

The Multiple Functions of the Definite Article in Terena

by Nancy Evelyn Butler

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Introduction

In Terena¹, the class of definite determiners is made up of the definite article *ne* along with two demonstratives, *ra* 'this' (near the speaker spatially, or prominent in the discourse context) and *neko* 'that' (more remote in time, or in discourse use, demonstrative force with respect to a previous referent)².

Whereas *ra* has a lexical feature of spatial nearness (either physical or in discourse with respect to prior reference) and *neko* has a lexical feature of more remoteness in time (either actual or discourse time), *ne* has neither of these lexical features, so is, in this sense, the neutral member of the set. All three, though, indicate 'definite'. On the spacial time-distance axis, the *ne* is the default form used when neither *ra* 'this' (spatial nearness) nor *neko* 'that' (remoter time distance) is an appropriate or desired choice. Indefiniteness has no formal marker, being signaled by the absence of a definite determiner.

¹ Terena is an Arawakan language of southwestern Brazil spoken by some 15,000 people (1993 census). The Terena population is concentrated in an area between the cities of Campo Grande and Miranda in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The author is indebted to Robert A. Dooley and Stephen H. Levinsohn whose teaching and orientation during an SIL sponsored discourse workshop held in Porto Velho, Rondônia, Brazil, in October and November 1998, contributed greatly to this study. A special word of acknowledgment is due in particular to Robert A. Dooley for his collaboration and extremely valuable help in the writing of this paper. The author also wishes to thank Daniel L. Everett and David Eberhard for their comments upon reading this manuscript that contributed to its final form and organization. And to Muriel Ekdahl, a colleague of many years, who acquired and made available much of the text material used in this study, a very sincere thanks.

² Terena has 5 vowels: /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, and 18 consonants: /p/, /t/, /k/ (aspirated voiceless stops), and their voiced counterparts: /b/, /d/, /g/ (occurring only with pre-nasalization i.e., mb, nd, ng), /ʔ/ (glottal stop), /h/, /s/, /x/ (alveopalatal sibilant), /z/, /j/ (the voiced alveolar fricative and alveopalatal affricate occurring only with pre-nasalization, i.e., nz and nj in the orthography), /l/ (alveopalatal laminal articulation), /r/ (alveolar flap), /m/, /n/, /v/, and /y/.

There are two types of accented syllable, one marked by a circumflex and the other by an acute accent. The circumflex accent signifies that the vowel of the syllable is lengthened and pronounced with falling pitch. The acute accent indicates that the syllable is said with more force and that the following consonant is held briefly giving the syllable a staccato-like sound. All Terena nouns and verbs have 2 accent positions and these correlate with certain grammatical features such as possession in the nouns, and, in the verbs, with mode and aspectual distinctions, negation and temporal clauses.

Abbreviations used:

ART	article	NONSPCF	non-specifically
BEN	benefactive	PERF	perfect
DUR	durative aspect	POSS	possessed

DEFINITENESS		
general (default)	demonstrative force	
	spatial nearness	more remote time
<i>ne</i> 'the'	<i>ra</i> 'this'	<i>neko</i> 'that'

Example (1) illustrates the use of the members of this set.

(1)

a) Véyo-a ne ûto³.
 3get-3Oactivated the dish
 S/he gets the dish.

b) Véyo-a ra ûto.
 3get-3Oactivated this dish
 S/he gets this dish.

c) Îyo neko sêno.
 3cry previous woman
 That (previous mention or back then) woman cried.

1. Definiteness/Indefiniteness

One definition of definiteness, given by Chafe 1976, is a discourse-pragmatic notion which is identifiable. A definite referent is one which the speaker assumes that the hearer will be able to identify, i.e. to locate in his or her current mental representation, and an indefinite referent is one for which the speaker is instructing the hearer to create a slot, example (2).

(2)

a) Yoko ómo-ne kali tikóti.
 now 3bring-PERF small stick
 Now he had brought a small stick.

b) Yanê'e ina yuhurúko-a ne kali tikóti
 after.that then 3thrust-3O the small stick
 After that then, he thrust the small stick

uké-ku-ke yúku.
 eye-place-in fire
 into the midst of the fire.

