use:

- (10) a. *Roger est à table*  
Roger is at table  
‘Roger is eating’ [Dutra & Ross (26a)]
- b. *Roger est à la table*  
Roger is at the table  
‘Roger is [located] at the table’ [Dutra & Ross (26a)]
- c. \**Roger lave table*  
Roger washes table  
‘Roger washes the table’ [Dutra & Ross (26b)]
- d. *Roger lave la table*  
Roger washes the table  
‘Roger washes the table’ [Dutra & Ross (26b)]

Here again the (a) example, which lacks an article in the PP, is used to convey the Activity sense, while (10b), in which the PP contains an article, conveys only the Location sense. Dutra and Ross attribute the difference in article use in the (a) and (b) examples of (10) to whether or not the activity being portrayed is the one most commonly associated with the location. Thus (10a) contrasts with (10c) in that a count noun like *table* cannot normally appear without the article unless it is in a circumstance where the prototypical activity is involved; eating at a table can be conveyed without an article, but the act of washing a table cannot. While I agree that only certain prototypical actions can be referred to through Activity Implicature, it is important to note that using the noun in a PP also appears to be necessary to generate this sense. Thus (10c), where the NP is the direct object, differs in more than prototypicality with the example in (10a).

*At/ to table* also appears in British English with this same Activity sense, (as illustrated in (11a) and (11b) below), and is found, less often, in American dialects as well, as shown in (11c):

- (11) a. Now he sits **at table** with his friends Alix and Brian Bowen, and their friend Liz Headland, rolling himself a thin cigarette with thin fingers, over the remains of an apple crumble, his head tilted quizzically to one side as he listens to Liz's apprehensions about her autumn trip to Japan.  
(Margaret Drabble, *The Radiant Way*, New York: Ivy Books, 1987, p. 156)
- b. The accidents of conversation; the simple habits which regulated even such a little thing as the position of our places **at table**... every one of these trifles, and many more, combined to fold us together in the same domestic atmosphere, and to lead us both insensibly to the same hopeless end.  
(Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White*, 1860)
- c. Constantine joined them all **at table**. Mushroom quiche was the opener, already there.  
(R.A. Lafferty, *Apocalypses*, Los Angeles: Pinnacle Books, 1977, p. 6)

A number of Germanic languages also exhibit contrasting constructions involving the presence or lack of an article with count nouns in PPs. Dutch and West Frisian, both spoken in regions of the Netherlands, show a parallel contrast to the English contrast in (2) (repeated here as 12). The Dutch and Frisian examples are shown in (13) and (14).

- (12) a. to be in school = to be attending or teaching a class
- b. to be in a school = to be located in a school—could apply to any person (visitor, parent, janitor, voter) or object physically inside the building

- (13) a. Dutch: *op school zitten*  
to/ in/ at school sit  
'to be attending a class; to be a schoolboy/ girl'
- b. WF: *op skoalle sitte*  
to/ in/ at school sit  
'to be attending a class; to be a schoolboy/ girl'
- (14) a. Dutch: *op de school zitten*  
on the school sit  
'to sit on top of the school building'
- b. WF: *op 'e skoalle sitte*  
on the school sit  
'to sit on top of the school building'  
(examples from Henk Wolf p.c.)

In Dutch and West Frisian, the Activity sense is again reflected separately from the Location sense in PPs, and again, it is shown by the lack of article, as was seen in the (a) examples of (13) and (14).

## 2.2. Contraction

The second construction type involving location NP senses for which a contrast shows up is the full form of the article and preposition combination as opposed to a reduced or contracted combination. Contraction is found in many languages; it is sometimes obligatory (e.g., *a* and *de* with the definite articles in French) or may only show up in certain phonological circumstances (Italian, Yiddish); it is, however, those cases

where contraction is an optional use determined by meaning that are of interest here.

A Portuguese example from Dutra and Ross (n.d.) demonstrates one form of this contrast:

- (15) a. *Antônio está trabalhando em casa*  
 Antonio is working in house  
 ‘Antonio is working at [his] home’ [=Dutra & Ross (25a)]
- b. *Antônio está trabalhando na casa*  
 ‘Antônio is working in+the house’  
 ‘Antonio is working in the house’ [=Dutra & Ross (25a)]

In (15a) the implicated Familiarity sense is conveyed by the anarthrous form, while the Location sense is conveyed by the contracted form in (15b).<sup>2</sup>

In German, too, there is a morphophonemic reduction of preposition and article (e.g., *zum* from *zu* ‘to’ + *dem* ‘the’ [dative masculine singular] and

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2. An area for further investigation would be to check the range of nouns which this marking can accompany. Not just in Portuguese, but in many languages the word for *home* seems to occur in bare form with exceptional meanings (cf. Fillmore 1991, as well as the very small selection of Familiarity-only NPs in Chapter 4). Judith Levi (p.c.) notes that in Hebrew also there is a directional inflection (*a-*, similar to *-ward* in English) that occurs on just a few nouns, including ‘house’ and ‘town,’ which is always used in a Familiarity sense.

