Bare PPs between indefinites and weak definites

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Definition

A bare PP is an adposition with a determinerless singular count common noun.

<p style="color:red; text-align:center">at school</p>
<p style="color:red; text-align:center">by car</p>
<p style="color:red; text-align:center">at hand</p>
<p style="color:red; text-align:center">at eye level</p>
<p style="color:red; text-align:center">per recruited student</p>

Determinerless PPs, Preposition-Noun combinations, PP-Ds

Bare PPs

What do these have to do with definiteness?

> wait and see…

Why bother at all? They're idiosyncratic thingies…

> Kiss et al. (2010)

Goal of this presentation?

> Argue that there are generalizations hidden in the mass of data…

Some basic insights from the literature on English bare PPs

Stvan (1998)

Insight 1

> Most nouns that can occur in bare PPs fall into a restricted set of semantic classes.

Social/geographical spaces

at/to/from home

at/to/from church

in/to/out of prison

at/to/from school

in/to hospital

in/to/out of town

at/to sea

Recording expressions

on album

on cassette

on CD

on disk

Temporal Interruptions

at breakfast

at dinner

at recess

on break

on holiday

Baldwin et al. (2006)

In search of a systematic treatment of determinerless PPs. In: P. Saint-Dizier (ed.). *Computational Linguistics Dimensions of Syntax and Semantics of Prepositions*. Springer.

Insight 2

> Whether a noun can occur in a bare PP doesn't only depend on the noun.

Social/geographical spaces	Recording expressions	Means of transport
at/to/from home	on album	by car
at/to/from church	on cassette	by bike
in/to/out of prison	on CD	by flying carpet
at/to/from school	on disk	by hat
in/to hospital		
in/to/out of town		
at/to sea		

Insight 3

> The nouns occurring in bare PPs can often occur bare in other argument positions as well, including the subject position.

home is happiness and family

church is the place where we hope to find an experience to love

prison is much better when you're pregnant

school is something Sophie's been looking forward to for ages

hospital was more comfortable than home

Recap

Recap

> Most nouns that can occur in bare PPs fall into a restricted set of semantic classes.

> Whether a noun can occur in a bare PP doesn't only depend on the noun.

