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ON REFERENCE TO KINDS IN INDONESIAN*

Chierchia's (1998) theory of noun denotations, formalized in the Nominal Mapping Parameter, makes the prediction that no language will have both a generalized classifier system and a singular – plural contrast in nouns. Evidence presented in this note suggests that Indonesian is just such a language. The evidence is used to raise the more general issue of the extent to which the morphosyntax of nouns can be reliably predicted from the routes by which they are mapped into their denotations (and vice versa).

1. INTRODUCTION

In an article published recently in this journal (1998), Gennaro Chierchia offers "a tightly constrained view of how the lexical category N (and its phrasal projection NP) is mapped onto its denotation across languages" (1998: 344). He in essence makes two claims. First, languages differ in whether nouns and their (determinerless) maximal projections are predicative ([+pred]) or argumental ([+arg]), where predicative NPs are mapped into their denotations as properties and argumental NPs are mapped into their denotations as kinds. Chierchia attributes this crosslinguistic variation to what he calls the Nominal Mapping Parameter. Second, the setting of this semantic parameter has important consequences for the syntactic distribution and morphological profile of a language's NPs.

Chierchia's conception of kinds is that they are spatiotemporally discontinuous individuals which can be modeled as "functions from worlds (or situations) into pluralities, the sum of all instances of the kind" (1998: 349). On this view, kinds resemble the entities denoted by mass nouns in that "the property of being an instance of a kind does not differentiate between singular and plural instances" (1998: 351). This conception is directly responsible for the semantic, syntactic, and morphological patterning associated with each of the three settings of the Nominal Mapping Parameter.

In [+arg, –pred] languages, Chierchia claims, nouns and their maximal projections must refer to kinds. Because kinds are saturated, languages of

this type permit bare (= determinerless) NPs to occur freely as arguments. Further, because kinds are mass-like in not differentiating between singular and plural instances, [+arg, –pred] languages lack a morphological contrast between singular and plural nouns "of the kind familiar from many western languages" (1998: 353). For similar reasons, these languages do not allow nouns to combine directly with numerals but instead require a classifier "to individuate an appropriate counting level" (1998: 354).

In [+pred] languages, on the other hand, nouns either can or must refer to properties, depending on the language's value for [arg]. Because properties are unsaturated, [+pred] languages which are also [–arg] demand that an NP must combine with D in order to serve as an argument; bare NP arguments are prohibited. But [+pred] languages which are also [+arg] will permit bare NP arguments under some circumstances: specifically, when the bare NP is [+arg] – that is, mass – or else [+pred] and capable of undergoing type-shifting to yield a kind – that is, plural (Chierchia 1998: 356–357).

Chierchia identifies Chinese and Japanese as [+arg, –pred] languages, French and Italian as [–arg, +pred] languages, and English as a [+arg, +pred] language. (For an opposing view of Mandarin and Cantonese, see Cheng and Sybesma 1999.) Much of his discussion is devoted to a contrastive analysis of English and Italian in which the patterning of bare plurals and generic NPs is derived from these languages' different settings of the Nominal Mapping Parameter.

What interests me here is the general claim that there are only three settings of the Nominal Mapping Parameter and every language exhibits one of them – in other words, the claim that as far as noun denotations are concerned, the possibilities just described are the only possibilities. Chierchia is admirably explicit about this and just as explicit in claiming that the Nominal Mapping Parameter has direct syntactic and morphological consequences. For instance, in discussing the setting [+arg, –pred], he says,

It is important to observe that the properties [attributed to [+arg, -pred] languages – SC] are not logically related. For example, a language with the plural-singular contrast and a generalized classifier system is certainly logically conceivable; it could, in principle, exist. The point of view we are adopting offers a seemingly principled way for ruling it out. (1998: 354)

The purpose of this short note is to flesh out what is empirically at stake in the Nominal Mapping Parameter – more generally, in a semantic parameter that is intended to have transparent syntactic and morphological consequences. I discuss one language, Indonesian, in which the patterning of NPs seems to run counter to the predictions of the Parameter.