*zur* from *zu* 'to' + *der* 'the' [dative feminine singular] respectively) which in speech tends to happen automatically, leaving only one form. Hence, there is usually no contrast, but it does sometimes appear in both full and reduced variations. In the case where there are two forms, for some speakers the reduced one has the Activity sense just as the anarthrous form does in English.<sup>3</sup> For example, in locative phrases used to refer to a type of scenario rather than to concrete referents of the NP contained, the definite article can be cliticized to a preceding preposition. The cliticization is restricted by morpho-phonological constraints, but "if it is possible, it is a clear surface marking of de-referentialization (or something in the direction of incorporation). The semantic and pragmatic effects are the same as in the case of articleless definite NPs in English" (Sebastian Löbner p.c.). German examples of full and cliticized forms are shown in (16)-(19).

- (16) a. *zur Kirche gehen*  
to+the church go  
'to go to church' (Activity Sense)
- b. *zu der Kirche gehen*  
to the church go  
'to go to the church' (Location Sense)

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3. Löbner (1985:304-311) indicates that the phenomenon is not restricted to locational expressions, but covers all sorts of abstract "scenario expressions" in which the NP is not referential.

- (17) a. *zum Friseur gehen*  
to+the barber go  
'go to the barber's = have a haircut' (Activity Sense)
- b. *ins Krankenhaus kommen*  
in+the hospital come  
'get hospitalized' (Activity Sense)
- (18) a. *Hans ist am Tisch.*  
Hans is at+the table  
'Hans is eating.' (Activity Sense)
- b. *Hans ist an dem Tisch.*  
Hans is at the table  
'Hans is [located] at the table.' (Location Sense)
- (19) a. *Frieda geht zur Schule.*  
Frieda goes on+the school  
'Frieda goes to school.' (Activity Sense)
- b. *Frieda geht zu der Schule.*  
Frieda goes to the school  
'Frieda goes to the school.' (Location Sense)

For most speakers the meaning difference shown in (16)-(19) is an option, but when it is so, the Activity and Location senses are not in complementary distribution. Rather, the contracted forms are ambiguous: they can have both the activity sense (which is the preferred sense) and the location sense, while the stylistically marked uncontracted form cannot have the activity sense. Thus, the pairs in (16)-(19) demonstrate the interplay of opposing inferential strategies captured by the Q and R Principles of Horn (1984). Use of the unmarked contracted form



becomes associated with the stereotypical activity scenario, while use of the marked uncontracted form can only convey the literal location sense.

### 2.3 Contrasting Locative Prepositions

The third device is seen in the way a locative contrast shows up in a range of prepositions that translate to the same word in English. In French, for example, there are many PP alternations that show locative contrasts similar to that shown in English, such as the one in (20).

- (20) a. *en prison* = ‘in prison’  
 b. *dans la prison* = ‘in the prison’

Here, not only is there a difference in whether or not a determiner occurs, but the presence or absence of a determiner is accompanied by different prepositions. While both *dans* and *en* can be translated into English by *in*, they are rarely interchangeable in these contexts: as illustrated in (20), *en* almost always occurs without a determiner, and *dans* almost always occurs with a determiner. In addition, with *dans*, the meaning is usually concrete and specific, while with *en*, the meaning is more abstract and general (e.g., the prison as a societal institution, not as a specific building). Richard Epstein (p.c.) notes that you do not find either \**en la prison* or \**dans prison*.

A similar example of meaning contrast by means of the choice of prepositions is shown in (21).

- (21) a. *Il est entré dans l'école.*  
 he entered in the school  
 'He entered the school [building].' (Location Sense)
- b. *Il est entré à l'école septembre dernier.*  
 He entered in the school September last  
 'He began school last September.' (Activity sense)

Here both examples in the pair contain articles, leaving just the preposition *dans* 'in' to convey the more specific location sense, while *à* 'in/ to/ at' is used to convey the Activity sense.