<p align="center">N-based bare PPs vs. P-based bare PPs</p>

> The nouns occurring in bare PPs can often occur bare in other argument positions as well, including the subject position.
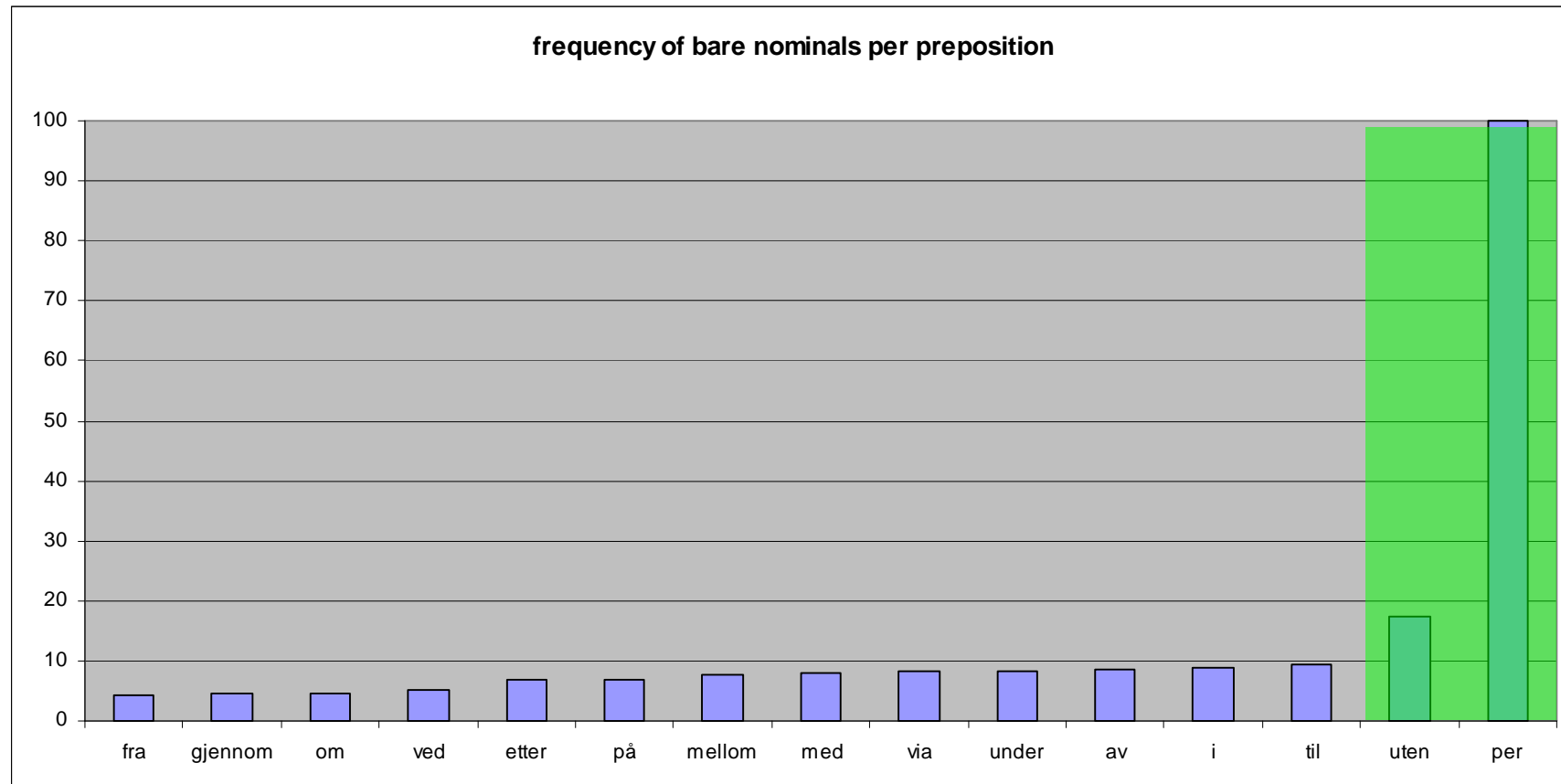
Beyond English

Ingmar van de Beld, Marlies Paenen, Tilly van Paassen, Marten Postma, Martijn van der Klis, Emiel van Miltenburg, Atle Grønn

P-based bare PPs

P-based bare PPs

> Looking for Ps that – at least in one of their senses – productively give rise to bare PPs.

> 'blunt axe method'

+ check how many times a preposition occurs in total
+ check how many times it's immediately followed by a bare noun
+ calculate the 'bareness percentage' of the preposition

P-based bare PPs in **Norwegian**

frequency of bare nominals per preposition

data from the Oslo Multilingual Corpus

P-based bare PPs in Norwegian

(E) "One **per family**," said Jack.

(N) "En **per familie**" sa Jack.

(D) "Eén **per gezin**," zei Jack.

