



Onomastics Online

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The headedness of proper names

Abstract: Proper names pose several challenges if analysed using noun phrase rules and configurations in generative grammar. The refined definite reference in them marks the biggest difference with appellatives. This has resulted in several approaches to the structure of proper names in syntactic theory. Payne and Huddleston (2002) analyse them into proper nouns and proper names which are lexical and phrasal categories respectively. Such an analysis identifies the proper noun as the head of a proper name phrase. However, this approach runs into problems in cases of multiple proper nouns in the same proper name and proper names with no proper noun. Others have opted to analyse them using the DP Hypothesis and make them nominal phrases that complement the D in the DP structure (Abbott, 2002; Carroll, 1985). This approach also runs into its own structural problems too. This lecture uses X-bar schema to propose a different structure on the headedness of proper names. It challenges the proper noun and determiner heads and proposes a neutral head for the proper name NPs.

Keywords: Noun, proper noun, proper names, headedness, identity

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Biography: Prof. Sambulo Ndlovu is Associate Professor of linguistics at UNESWA and a Research Associate at the University of South Africa. He holds a PhD in linguistics from UCT, and his research areas are onomastics, socio- and anthropological linguistics, and cultural studies. He is the Editor-in-Chief of *Nomina Africana Journal of African Onomastics*. He sits in the Names Society of Southern Africa (NSSA) Executive Board and the scientific board for the International Symposium on Place Names. His latest books are *Naming and othering in Africa: Imagining supremacy and inferiority through language* (Routledge), and *Onomastic performatives: Names and naming from an anthropological linguistic perspective* (Mouton De Gruyter).

Onomastics Online lecture series:

Onomastics Online is a series of online lectures dealing with important timely topics related to names and naming. Given by distinguished scholars from various academic backgrounds, the lectures demonstrate the importance and the multidisciplinary nature of onomastic research. To see the list of upcoming and past lectures, please visit our webpage at: <https://icosweb.net/onomastics-online/>.

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