Having different uses for synonymous prepositions is not unique to the Location/ Activity contrast; many Romance languages contrast synonymous prepositions of place when they occur with different types of locations, so that words naming cities and states, for instance, may require different prepositions. In French, for example, the appropriate preposition translating to *in* or *to* with geographical names depends on the noun's gender and its beginning sounds. Thus, *au* [= *à* 'to/ in' + *le* 'the, masculine sg.'] is used for masculine countries and states, except those starting with a vowel sound; *en* is used for feminine countries and states, and for masculine countries and states starting with a vowel

sound; while *à* is used for city names (Muyskens et al. 1982:268-9).

Similarly, Italian prepositions that are translated by *in* in English vary depending on the type of location objects: *a* is used for town names and *in* for countries and regions, as shown in (22).

- (22) a. *a Milano*  
           ‘in Milan’
- b. *in Italia*  
           ‘in Italy’

Some prepositional contrasts, however, reflect the Activity versus Location contrast:

- |         |                      |                     |                |
|---------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| (23) a. | <i>a teatro</i>      | <i>al cinema</i>    |                |
|         | to theater           | at/ to cinema       |                |
|         | ‘at/ to the theater’ | ‘at/ to the cinema’ | Activity Sense |
| b.      | <i>nel teatro</i>    | <i>nel cinema</i>   |                |
|         | ‘at/ in the theater’ | ‘at/ in the cinema’ | Location Sense |

The Italian phrase *a teatro*, shown in (23a), can be used to indicate going to or being at a theater for a show (and likewise *al cinema* for movies).

But a different preposition is used (*nel teatro, nel cinema*) to indicate something which is located inside the theatre building.

James Kirchner (p.c.) points out that Slavic languages will also “some-

times make a prepositional distinction between simply being in (*v*) a place and being in (*na*, literally 'on') one in which some special function is performed. For example, in Czech a locatum would be *v parku* ('in/ at the park') but *na poste* ('in/ at the post office').

Danish has a double pair of PPs involving *school* with different prepositions:

- (24) a. *i skole*  
in school  
'in school' [for the day's lessons]
- b. *i en skole*  
in a school  
'in a school building'
- c. *på skole*  
at school  
'away at school for some time'
- d. *på en skole*  
at a school  
'on a school's grounds' (indoors or outdoors)  
(examples from Lars Mathiesen (p.c.))

Danish speakers note that when these PPs are used with "to be," the contrast involves the article also, so that (24a) and (24c), which lack articles, display the Activity sense, while (24b) and (24d), where articles are present, exhibit the Location sense.

German displays a similar distinction involving some uses of the prepositions *in* 'in' and *auf* 'on'. When used with the verb *go*, the *auf* forms often show the Location sense, as shown in (25).

- (25) a. *auf sein Zimmer gehen*  
           to one's room go  
           'to go to one's room'
- b. *auf die Post gehen*  
           to the post office go  
           'to go to the post office'
- c. *auf die Polizei gehen*  
           to the police station go  
           'to go to the police station'

The German preposition *in* 'in, into, to,' on the other hand, is used with many nouns in a way that matches the Activity sense, as demonstrated in (26) and (27):

- (26) a. *in die Schule gehen*  
           'to go to school'
- b. *in die Kirche gehen*  
           'to go to church'
- (27) a. *er ist in der Schule*  
           he is in the school  
           'he's at school/ in school'
- b. *er ist in der Kirche*  
           he is in the church  
           'he's at church/ in church'

An additional point regarding German prepositions and the Activity

sense concerns the use of the locational preposition *an* to indicate the location at which someone works, e.g., *an der Universitat* = (working) at the university.’ English also has this sense conveyed by *at* before proper nouns: “He’s at Northwestern this year.” This construction might best be considered a “use type” when it involves proper noun locations that can name an employing institution, as shown in (28).

- (28) a. She’s at Microsoft now. = employed by Microsoft Corporation.  
 b. He’s at Notre Dame. = employed by Notre Dame University  
 c. \*They’re at garage. ≠ employed by a mechanics garage  
 d. \*We’re at Illinois.<sup>4</sup> ≠ employed by the state of Illinois

Dutch also shows examples where different synonymous locative prepositions are used to convey contrastive meanings:

- (29) a. op toneel zitten Activity sense  
 on/ in/ at theater sit  
 ‘take part in a theater class or a performance’  
 b. in het theater zitten Location sense  
 in the theater sit  
 ‘sit in the theater’

While the Dutch examples in (29) differ in preposition selection as well as in whether they use an article, those in (30) both have articles, but differ in the choice of preposition:

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4. Except where the state name refers, for example, to the University of Illinois—a potential employer.