³ The verb is inflected for subject and object agreement, marking person and number (plural agreement is obligatory only for the first person). The subject is marked in a variety of ways, including changes from voiceless to voiced stops with prenasalization, vowel changes, and the pronoun *ûti* 'we'. The third person form of the verb which has zero marking is the basic form from which the other person changes are derived. (For further details, see Ekdahl & Grimes 1964.) Future tense is marked overtly by the suffix *-mo*, but otherwise the verb is not inflected for tense.

In (2a), stick is being activated and as such is not definite, hence the article's absence. In the subsequent statement (2b), with stick now definite, it is preceded by the article.

Chafe's definition in itself will not explain all occurrences and non-occurrences of the definite article in Terena, because the definite article has higher level functions in the grammar which can override and make inoperative its function as marker of the definite/indefinite contrast. This is especially evident in the transitive verb core where strict grammatical constraints regulate the occurrence, non-occurrence and positioning of the article in its role as subject/object indicator of post-verbal nouns.

In other instances clause type or discourse pragmatics come into play affecting the occurrence or non-occurrence of the article. The present paper describes the interplay of these factors as they relate to the definite article in Terena. Most comments and examples will involve the definite article *ne*, with the understanding that these can be generalized to the entire class of definite determiners.

2. Constituent order

With reference to subject, object, and verb constituents, the basic order in Terena is described as **VOS** (Derbyshire 1986:489ff). The basis for this criteria is 'least morphologic marking,' example (8). However the **OS** constituent order in transitive clauses is not a fixed one, and, in fact, is governed by a complex system in which the number of free core arguments and the definite/indefinite status of the **O** argument play major roles. Obliques normally follow the core⁴. The unmarked pragmatic structuring is **Comment-Topic** in that order, with S as unmarked topic, as in (3).

Elements can be preposed before the verb (see 4.1 Fronted elements) to function as marked topic, point of departure, or marked focus (see Lambrecht 1994). The default position for sentence focus is the argument immediately following the verb.

3. Clause types

3.1 Intransitive clause types

The basic order for **intransitive** clauses is **VS** as in (3). The presence of the article with the S signals definiteness (3a), and its absence, indefinite or generic reference (3b). (It should be noted here that motion verbs in Terena function as transitives when place occurs since place is treated as O.)

(3)

a) Sîmo ne sêno.
 ʒarrive ART woman
 The woman arrives/ed.

(b)

Éneo tapî'i.

⁴ When the verb is marked with the benefactive suffix *-ino*, an indirect object can occur as part of the core, but normally with only one other argument (S or O). Three arguments within the compact area of the core are uncommon but can occur with certain combinations of elements at activation.

3crow chicken
 A rooster crows/ed./Roosters crow.

3.1.1 Equative clauses

Nouns can be used in a predicate function in the order **PS** in an equative clause construction (4) and (5). In these constructions, the presence of the article between the noun functioning as **P** and the noun functioning as **S** is obligatory, making equatives differ from other intransitive types where the article's presence signals definiteness and its absence indefinite or generic reference. Thus, even though generics in general are treated as a sub-class of indefinites and as such do not normally take the article, in equative clauses, a generic S still must be accompanied by the article (5).

In that equative clauses consist of two nominal elements where the article's positioning between these two elements identifies the first nominal as P and the second as S, this function of the article parallels the situation in the transitive verb core where it's also the article that identifies post-verbal nouns as to their grammatical function as subject or object (section 3.2).

(4)

Xe'exa	Vili	ne	kalivôno.
3POSS.offspring	Vili	ART	child
The child is Vili's (child).			

(5)

Pú'i-ti	hó'openo	ne	kûre.
3fat-DUR	animal	ART	pig
Pigs are fat animals.			

The article's positioning in syntax can make a big difference in meaning as seen in the following examples. If in (5) the word *hó'openo* 'animal' had not occurred, and the article had occurred in initial position, the expression would be a **NP**, as in (6a). (The normal NP order is +/- article, +/- adjective/modifier + noun.) . Or if the article had occurred in between the two constituents, an **attributive clause** would have resulted (6b).