In Indonesian, bare NP arguments occur freely and numeral classifiers are required under some circumstances, suggesting the parameter setting [+arg, –pred]. But in addition, nouns exhibit a morphological contrast between singular and plural – a contrast that ought to be ruled out in principle if nouns must denote kinds and kinds are mass-like. The observation that Indonesian has both the singular-plural contrast and a generalized classifier system does not necessarily argue against Chierchia's contention that "bare NPs can, or sometimes even must, refer to kinds" (1998: 343–344). But it does, at the very least, raise searching questions about the extent to which the morphosyntax of nouns can be reliably predicted from the routes by which they are mapped into their denotations (and vice versa). I first present the evidence and then briefly address the larger issues.

1. Introduction

Indonesian, also known as Bahasa Indonesia, is the national language of Indonesia, very closely related to Malay (Bahasa Melayu) and, like Malay, extensively documented. The sociolinguistic complexities of the use of Indonesian pose a formidable challenge to the field linguist. For this reason, the discussion below relies almost exclusively on the documentation supplied by grammars and standard teaching materials.

Indonesian is a language in which bare NP arguments occur freely, there being no definite or indefinite articles in the strict sense.[1] The examples in (1) illustrate bare NPs as direct objects or objects of prepositions. Notice that either a definite or an indefinite construal is possible. (All examples cited are accompanied by English translations in the original source.)

(1) a. Saya pinjam mobil dari kantor.
   I   borrow car   from office

   'I borrowed a car from the office.' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 715]

   b. Dia membeli buku.
   he buy   book

   'He bought a book.' [Dardjowidjojo 1978: 65]

   c. Tutup-lah pintu dengan kunci.
   lock-Emp door   with   key

   'Lock the door with a key.' [Macdonald 1976: 128]

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[1] Though they are not articles, the Indonesian demonstrative *itu* 'that', which occurs at the right edge of NP, and the enclitic *-nya* 'his, her, its' "are coming to fulfil a function very much like that of the definite article" (Macdonald 1976: 85).

d. Bagaimana kalau kita mengunjungi sekolah di desa
   how?   if   we   visit   school   in village

   ini?
   this

   'What about visiting the school in this village?' [Wolff et al.
   1992b: 295]

The examples in (2) ilustrate bare NPs as subjects:[2]

(2) a. Remdepan,   tanpa   aku rem,   mengerem   sendiri.
        brake.front without I   brake put.on.brake itself

        'The front brake, without being braked by me, braked itself.'
        [Macdonald 1976: 149]

     b. Trotski pernah meneriakkan bahwa partai tidak bisah
        Trotski once   yell.out   that   party   not   can

        bersalah.
        wrong

        'Trotski once asserted loudly that the party could not be wrong.'
        [Macdonald 1976: 102]

The free occurrence of bare NPs suggests that Indonesian might well be a
[+arg, –pred] language in Chierchia's typology – a language in which nouns
must refer to kinds. The suggestion is supported by some other consider-
ations. For instance, bare NP arguments can occur in generic sentences,
in which case they "give rise to a universal reading" (Chierchia 1998:
363).

(3) a. Anjing suka tulang.
        dog   like bone

        'Dogs like bones.' [Sneddon 1996: 17]

     b. Kertas kan mahal   sekarang.
        paper   expensive now

        'Paper is expensive these days.' [Wolff et al. 1992a: 24]

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[2] Indonesian has a specificity restriction on the subjects of clauses: roughly, the surface
subject must be either specific or generic (see, e.g., Macdonald 1976: 133). Bare NP subjects
can satisfy this restriction, as (2) shows. Cheng and Sybesma (1999: 509) report a similar
restriction on preverbal subjects in Mandarin and Cantonese.

In this respect, bare NPs pattern like bare plurals in English, which Chierchia analyzes as kind denoting.