- (30) a. in de gevangenis zitten  
in/ at/ on the prison sit  
'to sit in prison/ to be in prison' Activity sense
- b. op de gevangenis zitten  
in/ at/ on the prison sit  
'to sit on top of the prison building' Location sense

As mentioned in Chapter 3, British English has some preposition contrast with *in school* and *at school*, as shown again in (31), while speakers of American English use *in school* to convey both the Activity sense and the Location sense.<sup>5</sup>

- (31) a. He's at school (Brit) = He attends/ is attending school
- b. He's in school (Brit) = He's actually inside the building  
—not, e.g., on the playing fields

Quirk et al. (1979:310) note that this is part of a more general contrast involving *at/ in* in which *at* refers to a more functional aspect of the location and *in* refers to a three dimensional structure. The British usage reflects the split of using *at* for a function of a location and *in* for the physical building. In addition to the British example in (31), both American and British speakers contrast in expressions where the location NP names a university:

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5. Some of this contrast with American usage may be due to British children traditionally being sent away for school more often than students in the U.S.

- (32) a. He's at Oxford. (attending the university)  
 b. He's in Oxford. (the town)

This can be seen as a variation on the employment use type of *at* shown in (28) above, where attending a school is a variation of being employed by a company.

Italian, likewise, connects one preposition to the activity sense when used with the word for *university*:

- (33) a. andare all'università  
 to go to + the university  
 'to attend a university; to being a university student'  
 b. andare in università  
 to go to university  
 'going to the university' [building, campus, etc.]

Notice that in the cases where a contrast is shown in English usage for *at* and *in* (as in 28, 31, 32), the word *at* is the one used to convey the Activity sense; that is, the less literal, more pragmatically created sense. This is in keeping with Dirven's observations, discussed in Chapter 3, that *at* is the most neutral of the spatial prepositions. Since it is the one conveying the least spatial information about the referents' positions, it is the one most able to be filled in with pragmatic details; that is, the least marked form is the one chosen to express the stereotypical activity.



Further evidence of the difference in the kinds of objects found with *at* and *in* seen in (34).

- (34) a. They are at home.  
b. They are in the house.

In (34a) we know that the Familiarity use emphasizes whose house it is rather than whether they the locatum is inside the house. (34b), on the other hand, is used to locate the locata inside a building.

As a final example of this preposition contrast type, recall that in Danish a contrast showed up concerning articles with the noun *skole*, 'school':

- (35) a. *i skole*  
in school  
'in school' [for the day's lessons] [= (24)]
- b. *i en skole*  
in a school  
'in a school building'
- c. *på skole*  
at school  
'away at school for some time'
- d. *på en skole*  
at a school  
'on a school's grounds' [indoors or outdoors]

The contrast repeated above occurs when the PPs are used with the verb ‘to be.’ With some other verbs, however, such as ‘go,’ the preposition choice is based on the level of the school: *i skole* ‘in school’ means primary school while *på skole* ‘at school’ is vocational school or higher<sup>6</sup> (Mathiesen p.c.). In these examples, the contrast of preposition type co-occurs with the next type, which is determined by the verb type.

#### 2.4 BE/ STAY Verbs vs. Nonpositional Verbs

Lars Mathiesen (p.c.) notes that in Danish a meaning contrast exists for *i kirke*, ‘in church,’ depending on whether an article is used. He explains that the contrast only holds, however, when the PP is used with verbs of location and direction, e.g., ‘be in church’, ‘come to church’, etc. “When used with other verbs, the form without the article is less usable, and the distinction tends to be neutralized” e.g., *Jeg så hende i kirken i dag* (lit. “I saw her in the church today”). Thus, where the verb is not a BE or GO form, the absence of an article gives no hint as to whether or not the action of seeing her happened during a religious service. Danish, then, shows an interaction of three of the contrast types, preposition choice,

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6. Of course, there are many other subtleties involved in the choice of preposition. For example, for “i en skole” Mathiesen added: “I strongly prefer “på” even for a single-building school, in all non-abstract senses—but I have a feeling that this may not be true for older speakers (I’m 35). Up until the sixties, country schools were very often single buildings.”

verb type, and lack of article.