(6)

- a) ne pú'i-ti kûre
 ART 3fat-DUR pig
 the fat pig
- b) Pú'i-ti ne kûre.
 3fat-DUR ART pig
 The pig is fat.

3.1.2 Attributive clauses

Adjectives, as well as nouns, can also be used in a predicate (**P**) function in the order **PS**, (7). In contrast to equative clauses, the article is not a required element in attributive clauses and as such is free to function in the definite/indefinite contrast.

(7)

- a) Heú'i-ti ôe sîni.
 3sharp-DUR 3POSStooth jaguar
 Jaguar teeth (generic sense) are sharp./A jaguar tooth is sharp.
- b) Heú'i-ti ne oe sîni.
 3sharp-DUR ART 3POSStooth jaguar
 The jaguar tooth is sharp./The jaguar teeth are sharp. (A specific jaguar tooth/teeth in question is/are sharp.)⁵
- c) Heú'i-ti ôe ne sîni.
 3sharp-DUR 3POSStooth ART jaguar
 The jaguar's tooth is sharp./The jaguar's teeth are sharp. (The tooth/teeth of a specific jaguar in question is/are sharp.)

In (7a), the absence of the article with *oe sîni*, 'jaguar tooth' marks it as indefinite/generic. In (7b,c) with the article present, the sense is definite. The syntactic placement of the article in possessed noun phrases determines which of the elements (possessor or possessed) receives the didactic thrust (see also section 4. for further discussion of this).

3.2 Transitive clauses, the clause core

Verb, object, and subject make up what will here be called the **CORE** of the clause, following Van Valin 1993, (8a). Core arguments once activated are often left implicit, being signaled by verbal inflection. Thus, it is common to have transitive clauses with only one free argument (8b), or none (8c).

(8)

- a) Komómo-ti koyuhópe-ti ne sêno.
 3look-DUR book-NONSPCF.POSS ART woman
 The/a woman is looking at a book.
- b) Komom-â-ti ne koyuhópe-ti.
 3look-3O-DUR ART book-NONSPCF.POSS
 S/he is looking at the book.
- c) Komom-â-ti.
 3look-3O-DUR
 S/he is looking at it.

3.2.1 The definite article's function in S/O identification of post-verbal nominals

When there are 2 free post verbal nominals in the transitive clause, the article's function as definite/indefinite marker is active only with regard to the **O** argument, not the **S**. This is because the language employs the article at clause level to identify post-verbal nominals as either grammatical subject or object. This function of the article is played out in conjunction

⁵ Although nouns can be overtly pluralized by *-hiko* 'plural', this is not an obligatorily marked category for Terena. The absence of this suffix does not necessarily indicate singular. The singular/plural contrast is context sensitive. The plural suffix is used mainly in an emphatic sense or to make explicit for the uninitiated something that is implicit for the speaker and his group.

with the syntactic positioning of the nominals and the occurrence or non-occurrence of the *-a*, third person activated object verbal suffix. The whole S/O identification system hinges on the activation status of the **O** argument. If the O is being activated, hence **indefinite**, no article can occur with it and the 3rd person O activated verbal suffix *-a* is absent from the verb (8a).

3.2.1.1 The core with 2 free nominals

When there are 2 free nominals in the clause, there are separate and fixed positions in syntax for the **indefinite** and the **definite O**. An **indefinite O** occurs in the **immediate post-verbal slot** (without a determiner) as in (8a). A **definite O** occurs **core finally** preceded by the article (9). The verb in this case manifests the 3O activated suffix *-a* which cross-references with the determiner marking the O as definite. Or, in the case of an activated generic, the O occurs core finally without the article but with the 3O activated suffix *-a* still manifest in the verb (10).

(9)

Komom-â-ti	sêno	ne	koyuhópe-ti.
3look-3O-DUR	woman	ART	book-NONSPCF. POSS
The/a woman is looking at the book.			

(10)

Oyé'eko-a	yêno	kareúke.
3cook-3O	3POSSwife	beans
His wife cooks beans.		