(G) "Einer **pro Familie**", sagte Jack

UNIT

(E) all of this has been arranged **by** phone and **mail**

(N) alt er blitt ordnet **per brev** og telefon
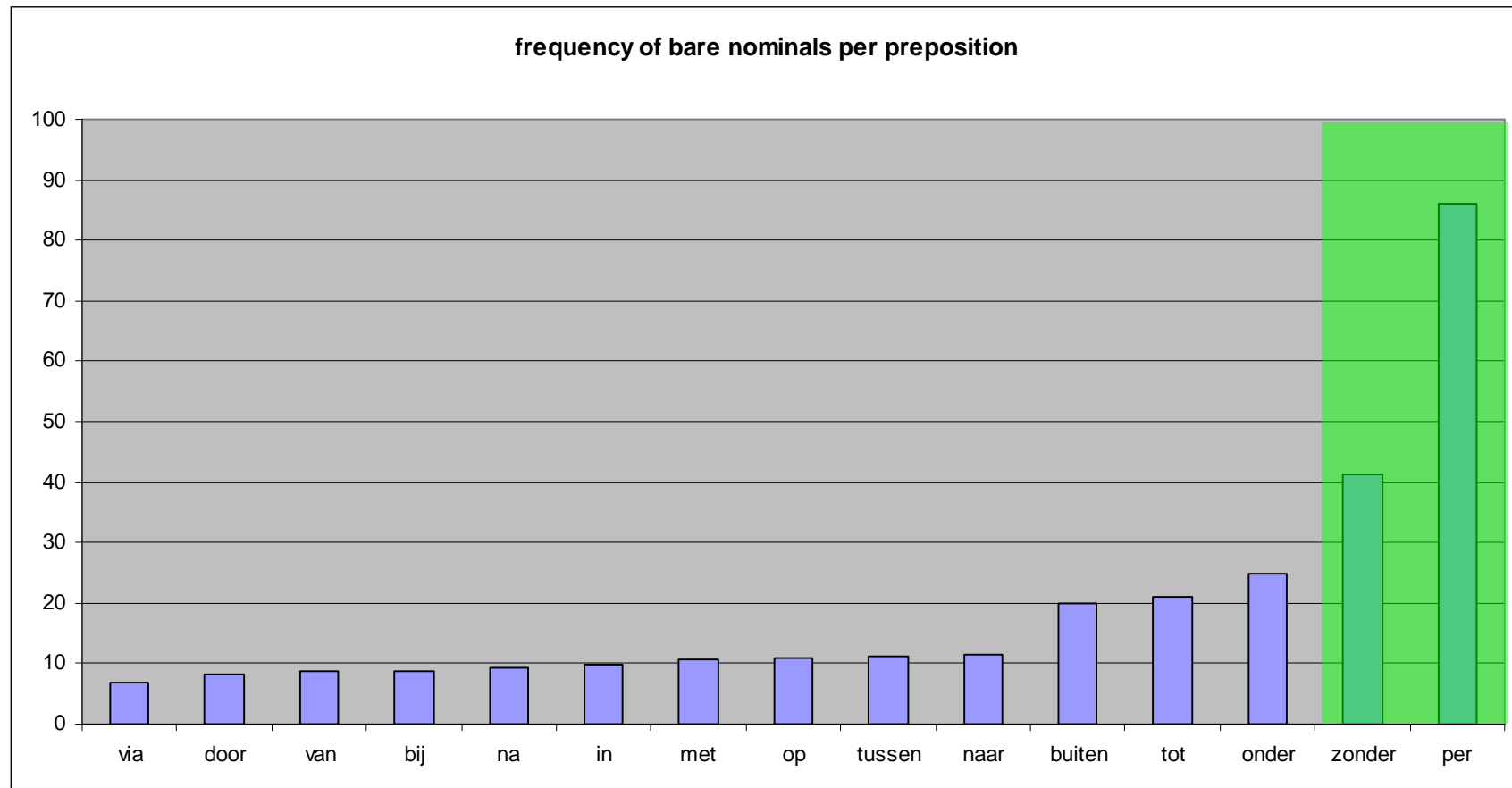
(D) alles is telefonisch en **per brief** geregeld

(G) alles am Telefon und **per Post** geregelt worden ist

TRANSPORT

P-based bare PPs in Norwegian

(N) — Ja, til neste gang hun kommer ridende som en stallkar, overskrevs og **uten sal** gjennom hele bygda og tar seg til rette som om hun eier hele lensmannsgarden!

(G) "Ja, bis sie das nächste Mal wieder durch die ganze Gemeinde angeritten kommt, wie ein Stallknecht rittlings und **ohne Sattel**, und so eigenmächtig handelt, als ob der Lehnsmannshof ihr gehörte!