Does this verb difference hold in English also? In other words, is there a difference that is based on the type of verb for the implicated meaning of the NPs used in *be at school* versus *go to school*? Or is the meaning in these English expressions only due to the lack of article? Certainly the meaning is not determined by the verb for English, since non-typical school actions, such as burying or dancing—illustrated in (36)—evoke the implicated senses just as much as the sentences in (37) which contain *be* or *go*, or those in (38) which contain verbs naming more explicit, prototypical school-related activities:

- (36) a. He buried them at school.  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)
- b. They danced together at school.  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)  
 (= while attending school—Activity sense)
- (37) a. Joe was at school.  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)
- b. Karl goes to school.  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)  
 (= while attending school—Activity sense)
- (38) a. to learn geometry at school  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)  
 (= while attending school—Activity sense)

- b. to teach at school  
 (= a designated school—Familiarity sense)  
 (= while attending school—Activity sense)

In Danish, then, the choice of a verb of direction versus a verb of location sometimes can influence whether an activity sense is created.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.5 Case Marking

The final construction type involves languages that don't use articles, yet still convey locative NP contrasts. Here the contrast is achieved not by means of article placement, but through case marking. In (39)-(42), Jee-hong Kim (p.c.) presents Korean sentences in which the same NP can be marked with either an objective or a locative marker:

- (39) a. *ch'a-lul t'-ta* ('marks aspiration)  
 vehicle-OBJ ride-END (ENDING of declarative)  
 'to ride (in a) car' as a vocation, like a chauffeur
- b. *ch'a-e t'-ta*  
 vehicle-LOC ride-END  
 'to ride in a car' as an action
- (40) a. *hakkyo-lul ka-ta*  
 school-OBJ go-END  
 'to go (to) school' as a vocation, like a student or a teacher
- b. *hakkyo-e ka-ta*  
 school-LOC go-END  
 'to go to a school' as an action

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7. In Korean, as we'll see in 2.5 below, the verb choice also can affect the implicated meaning. In English, however, this does not come into play.

- (41) *ch'a t'-ta*  
 vehicle ride-END  
 'to ride in a car'

Kim notes that bare or zero case marking is also possible, as in (41), but with an ambiguity between the Activity and Location readings which the discourse context serves to disambiguate. “As a native speaker, I feel intuitively that a sentence with the LOCative marker refers to an action,” while sentences with the OBJective marker convey a habitual action, interpreted as a vocation reading, as in (39a) and (40a).

In (42b), Kim suggests that the LOCative marker indicates a point in time, while the OBJective marker in (42a) suggests an action occurring over longer duration:

- (42) a. *hyundai-lul sal-ta*  
 contemporariness-OBJ live-END  
 'to live by (or with) contemporary style'
- b. *hyundai-e sal-ta*  
 contemporariness-LOC live-END  
 'to live in modern or contemporary time'

Note that the case marker contrast is not found with the copula, which selects only nouns with the LOCative marker. If a motion- or action-oriented verb is used, however, the contrast is observable, as in (39) and (40). Kim adds, “I am inclined to summarize the pair of contrasts as an

action instance vs. a habitual action or a time-point action vs. a time-durational action.”

Other Korean speakers (Ho-Bae Lee p.c.) note that there is not always such a meaning difference indicated between locative (*-e*) and direct object (*-lul*), so that for (39) and (40), either the (a) or (b) translations could receive either interpretation, though constructions with abstract or mass nouns, as in (42), reveal more of a difference.

### **3. Conclusion to Chapter 5**

This chapter adds a new range of data to the current study, one which began by examining certain count nouns occurring without articles, but which, I suggest, should be viewed as an examination of several contrasting semantic/ pragmatic functions of locative PPs and the ways these functions are marked. The cross-linguistic data reported here demonstrates that locative PP expressions can typically be used in two ways. One use (the default or unmarked form) is to make a statement about where some entity is located—the Location sense. To express this sense, languages may use locative case, an article, the more concrete choice from a range of locative prepositions, or two separate words instead of a contraction. The alternative use for locative PPs is a marked

sense which, through conventionalized implicature, relates additional information about the entities involved besides stating their spatial relationship to each other. We have seen forms such as the Activity sense, the Familiarity sense, and the Specified Co-hyponym sense that illustrate this. This range of marked uses I collectively label the Non-Locative Reading.

The cross-linguistic data show that a Non-Locative Reading can encompass several different kinds of information about the locatum or the location referents. The kinds of other information conveyed about the locatum include the following: (1) the activity of the locatum (e.g., *in prison* means to serve time), or (2) that the locatum is at the place for a set duration (e.g., *when I was in school* can be interpreted temporally to indicate the time during which I was a student'). Information conveyed about the location may include (1) specifying, for example, the size of the school or the level of education provided there (as in the Danish examples); (2) the fact that a location is the one associated with either the speaker, hearer or locatum (e.g., *at school* means the one that a discourse participant attends; *in town* means the town of one of the discourse participants); or (3) contrasting that place with other possible places (as in Italian).