In contrast to the O, the **S** has no fixed position in the transitive core. It fluctuates depending on the definite/indefinite status of the O. With two free post-verbal nominals, one as O and the other as S, if the **O** is **indefinite** (i.e., being activated) it occurs in the immediate post-verbal slot without any article. The **S** then must occupy the core final position preceded by the article which marks it as S. Here the article functions only as subject marker. Its function with regard to the definite/indefinite contrast is inoperative with the S since the article's presence with the **O** is what marks that element as **definite object**. The same marker (the article) cannot be used concurrently for S/O identification of both the arguments and also as definite/indefinite marker of both arguments without totally skewing the system. Intransitive clauses, in contrast, never have two post-verbal nominals that need distinguishing as to subject and object so that the article is free to function at phrase level in the definite/indefinite contrast.

The fact that a definite O must occur core finally and that an indefinite O occurs in the immediate post-verbal position forcing the S to the core final slot, explains why the core final element, irrespective of its grammatical role as subject or object, always occurs with the article (except for the case of an activated generic) example (10).

3.2.1.2 The core with only one free nominal

With just one free post-verbal nominal, when the 3O activated object suffix *-a* is absent from the verb, the occurrence of the article with the following nominal identifies it as **S** (11a) and its absence identifies that nominal as **O** (11b). With the *-a* 3O activated suffix present in

the verb, the following noun is identified as **S** by the absence of the article with that noun (11c).

11)

- a) Komómo-ti ne sêno.
3look-DUR ART woman
The/a woman is looking.
- b) Komómo-ti sêno.
3look-DUR woman
S/he is looking at a woman.
- c) Komom-â-ti sêno.
3look-3O-DUR woman
The/a woman is looking at him/her/it.

The situation of post-verbal nominals needing identification as to S/O and the article's role in this identification occurs only when the transitive core verb is inflected for both 3rd person subject and object. When the subject or object or both are inflected for other than 3rd person, there is no need for this function of the article in the core. The article, then, is free to function for the definite/indefinite contrast, signaling definite when present and cross-referencing with the 3O activated verbal suffix *-a*. In the article's absence, indefinite or generic reference is signaled.

There is one situation which can generate ambiguity. This is when the verb is inflected for both 3rd person S and O with only one free post-verbal nominal which is animate. In example (8b), if the O had been animate such as *sêno* 'woman', rather than *koyuhópeti* 'book', there could be ambiguity. With only one post-verbal nominal, the *-a* '3O activated' suffix could be alluding to a previously mentioned object and not the word *sêno* 'woman' (this fact coming from the previous context and participant role identification and not from the clause core syntax in itself). In such a case, the article preceding *sêno* 'woman' would not be cross-referencing with that suffix, since it is not the intended referent. The article's occurrence with *sêno* in that case would be functioning at phrase level as definite marker, meaning that the previously referred to woman was looking at another 3rd person.

On the other hand, if the context did not clarify that the verbal suffix *-a* '3O activated,' was referring back to another referent, the article preceding *sêno* could be interpreted as marking that noun as definite object, meaning that some other 3rd person is looking at the previously referred to woman. With an inanimate noun such as "book" instead of "woman", that noun would be unambiguously understood as object since in normal contexts books cannot perform the verbal action. In most cases the preceding discourse (or extra-linguistic setting) would clarify the intended meaning, but the article can be omitted to signal the noun unambiguously as S in such cases.

3.3 Ditransitive clauses

When the suffix *-ino* BEN occurs in the verb, the situation with regard to the occurrence or non-occurrence of the article with the various post-verbal arguments is parallel to the situation in the foregoing discussion. If the **Indirect Object** is **indefinite**, i.e. being activated, its position is fixed in the **immediate post-verbal slot**. No article occurs with it and

the *-a*, '3O activated' suffix is absent from the verb (12a). If a **Direct Object** which is also **indefinite** occurs in the core, it **immediately follows the Indirect Object** with no determiner accompanying it (12a). The **S**, if present as a free argument, must then occur **core finally** preceded by the article, the article again functioning with the **S** only in its subject identification role.