Further, bare NPs in Indonesian seem to be scopeless (see Chierchia 1998: 368–370) – more precisely, under at least some circumstances they must take narrow scope with respect to logical operators such as negation, the intensional operator, and the like. Bare NPs that are direct objects, for instance, necessarily have narrow scope with respect to logical operators. Consider sentence (4), which contains both the sentential negative *tidak* and the bare NP *buku* "book". Speakers declare that the bare NP must take narrow scope with respect to the negation; that is, the sentence can mean only that Ali bought no book(s), not that there was a book he failed to buy:[3]

(4)   Ali tidak jadi   membeli buku.
        Ali not   finished buy   book

      'Ali didn't buy any book(s).'/*'There was a book that Ali didn't buy.'

The general point that bare NP objects are scopeless is confirmed by examples from narrative discourse. In all the examples I have managed to locate in which a bare NP object and a logical operator are clausemates, context reveals that the bare NP is intended to have narrow scope with respect to the operator. Some illustrations:

(5) a. Ia   tidak melihat perempuan.
         he   not   see   woman

       'He saw no women.' [Purwo 1989: 303]

    b. Saya sedang   mencari rumah kontrakan.
        I   be.in.process.of look.for house to.lease

       'I'm looking for a house to lease.' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 383]

Scopelessness is characteristic of bare plurals in English and – evidently – bare NP objects in Chinese, a point I return to later.[4] Given this, the scope relations in (4–5) are what we expect if Indonesian, like Chinese, is a [+arg, –pred] language.

Consistent with this parameter setting, Indonesian is a classifier language. Numerals, which could be analyzed as D, precede NP and are immediately followed by a classifier. Though it has been claimed that Indonesian has as many as sixty classifiers (Dardjowidjojo 1978: 64), only three are in frequent use in the contemporary language: *orang* 'person' (used for counting persons), *ekor* 'tail' (used for counting animals, birds, fish), and *buah* 'fruit' (used for counting other objects). Consider

(6) a. Sebentar kemudian datang se-orang   bocah pekerja
       not.long   later   come   one-Classif boy   worker

       membawakan dua buah   topi bambu.
       take   two Classif hat   bamboo

       'In a moment came a boy peddler [and] took two bamboo hats.'
       [Purwo 1989: 370]

    b. Di-lihat-nya   se-ekor   tetinggi   lagi.
       pass-see-by.him one-Classif centipede again

       'He saw a centipede.' [Purwo 1989: 302]

    c. Ada se-orang   perempuan yang   nama-nya Susan.
       exist one-Classif woman   which   name-her   Susan

       'There was a woman named Susan.' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 135]

    d. Lima ekor   anak kucing banyak.
       five   Classif child cat   many

       'Five kittens are a lot.' [Dyen 1964: 11a.–9]

Complicating the picture is the fact that classifiers are often omitted in colloquial Indonesian after numerals meaning 'two' or some number greater than two (see, e.g., Dardjowidjojo 1978: 64–65; Macdonald 1976: 82–83; Sneddon 1996: 134–135; Wolff et al. 1992b: 556). The optionality of overt

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[4] Thanks to the late Peter Rushton and to Jacqueline Ku for information bearing on this point.
      I note here that both Chinese and Indonesian seem to require scope relations to mirror the hierarchical relations of constituents in (surface) syntactic structure. See Huang (1982) and subsequent work on Chinese, and Razak (1995) on Malay. An important question not addressed here is to what extent the scopelessness of bare NP objects in Chinese and Indonesian can be made to follow from this requirement.

classifiers is conceivably due to influence from Javanese, which does not have a classifier system (Poedjosoedarmo 1982: 84). Even in formal registers of the contemporary language, an overt classifier need not occur after *dua* 'two' or higher numerals. The point is illustrated by the examples below, which are excerpted from Indonesian translations of English-language articles on Indonesian syntax.