This brief sample of cross-linguistic data reinforces the fact that conveying prototypical acts connected to a location or marking locations as connected to discourse participants are aspects of meaning that speakers find ways to encode in language. Looking at other languages has highlighted the range of meaning contrasts that can be conveyed using marked NP forms in locative expressions. As this chapter shows, in a number of languages, both non-referential and referential uses show up in contrasts created by using bare locative forms. On the one hand, Italian shows specification of co-hyponyms, and English shows specification through deictic connection to the discourse participant. On the other hand, the Activity sense is shown in Italian and English when the location itself is not highlighted but is assumed to be background information to some highlighted activity occurring there. As we saw in Chapter 2, Behrens (1995) and Gil (1987) both found that relying on English examples alone gives one a skewed view of the mass/ count scenario, because different factors interact in each language. Likewise, examination of the data in this chapter starts from an observation about the forms in one language (e.g., the unexpected anarthrous forms in English), but concludes by suggesting broader implications about the meanings that such marked forms represent.



## CHAPTER SIX

### Applications and Conclusions

#### 1. Introduction

This investigation of a rarely discussed NP form has shown that the category of bare singulars is heterogenous, comprising some NPs capable of being used as definite referring expressions, others used in inferences in which the location sense is only background information, and finally, NPs used as kind-referring generics. In tracking the behavior of the locative expressions containing these NPs, I have relied on an analysis of a corpus of naturally occurring data, rather than on predictions and classifications based solely on intuition.

Touching as it does on both prepositions and NPs, both predicates and referring expressions, as well as patterns of word meaning extension, I expect this work to prove useful on several counts. The dissertation details a new range of syntactic constructions that are matched to certain pragmatic functions, expanding our repertoire of functional syntax. In particular, this examination of bare forms occurring in locative PPs

will help in separating traditional adverbial PP uses from those in which the NP object has more specific referential qualities. Through such an understanding of the phrases containing these NPs, I open an avenue of investigation to researchers of similar morphosyntactic markers in other languages. In addition, tracing the constraints on the set of nouns used as bare singular nominals sheds new light on discussions of the mass/ count distinction and the nominal level at which this distinction applies, as well as on the way we categorize location referents. This issue of categorization is one which I see as especially fruitful in future investigations of the social and cognitive influences on our categorization of places, as well as in expansions of the existing work on the translation of prepositions, which currently reveals so much about our categorization of space. Finally, this dissertation should further our understanding of determiner distribution in English, which has immediate applications in the teaching of English as a second language.

## **2. Discourse Tagging and Translation**

Identifying the Activity, Familiarity, Generic, and contrast or Specified Co-Hyponym uses of these PPs makes available techniques that assist in referent identification within a given discourse. Bare nouns can now be indicated as either instances of a definite NP (the deictic/ possessive

Familiarity interpretation), as categories named in Generic reference, similar to that evoked by bare plural forms which encompass all instances of the named location, or as part of non-locative PPs used to indicate the activity occurring at the location.

Unlike conversational pragmatics, which looks at how a sentence may mean something different each time it is uttered, discourse pragmatics examines how the “relationship between a given sentence form and the function of the sentence in discourse is directly determined by grammatical convention” (Lambrecht 1994:5). The discovery of presuppositions attached to the bare singular form as well as the set of nouns that might appear in bare form should have applications in both tagging and translation of text corpora.

An examination of these PPs and their different discourse functions, expressed in English via the same bare singular form is relevant in a monolingual English text corpus that aims to replicate the speaker’s and hearer’s cues about the changing discourse model. Bare form uses represent the kinds of concepts that need to be considered in parsing and tagging English as an on-going reflection of the discourse. For example, we can better describe PPs which contain spatial prepositions as having

a broader, but not unpredictable range of case types than those involving thematic roles, e.g., locative (*in the park*), manner adverbials (*with a glance, on foot*), or tool adverbials (*with a hammer*). A more useful set of concepts to encode would include identification of discourse function tags such as topic, hearer-known referent, new referent, reference to a kind, deictically anchored referent, etc. Uses of the bare singulars bring us closer to a working set of such taggable discourse concepts.

The initial split in discourse functions found in a data base culled from English is reinforced by subcategories expressing the same contrasts in other languages. While not all languages use the lack of articles to show this, examples such as Korean's locative vs. object morphemes or the choice in French of two synonymous prepositions (e.g., *dans* and *en*) indicate the varied ways languages show contrasting functions for PPs containing location words. Once semantic/ discourse contrasts are made clear, the existence of a range of overt markers in other languages (which map onto a single English marker—the bare singular form) reinforces our need for a better vocabulary for elaborating the functions of PPs. Thus, in translation, too, it should be possible to indicate a more accurate match between differences that do not appear to show up in the English morphosyntax, but that are active in its seman-

tics/ pragmatics.