If, however, in circumstances similar to the above, the **Indirect Object** is **definite** (12b), the constituent order is **S/DO/IO**. The *-a* '3O activated' suffix must be present in the verb and cross-references with the definite IO core finally. The article's use is reserved for the IO alone, marking it as definite in conjunction with the core final position and cross-referencing with the *-a* '3O activated' suffix present with *-ino* 'BEN'.

Although (12a,b) are valid syntactic arrangements when elements are being activated, it is not common to have all three post-verbal slots filled by free arguments. Since subject activation can be core external in contrast to object activation which is core internal, it is common to introduce the subject argument outside the compact space of the core.⁶

(12)

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| a) | Poréx-ino kalivôno itátane mbûlu ne sêno.
3give-BEN child 3POSSpiece cake ART woman
The/a woman gave a child a piece of cake. | (IO and DO both <u>indefinite</u>) |
| b) | Poréxinoa sêno itátane mbûlu ne kalivôno.
The/a woman gave a piece of cake to the child. | (DO <u>indefinite</u> , IO <u>definite</u>) |
| c) | Poréxinoa sêno itátane mbûlu.
The/a woman gave him/her a piece of cake. | (IO <u>definite</u> , left implicit via inflection, with <u>indefinite DO</u>) |
| d) | Poréxinoa itátane mbûlu.
She gave him/her a piece of cake. | (same as c but <u>without the S</u>) |
| e) | Poréxinoa sêno
The/a woman gave it to him/her. | (<u>definite IO</u> and <u>DO</u> , both left implicit via inflection) |
| f) | Poréxinoa.
S/he gave it to him/her. | (same as e but without the S) |
| g) | Poréx-ino-a neko itátane mbûlu.
S/he gave him/her that piece of cake. | (<u>definite IO</u> left implicit + cross-referencing with the <u>definite DO</u>) |
| h) | Poréxinoa neko kalivôno. | |

⁶ Other factors regarding the rate of introduction of participants and information flow come into play here but are not focal to the main purpose of this paper.

S/he gave it to that child.

(definite DO left implicit, +
cross-referencing with definite IO)

Once the IO and DO are activated, both may occur as core arguments. However, in normal discourse progression, only one or the other occurs as a free argument in the core final slot. This argument is preceded by the article while the remaining argument is left implicit, signaled by the *-a* ‘3O activated’ suffix, occurring with the benefactive *-ino*, as in (12g,h). The lexical component of the core final argument in such cases (+/— the general context) identifies the argument as IO or DO, not the core final position in itself since both may occur there, depending on the progression of the discourse.

The argument that is left implicit, signaled by the *-a* ‘3O activated’ suffix, is identified as the IO if the core final argument is DO (12g). If the core final argument is IO, the argument left implicit, signaled by verb inflection, is the DO (12h). In such cases the *-a* ‘3O activated’ suffix does double duty (12g,h) also (12e), having reference to both the DO and the IO, the cross-referencing applying to the element in the core final slot. However, what really keeps track of the IO and DO in such cases is the general context and sense of the discourse.

Although both DO and IO as free arguments can occur in the same core when being activated (12a), in references subsequent to activation, there is a constant trade-off as to which argument (DO or IO) occurs as the free argument. Whichever occurs as the free argument determines the implicit status of the other argument which is left to verb inflection (12g,h), because both do not occur together in the same core as free arguments when definite.

All three post-verbal arguments (S/DO/IO), once activated, may be left implicit, signaled by inflection alone with no free nominals at all (12f) depending on discourse progression and information flow factors.

Underlying the fluctuating order of elements in the transitive core (the trade off between S and O, or the Indirect O and the Direct O for the core final positioning) is the new/known information factor and where each kind of information resides in the core.

In transitive cores, the O argument is inalienably bound up with definite/indefiniteness and new/known information. The Indefinite Object slot in the immediate post-verbal position, the unmarked sentence focus position, is where new information is activated core internally while the Definite Object, and it's slot core final, is where known information resides.

The higher value of the new information conveyed in the indefinite object, correlates with its immediate post-verbal position, the unmarked sentence focus slot. The lesser value of the known information in the definite O correlates with its less focal position core finally. (See also section 4.1, Fronted elements) regarding preposing and the leftward movement of elements for higher prominence.)