(7) a. Arah   penjelasan yang   di-runut   ini
       direction explanation which Pass-follow this

   menimbulkan tiga   buah   pertanyaan.
   raise   three Classif question

   'This line of argument raises three questions.' [Purwo 1989: 285–287]

   b. Muda-mudahan makalah ini telah   memenuhi dua
      hopefully   then this already   fulfill   two

   tujuan pokok-nya.
   goal   principal-its

   'Hopefully, this paper has fulfilled its two major goals.' [Purwo 1989: 333]

Against this apparent optionality must be balanced two points. First, classifiers are obligatory with the numeral *se-* 'one'. *Se-* 'one' must either be followed by a classifier or else occur in the fixed expression *s(u)atu*, in which it is combined with the obsolete classifier *watu* 'stone' (Hopper 1986: 311). As Sneddon observes (1996: 135), "If the classifier is absent *se-* cannot occur." What occurs instead is a bare NP.[5] The options are illustrated below.

(8) a. Kemudian di-ambil-nya   se-helai   serbet kertas
       later   Pass-take-by.her one-Classif napkin paper

   yang   baru.
   which new

   'Then she got a new napkin.' [Purwo 1989: 318]

   b. Kemudian di-ambil-nya   kertas baru.
      later   Pass-take-by.her paper   new

   'Then she took a new piece of paper.' [Purwo 1989: 312]

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[5] Chinese too can express a singular indefinite via a bare NP or a DP headed by the numeral 'one' plus classifier; see, e.g., Li and Thompson (1981: 110, 437, 514, 516) for relevant examples.

Second, there is evidence that at an earlier stage of the language, overt classifiers were more frequent than they are today after *dua* 'two' and higher numerals. Statistics reported in Hopper's (1996) careful study of classifier use in the 19th-century Malay of the *Hikayat Abdullah*, an autobiography published in 1849, suggest that roughly 80% of the numerals that combine with NPs are accompanied by an overt classifier.[6] Some illustrative examples from the second half of the *Hikayat* are given below. (The free translations of these examples are taken from Abdullah 1970.)

(9) a. Maka di-tembak-lah dua-bĕlas puchok mĕriam di-bukit.
        then   Pass-fire-Emp twelve   Classif gun   from-hill

    '[A salute of] twelve guns was fired from the hill.' [Abdullah 1963 [1849]: 222]

    b. Ada pun tatkala mĕmbuat rumah itu tiga
       as   for when   make   house the three

       orang   orang   China   kuli   jatoh dari atas.
       Classif person Chinese laborer fell   from top

    'In the course of its construction three of the Chinese workmen fell from the top.' [Abdullah 1963 [1849]: 222]

Suppose we take the patterning of the numeral 'one' and the evidence of 19th-century Malay to indicate that Indonesian is what Chierchia calls a generalized classifier language. More precisely, when NP combines with a numeral, a classifier must be syntactically present even though it need not be phonetically overt. We then have evidence from the classifier system as well as from the free occurrence and scopelessness of bare NPs that Indonesian is a [+arg, –pred] language.

The hypothesis that Indonesian is [+arg, –pred] leads immediately to the prediction that it should lack a morphological contrast between singular and plural nouns. But in fact, the language has just such a contrast. Indonesian nouns can be inflected for plural via full reduplication, as shown in (10).

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[6] This statement should be qualified in two ways. First, Hopper does not give statistics for all DPs containing numerals in his corpus (the first half of the *Hikayat Abdullah*), but only for examples of two subclasses of DPs ("enumerated" and "presentative") drawn from small collections of randomly selected pages of text. Second, the percentage of DPs in which a numeral is followed by an overt classifier is probably higher than what Hopper reports, because his "without classifier" category apparently includes certain bare NPs.