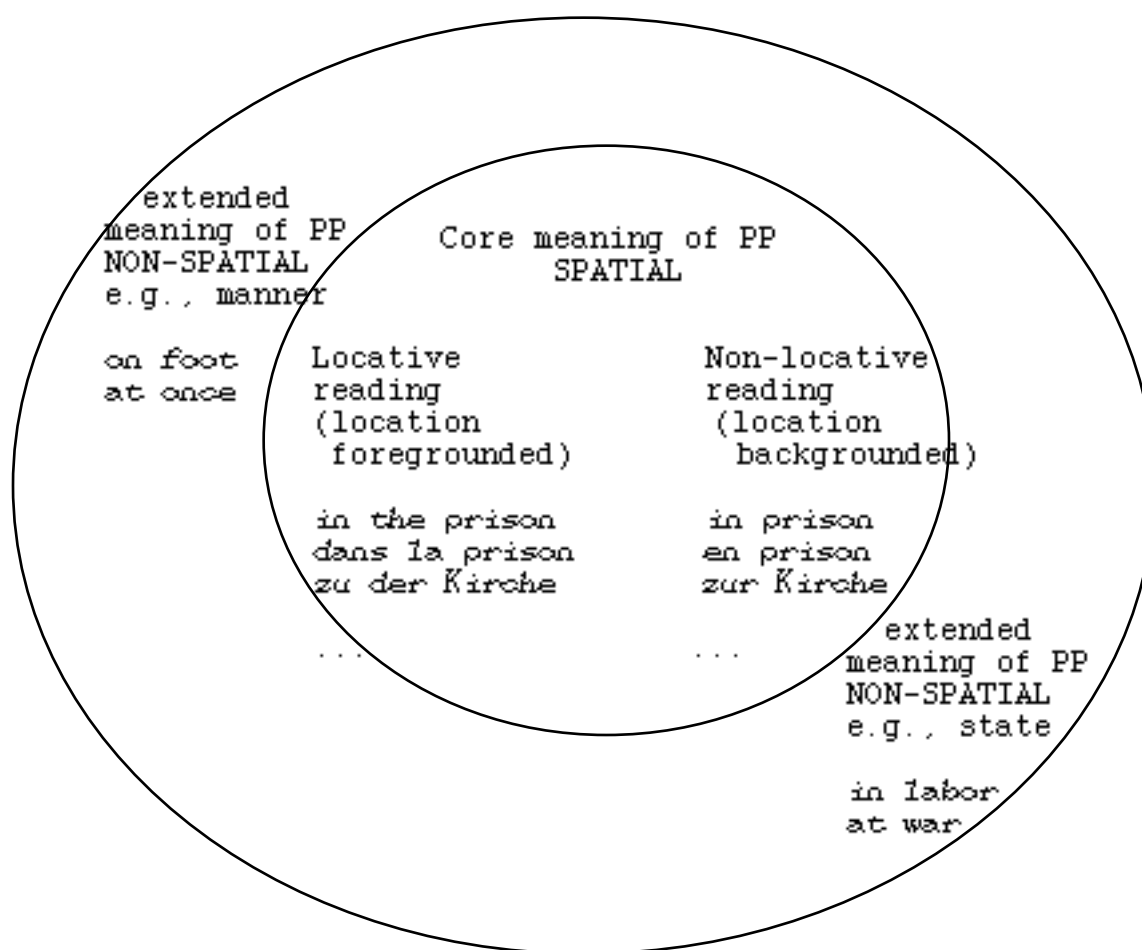
### **3. ESL Applications**

Native speaker competence relies on more than knowledge of allowable syntactic structures, but crucially requires a mapping of a given language's forms to the ways these can be used to represent concepts. One immediate application of the work in this dissertation which should be considered is language teaching. While input may be insufficient for a second language learner to learn about the full range of bare singular NP functions in English, mastery of their discourse functions can be facilitated by enhanced input in the classroom. To gain competence in English, the discourse functions of the article system must be mastered, which not only includes separating definite from indefinite uses, but also information about when a noun appears with no article—and the inferences this licences.

### **4. Conclusion to Chapter 6**

When nouns appear in spatial PPs, we have seen that some bare singular NPs are interpreted in a non-locative way, contrasting with articulated forms. As seen in Figure 4, both these sets of spatial PPs contrast as well with other PPs formed from extensions of the preposition beyond

the spatial domain, creating PPs such as manner or state adverbials (e.g., *by hand, on foot, in labor, in person, at war*).