(F) "Oui jusqu'à la prochaine fois où elle s'amènera à cheval comme un palefrenier, à califourchon et **sans selle**, à travers tout le pays, et s'installera comme si elle était la propriétaire!

(E) Yes, until the next time she rides through the parish like a stableboy, astride her horse **without a saddle**, and acts as if she owns Fagerness!

P-based bare PPs in Dutch

frequency of bare nominals per preposition

data from the Eindhovencorpus

P-based bare PPs in Dutch

> **PER**: per produktief manuur ('per productive man hour'), per regio ('per region')

UNIT
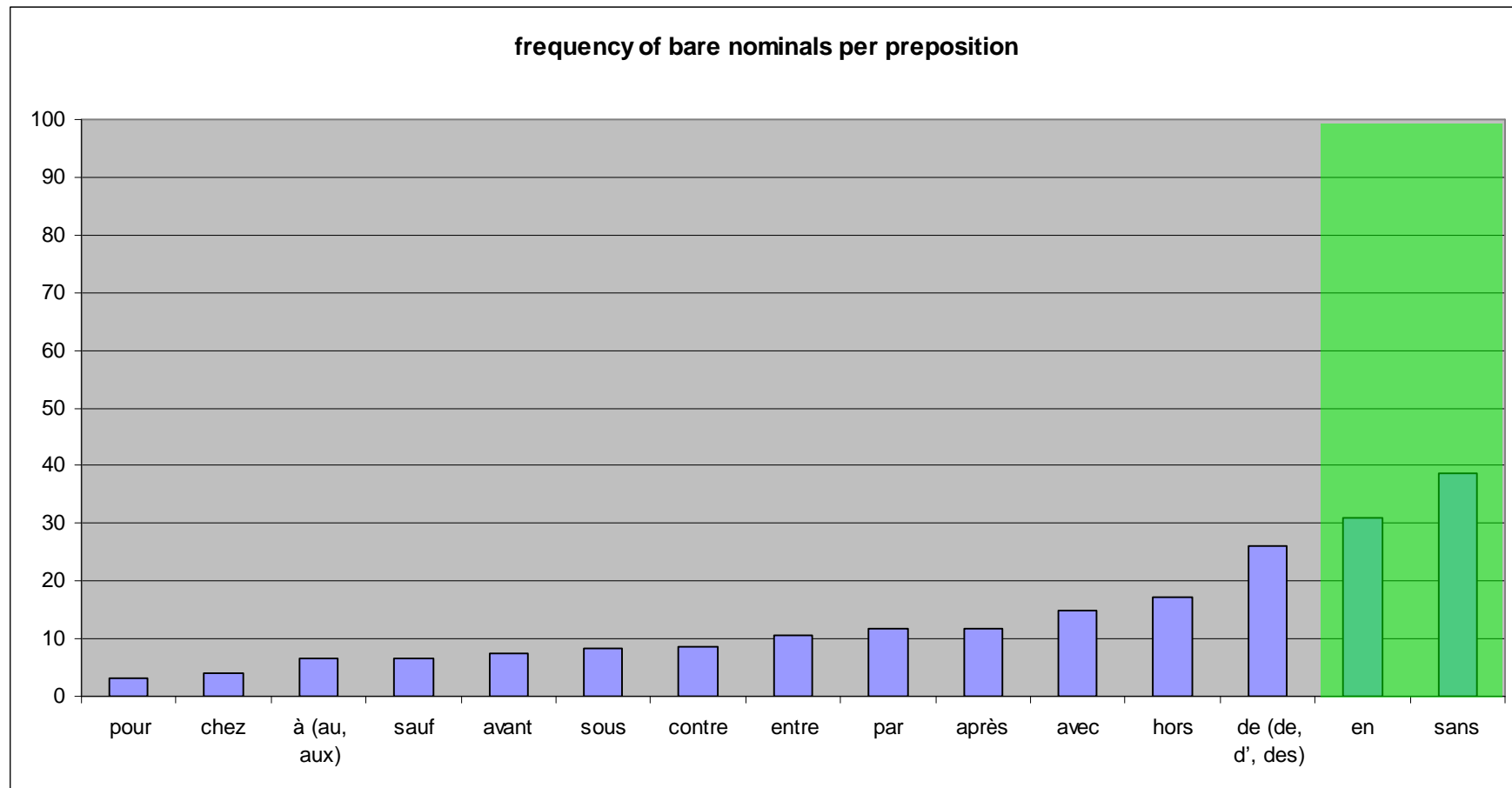
> **PER**: per brief ('by letter'), per ballon ('by balloon'), per auto ('by car')