(10) a. Buat-lah   kalimat-kalimat berikut   menjadi
        make-Emp   sentence.Pl   following   become

    kalimat-kalimat   negatif.
    sentence.Pl   negative

    'Please make the following sentences negative.' [Dardjowidjojo
    1978: 27]

b. Anak-anak   bermain-main.
   child.Pl   play

   'The children play.' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 263]

c. Pulau-pulau Bali, Lombok dan Sumbawa terletak
   island.Pl   Bali   Lombok   and   Sumbawa   lie

   di sebelah timur pulau   Jawa.
   at side   east   island Java

   'The islands of Bali, Lombok and Sumbawa are located east
   of Java.' [Sneddon 1996: 17]

d. Sudah   ada   karya-karya ilmiah   mengenai   bahasa
   already exist   work.Pl   scientific   concerning language

   itu.
   that

   'That already are some scientific works on the language.' [Wolff
   et al. 1992b: 441]

The Indonesian plural resembles more familiar plurals in one important way. Just as in English, the plural of a count noun can indicate plurality of individuals or plurality of kinds, but the plural of a mass noun indicates only plurality of kinds (see, e.g., Macdonald 1976: 79; Sneddon 1996: 17). So, for example, *buku-buku* 'books' can refer to more than one book or different kinds of books, but *minyak-minyak* 'oils', like its English translation, can refer only to different kinds of oils. This fact lends weight to the idea that as far as semantics is concerned, the singular-plural contrast we are dealing with in Indonesian is of a very familiar type.

On the other hand, the Indonesian plural differs morphologically from more familiar plurals in that its associated inflection is optional. Whereas a reduplicated noun is always construed as plural, the corresponding unreduplicated noun can be construed as singular or plural depending on context (see the references cited above and Dardjowidjojo 1978: 78). This amounts to saying that semantically plural nouns can be realized morphologically

in two ways. Compare the semantically plural nouns in the following pairs of examples.

(11) a. Latihan   pola   kalimat   mengenai   kalimat-kalimat
       practice   pattern   sentence concerning   sentence.Pl

       dasar.
       basic

       'Pattern practices on the basic sentences' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 9]

   b. Kalimat   Dasar
      sentence   basic

      'basic sentences' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 21]

(12) a. Cerita-cerita   Umar Kayam hanya di-jual   di   toko   ini
       story.Pl   Umar Kayam only   Pass-sell   in   store this

       saja.
       just

       'Umar Kayam's stories are only sold in this store.' [Wolff et al. 1992a: 24]

   b. Apa ada   cerita   pendek Umar Kayam?
      Q   exist   story   short   Umar Kayam

      'Do you have any copies of Umar Kayam's short stories?' [Wolff et al. 1992a: 24]

(13) a. Orang-orang kalau   pulang   dari   sawah   berkumpul.
       person.Pl   if   come.home   from   rice.field gather

       'When people come home from the (rice) fields, they gather together.' [Wolff et al. 1992b: 263]

   b. Dimana-mana   orang   merasa   tak   puas.
      everywhere   person   feel   not   content

      'Everywhere people feel discontented.' [Macdonald 1976: 99]

Many Indonesian grammars suggest that a semantically plural noun typically undergoes reduplication when context would not otherwise reveal that it is intended to be plural. The grammars have less to say about the circumstances under which reduplication is allowed but does not occur. One observation that seems relevant for current purposes is made by Dyen (1964: 7a.–10). He says,

The Indonesian speaker makes the choice [to reduplicate or not – SC] according to whether the collection of plural objects is to be regarded as (1) constituting a more or less uniform mass or as (2) made up of a number of discrete objects. In the first case, the undoubled word is used and in the second, the double[d] word is used. Thus *kursi* means 'a chair, a collection of undifferentiated chairs' and *kursikursi* means 'a collection of different chairs'.

I will return to Dyen's comment below. Meanwhile, I want to state clearly my belief that the optionality of plural inflection is irrelevant for the Nominal Mapping Parameter. The reason is that the nouns in a [+arg, –pred] language refer to kinds, and kinds are claimed not to differentiate between singular and plural instances at all. It should therefore be impossible within Chierchia's framework for such a language to distinguish morphologically between singular and plural nouns, even if the morphology that encodes the distinction is optional.