4. The syntactic placement of the article in possessed noun phrases

In possessed noun phrases, the order is Possessed-Possessor. Although the unmarked syntactic placement of the article in such phrases is article first (7b) and (13a), the article's position can interrupt the possessed element and the possessor (7c) and (13b). The article

cannot however, occur with both elements.⁷ When the article interrupts the two nominals, that modified order results in the didactic thrust of the article being focused on the possessor, so that in (13b) the possessor, *Xuâum*, receives that thrust as does *sîni* 'jaguar' in (7c). In (13a) since the possessed noun phrase fills the S slot of an equative construction where the article is an obligatory part of the construction, it cannot also be overtly marking the definite/indefinite contrast. In another example, keeping the equative construction as in (13a), but substituting *hó'openo* 'animal' for *xâne* in the P slot and *xe'exa kûre* 'piglet/offspring of a pig' for *ínikone Xuâum* in the S slot, the meaning would be: A piglet (generic sense) is a fat animal./The piglet (a specific piglet of prior reference or there in the extra-linguistic context) is a fat animal. The article does not function in an equative clause to overtly mark the S as definite since the article's presence is obligatory in that construction. However in the marked syntactic position where the article interrupts the possessed element and the possessor, it does overtly mark didactic thrust for the possessor.

The same situation can occur in transitive clauses when the possessed noun phrase is in the O slot of a transitive core with two free nominals (13c,d).

(13)

- a) Pú'i-ti xâne ne ínikone Xuâum.
 3fat-DUR person ART 3POSSfriend John
 John's friend is a stout person.
- b) Pú'i-ti xâne ínikone ne Xuâum.
 3fat-DUR person 3POSSfriend ART John
 The friend of John is a stout person.
- c) Noíxo-a Xuâum ne xe'exa ínikone.
 3see-3O John ART 3POSSchild 3POSSfriend
 John saw his friend's child.
- d) Noíxo-a Xuâum xe'éxa ne ínikone.
 3see-3O John 3POSSchild ART 3POSSfriend
 John saw the child of his friend.

5. Discourse pragmatics and the definite article

5.1 Fronted elements

Since Terena is verb-initial, the basic or neutral position of clausal arguments is **post-verbal**. Arguments of various types can, however, be preposed before the verb for discourse-pragmatic salience. There are two possible pragmatic relations a preposed constituent can have with respect to the remainder of the sentence: marked topic (or point of departure), or marked focus.

⁷ The fact that the article cannot occur with both possessed and possessor, parallels the situation in the transitive core where there is also a restraint of one determiner per core.

5.1.1 Marked topic; Point of departure

A preposed specific argument which is **marked topic or point of departure will have a definite determiner**. As a marked topic or point of departure, (which are always definite in Terena) the nominal must be preceded by a definite determiner sentence initially. (Determiners which occur with preposed and right-dislocated constituents have as their first element the morpheme *enepo*. Preposed generics, however, because they form a subclass of indefinites, are not preceded by a determiner. These two cases are seen in (14) and (15), respectively.

(14)

Enepone sopôro, níko-a tapî'i.
ART corn 3eat-30 chicken
That corn, chickens eat/ate it.

(15)

Sopôro, níko-a tapî'i.
corn 3eat-30 chicken
Corn, chickens eat it.

In (14), the definite topic *sopôro* 'corn' has the determiner *enepone*, while the generic topic *sopôro* 'corn' in (15) has no determiner. Example (14) is a response to the question in (16a) and example (15) is a response to the questions in (16b).

(16)

a) Kene ne sopôro, kuti nikô-a?
and ART corn question word 3eat-30
And what about the corn, who eats/ate it?

b) Kene sopôro, kuti nikô-a?
and corn question word 3eat-30
And what about corn, who eats it?

5.1.2 Focus

When an argument is preposed as **focus**, however, **it cannot have a definite determiner, even if the argument is definite**. This is seen in (17a,b)

(17)

a) Kûre nikô-a.
pig 3eat-30
The pig eats/ate it.