TRANSPORT

> **ZONDER**: zonder hoed ('without hat'), zonder resultaat ('without result'), zonder raam ('without window'), zonder directe aansluiting ('without direct connection')

P-based bare PPs in **French**

data from Frantext (sample of 1.4 million words)

P-based bare PPs in French

> **SANS:** sans rêve ('without dream'), sans témoin ('without witness'), sans nom ('without name'), sans gant ('without glove')

> **EN**: voiture ('by car'), en transsibérien ('by transsiberian train')   TRANSPORT

P-based bare PPs: **generalizations**

> Every languages has P-based bare PPs.

> At least some of the meanings expressed by P-based bare PPs yield bare PPs in other languages as well.

P-based bare PPs: generalizations

UNIT TRANSPORT WITHOUT

	UNIT	TRANSPORT	WITHOUT
Norwegian	per	per	uten
Dutch	per	per	zonder
French	par	en par	sans
English	per	by	without
Spanish	por	en	sin

N-based bare PPs

N-based bare PPs

> Looking for Ns that can occur bare with multiple prepositions (excluding the prepositions that give rise to P-based bare PPs)

N-based bare PPs in English

Noun	#	# d.p.	preposition (# of occurrences with noun)
Summer	21	11	about (1), before (1), by (1), during (1), for (1), from (1), in (8), into (1), of (4), until (1), with (1)
Midnight	17	8	after (1), at (7), before (3), between (1), by (1), from (1), past (2), to (1)
Dinner	29	7	about (1), after (2), at (9), before (2), for (6), to (7), with (2)
Night	59	6	after (2), at (46), before (1), by (2), for (3), of (5)
Day	41	6	after (3), by (4), from (4), of (5), per (21), to (4)
Noon	16	6	after (2), around (1), at (8), before (1), by (2), to (2)
Spring	13	6	between (1), by (1), for (1), in (3), of (6), on (1)
Age	27	5	across (1), at (1), in (3), of (19), with (3)
Breakfast	13	5	at (2), before (4), for (5), of (1), to (1)
Week	9	5	after (1), by (1), from (2), per (3), to (2)
Sunrise	7	5	after (3), around (1), before (1), from (1), of (1)
Sunset	7	5	after (2), around (1), before (2), near (1), to (1)
Darkness	7	5	in (2), into (2), of (1), on (1), with (1)

N-based bare PPs in English

noun	#	# d.p.	preposition (# of occurrences with noun)
school	76	13	about (1), after (4), against (1), at (4), between (1), during (1), for (3), from (5), in (22), of (16), through (1), to (16), with (1)
town	62	10	after (1), around (1), for (3), in (23), into (5), of (13), through (1), thru (1), to (13), towards (1)
college	37	9	after (1), among (1), at (3), for (2), in (13), of (5), through (3), to (8), with (1)
stage	22	9	Across (1), among (1), at (1), by (2), for (2), from (2), of (6), on (6), to (1)
earth	41	8	between (1), from (3), into (1), of (9), on (17), over (1), to (5), with (4)
court	20	8	at (4), from (1), in (8), into (1), of (3), to (1), under (1), without (1)
home	52	7	at (31), during (1), for (2), from (11), in (3), of (3), with (1)
prison	19	7	between (1), by (1), from (2), in (11), of (1), on (1), to (2)
place	58	6	by (1), from (1), in (40), into (8), of (7), to (1)
church	32	6	at (3), for (6), from (2), in (6), of (5), to (10)
space	29	6	by (1), in (16), into (3), of (7), than (1), through (1)
world	26	6	between (1), for (1), in (11), of (11), to (1), with (1)
bed	47	5	for (1), in (18), into (5), of (8), to (15)