**Fig. 4. Spatial and Non-Spatial Uses of Locative PPs**

The forms discussed in this dissertation differ from non-spatial PP expressions in the following ways: the marked uses (activity and specified senses) rely on a backgrounded location sense contributed by the

spatial sense of the prepositions. In such a case, non-locative information is what is foregrounded or stated.<sup>1</sup> With PPs having manner or state senses, however, no statement of location is made at all because in those cases the prepositions are not conveying spatial information, but instead supply a background sense via some other extended, non-core meaning. Both the marked (bare singular) and unmarked (articulated) locative PPs rely on the more central, spatial sense of the prepositions.<sup>2</sup>

Greenberg (1978a:254-257) notes a tendency for languages to use no article with NPs that are “taken in a generic sense,” including adverbial and locative uses, but also with those taken as inherently determined, such as proper nouns and vocatives. While most treatments of bare singulars observe their presence in locative PPs and treat them as examples of generic NPs, as we saw, this categorization underdetermines the uses of bare forms for English. While bare forms are generic and non-locating, Familiarity uses of Social and Geographical Spaces, as well as Framing expressions for media terms, do indicate specific places, thus acting more like the inherently determined NPs. A bare singular NP’s

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1. For further discussion of viewing the referent of a grammatical unit as foregrounded/ asserted or not in different contexts, see Chafe (1972, 1976).

2. For discussion of the core sense and extended senses for prepositions, see work on metaphorical word extensions in Lakoff (1987).

surface form does not provide sufficient information to determine its meaning. Although the sets of nouns involved are semantically described and the NP forms are syntactically identified, the types of uses to which speakers put bare singular NPs are pragmatically defined, relying on both convention and grounding in a given discourse.



## APPENDIX A

### Attested Bare Singular NPs in the Corpus

#### Social/ Geographical Spaces As Prepositional Objects

**55 Types**                      **796 Tokens**

base	8
bed	43
camp	66
campus	32
cellar	8
chapel	14
church	19
class	11
clinic	5
college	26
country	9
court (legal)	41
court (royal)	4
daycare	5
deck	7
dock	4
district	1
hall	1
harbor	2
hill	10
home	36
hospital	2
island	5
jail	21
kindergarten	3
kitchen	1
line	23
market	7

meeting	8
office	2
pasture	3
planet	7
port	7
prison	52
property	5
river	7
school	59
sea	16
shore	18
site	3
seminary	5
slope	3
stage	22
state	26
stream	4
studio	1
synagogue	3
table	9
temple	4
theater	8
town	94
university	2
work	10
world	4
yeshiva	6

**Social/ Geographical Spaces****As Subjects****10 Types    33 Tokens**

bed	1
camp	1
church	5
college	3
court	3
home	5
jail	1
prison	3
school	10
town	1

**As Direct Objects****14 Types    39 Tokens**

camp	2
campus	3
church	3
court	1
downtown	1
home	1
hospital	1
jail	2
kindergarten	1
prison	6
school	12
seminary	1
town	4
work	1

## APPENDIX B

### Syntactic/ Pragmatic Contrast Types in Locative PPs

#### 1. Lack of articles with count nouns

- e.g., English:
- a. to be **in prison**  
[to be held for committing a crime]
  - b. to be **in the prison**  
[to be in the building for any reason,  
e.g., as visitor, cook, cockroach]

#### 2. Contraction vs. full article+prep

- e.g., German:
- a. **zur Kirche** gehen  
'to go to church' [an activity]
  - b. **zu der Kirche** gehen  
'to go to the church' [the location]

#### 3. Contrasting locative prepositions

- e.g., French:
- a. Il est entré **à l'école** septembre dernier.  
'He began school last September'
  - b. Il est entré **dans l'école**.  
'He entered the school.' [the school building]

#### 4. BE/STAY verbs vs. "nonlocative" verbs

e.g., Danish

- (a contrast when used with the verbs *go* or *be*)
- a. **på skole**  
'away at school' [for some time]
  - b. **på en skole**  
'on a school's grounds' [indoors or outdoors]
- (no contrast when used with verbs like *see*)
- c. Jeg så hende **i kirken** i dag  
'I saw her in (the) church today'  
[with no hint of whether it was during a service or not]

#### 5. Case marking

- e.g., Korean:
- a. **hakkyo-lul** ka-ta  
school-OBJ go-END  
'to go (to) school'  
[as vocation, e.g., as student or teacher]
  - b. **hakkyo-e** ka-ta  
school-LOC go-END  
'to go to a school' [as an action]

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