The same form could also, in a different context, indicate the generic sense, 'Pigs eat it.' responding to the question: *Kuti nikôa?* 'Who eats this?'

b) Xúpu níko.
manioc 3eat
S/he eats/ate the manioc.

In the context from which (17a) was taken, the focused element *kûre* 'pig' is definite and in the context from which (17b) was taken, the focused element *xúpu* 'manioc' is also definite. When the preposed argument as focus is the subject (17a), the verb takes second position stress, indicating subject selection.⁸ (In this particular verb, the subject selection is indicated by the circumflex accent on the second syllable of the verb.) The preposing of the argument correlates with the subject selection (second position) stress on the verb, giving a very marked emphasis to the subject. Similarly, when the preposed argument as focus is object, the verb takes first position stress, indicating object selection. (In this case, object selection is indicated by an acute accent on the first syllable of the verb.) This stress position again correlates markedly with the very heightened focus given to the object by preposing (17b).

A particular kind of preposed focus clause can occur as a cleft construction to signal marked, narrow focus for **contrastive purposes**, as in (18a,b). Here again the verb may take either subject or object selection stress, but is preceded by the article. The correlation of the subject/object selection as marked by the verbal accent and the preposing of the subject/object together with the use of the article all mark this as narrow focus for contrastive purposes. In (18a), the verb *nikôa* takes the second position stress, indicating subject selection and in (18b), object selection is indicated by first position stress seen in the verb *níko*.

(18)

- a) Kûre ne nikô-a.
 pig ART 3eat-3O
 The pig is what eats/ate it. (—and not some other animal)
- b) Xúpu ne níko.
 manioc ART 3eat
 Manioc is what he/she/it eats/ate. (—and not something else)

5.2 Highlighting

The definite article prefixed by the *enepo-* morpheme is a **highlighting device** within normal syntactic configurations (without dislocation or preposing) to give greater degree of demonstrative emphasis to the nominal it modifies (19a,b).

(19)

- a) Míhe'oko-a enepora pahapéti
 3open-3O ART door
 He/she opened THIS door.
- b) Anéye kúveu-ke enepora uhôro.
 3be.here inside-of ART hole.
 He/she/it is inside THIS hole.

⁸ All verbs have two positions of stress, one for subject selection and one for object selection since it's not the question word that carries the 'who/what' meaning distinction but rather the type and place of verbal accent.

5.3 Tails

Tails occur with the article and the *enepo-* morpheme sentence finally for **clarification/afterthought** (20). There is a definite pause before the tail, signaled by the comma. This, along with the final positioning, is characteristic of such tails.

(20)

Sîmo ne hóyeno, enepone oxô-ti.
ʒarrive ART man ART ʒplay-DUR

The man arrived, that musician (the one, I mean, to whom I previously referred).

6 Conclusion

This paper has described the class of definite determiners in Terena, composed of the definite article and demonstratives, and its distinctive functions as definite/indefinite marker, as S/O indicator in transitive clauses, as IO/DO indicator in ditransitive clauses, and as an obligatory element in equative constructions. By the grammar's use of the article at the clause level to identify post verbal nouns as S or O in transitive clauses, and in ditransitives as IO or DO, the article's function as definite/indefinite marker is restricted to the O argument only. The S argument in such clauses cannot be overtly marked for the definite/indefinite distinction since it would neutralize the clause level function and skew the system. The same situation exists in equative clauses where the article is an obligatory element of the construction identifying the S nominal from the P nominal. There also, the article cannot be used for the overt marking of the definite/indefinite status of the S.

The article's function was also seen in relation to discourse pragmatics with regard to fronting, highlighting and tails and the individual constraints and requirements that each entails with regard to the article's occurrence or non-occurrence and positioning.

In general, although the presence of a determiner signals definiteness and its absence indefiniteness, its occurrence with an argument can, at times, be mandated or suppressed by clause type, the syntactic restraints associated with clause type and the clause core, and by discourse pragmatics.

The distinctive feature of the article in Terena discourse, as seen in this paper, is that its scope is far greater than just its use in the definite/indefinite contrast. The definite article, *ne*, has an extensive, crucial and impressive role in Terena discourse that is totally disproportionate to its two letter size.

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