N-based bare PPs in English

- Stages of life

  life (12), death (14), marriage (8), birth (8), childhood (8), youth (5), adult (5), child (4), virginity (3)

- Body parts

  hand (8), heart (7), head (6), eye (4), foot (3), mouth (3), body (2), arm (2)

- Scholarly subjects

  history (9), literature (9), art (8), religion (9), law (10)

- Media

  paper (5), film (7), radio (9), page (3), television (7)

N-based bare PPs in **Dutch**

noun	translation	# d.p.
huis	house	8
aarde	earth	6
bed	bed	6
zee	sea	6
tafel	table	4

N-based bare PPs in French

noun	translation	# d.p.
terre	earth	5

N-based bare PPs: generalizations

<div align="center">

???

</div>

in hospital	??in hospital
(British English)	(American English)
to school	??à école
	(French 'to school')
aan tafel	??at table
(Dutch 'at table')	
en prison	??in gevangenis
(French 'in prison')	(Dutch 'in prison')

Intermediate summary

P-based bare PPs

There are preposition senses that productively take bare nominals across languages.
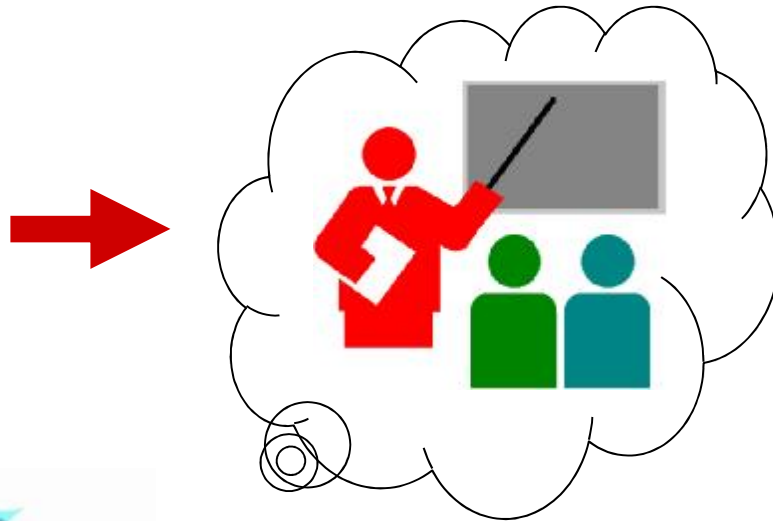
N-based bare PPs

There's no clear semantic class of nouns that productively appears in bare PPs across languages.

Zooming in on N-based bare PPs

N-based bare PPs

Sophie is going to school.

How should we conceive of school?

N-based bare PPs
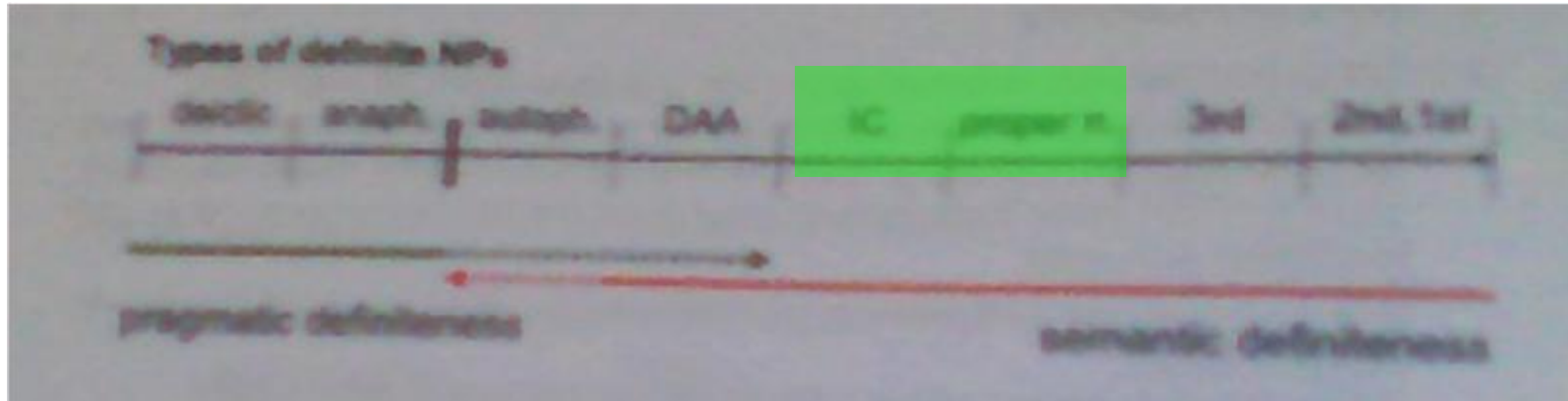
Sophie is going to school.

What does school refer to?

The institution 'school'.

The same 'school' as in :

school is something Sophie's been looking forward to
for ages

School functions as an individual concept.

N-based bare PPs

Unstable area of the scale for Western-European languages.

We expect bare nouns to alternate with definites.

We don't expect there to be any predictible variation. Lexical specification will be needed.

N-based bare PPs: generalizations

???

in hospital   ??in the hospital

(British English)   (American English)

to school   ??à l'école

       (French 'to school')

aan tafel   ??at the table

(Dutch 'at table')

N-based bare PPs: generalizations

in hospital   in the hospital

    (British English)   (American English)

to school   à l'école

            (French 'to school')

aan tafel   at the table

    (Dutch 'at table')

A caveat

> Dutch and French are different from English in (in general) not allowing individual concept nouns to occur bare outside PPs.

> This too will have to be specified lexically.

Intermediate summary

P-based bare PPs

There are preposition senses that productively take bare nominals across languages.

N-based bare PPs

The noun classes Stvan identified productively occur in special PPs across languages. Depending on the language and the noun, they may occur as definites or as bare nominals.

Revisiting P-based bare PPs

Individual concepts and P-based bare PPs

In principle, nothing prevents Ps in P-based bare PPs to select individual concept nouns.

> How can we identify these Ps?

Cross-linguistic perspective…

If a P-sense typically occurs with bare nominals or definites, we have reason to believe that this particular sense combines with individual concept nouns.

Individual concepts and P-based bare PPs

	Dutch per	Dutch with
by train	per trein	met de trein
by bus	per bus	met de bus
by car	per auto	met de auto
by bike	per fiets	met de fiets

Bare PPs that alternate with other determiners

Other P-based bare PPs select for <e,t> expressions.

> **per (unit)**

'for every'

Per comes with a universal quantifier built-in

> **without**

'without a'

Incorporation analysis à la Espinal & McNally

Conclusion

General picture

N-based bare PPs

> (abstract) individual concepts
> alternate with (weak) definites[1]
> ex. *At school*, *to church*, …

P-based bare PPs

> (abstract) individual concepts || other
> alternate with (weak) definites || other
> ex. *By car* vs. *met de auto* (Dutch 'with the car')
   || *without captain* vs. *without a captain*, *per kilometer* vs. *for every kilometer*

[1] See especially Aguilar-Guevara & Zwarts (2010), 'Weak definites and reference to kinds', Proceedings of SALT 20, 179-196,

Conclusion

Despite the need to postulate a certain amount of lexical variation, the study of bare PPs is not void of generalizations.

> There's a restricted class of nouns that productively occurs in special PPs across languages. Depending on the language and the noun, they may occur as definites or as bare nominals.

> There's a number of preposition senses that productively takes bare nominals. Depending on the preposition sense, these bare nominals may alternate with definites or indefinites.

weak referentiality

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NWO