To summarize, there is prima facie evidence that no setting of the Nominal Mapping Parameter is appropriate for Indonesian. The language exhibits free occurrence of bare NPs, a classifier system, and a singular-plural contrast in nouns – a clustering of properties that is predicted not to occur.

2. POSSIBLE ANALYSES

Let us now briefly consider whether Indonesian could be given an analysis more compatible with the Nominal Mapping Parameter. Two possibilities spring to mind.

Most obviously, suppose we were to view the optionality of classifiers for most numerals as evidence that contemporary Indonesian is not, after all, a generalized classifier language. We would then be free to imagine that Indonesian had a parameter setting different from what we had originally assumed; for instance, it might be a [+arg, +pred] language. Under such an analysis, Indonesian would resemble English in allowing NPs to be property denoting or kind denoting. And it would resemble Russian, another [+arg, +pred] language, in that it would lack articles and so would be able to employ the full range of type-shifting operations. The result would be that bare NP arguments "would occur freely and have a generic, definite, or indefinite meaning," just as in Russian (Chierchia 1998: 360–361).

Such an analysis would be appealing in that it would assimilate Indonesian to the Russian version of a very familiar pattern. It would, however, leave two properties of Indonesian bare NPs unexplained. First, as was shown in (4–5), bare NP objects are scopeless. But if such NPs in their indefinite interpretation are exactly analogous to indefinite singulars in English or Russian, then it becomes unclear why it is impossible for

them to have wide scope. Second, bare NPs in generic sentences cannot be overtly inflected for the plural. Sneddon (1996: 17) is quite explicit on this point. But if such NPs are exactly analogous to bare plurals in English or Russian, then their inability to exhibit plural inflection becomes mysterious. Notice, by the way, that both properties would follow more or less immediately under our original assumption that Indonesian was a [+arg, –pred] language.[7]

A more subtle approach might be to appeal to language change. Classifiers have been claimed to be omitted more often in colloquial than in formal Indonesian, and overt plural inflection is optional. Recall also Dyen's comment that semantically plural nouns are construed as collections of individuals when overtly inflected for the plural, but as mass-like otherwise. Putting all these observations together, we might conjecture that Indonesian has the morphosyntax it has because it is resetting its value for the Nominal Mapping Parameter: it is evolving from a [+arg, –pred] language to a [+arg, +pred] language. On this view, the Chinese-like properties just described – free occurrence of bare NP arguments, scope-lessness, and the classifier system – reflect a grammatical system with the older parameter setting, while the singular-plural contrast reflects a coex-isting system with the newer setting.

While not without virtues, such an approach would be hard to maintain, for the following reason. If Indonesian were indeed undergoing a shift in its parameter setting, we would expect the singular-plural contrast to be less in evidence at earlier stages of the language, when overt classifiers were more frequent. This prediction is not borne out in the 19th-century Malay of the *Hikayat Abdullah*. Nouns with overt plural inflection occur commonly in the *Hikayat*, as the following examples are intended to suggest:

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[7] In Russian, as expected, bare NP objects on their indefinite reading can take wide or narrow scope. Objects with wide scope typically appear in the accusative case; objects with narrow scope typically appear in the genitive. Further, as Chierchia observes, bare plurals have a generic reading but bare singulars typically do not. Thanks to Anatole Leikin and Alan Timberlake for discussion of these points.

(14) a. Maka tukang-tukang kayu   pun mĕnarah-lah akan sĕgala
        then   worker.Pl   wood also smooth-Emp   for   all

        pĕrkakas rumah itu.
        part   house   that

        'Carpenters started shaping planks of wood for various parts
        of the building.' [Abdullah 1963 [1849]: 221]

     b. Dan lagi pula pĕrahu-pĕrahu Mĕlayu pun   ada
        and still also boat.Pl   Malay   even exist

        mĕmbawa pula hamba-hamba dari Siak.
        bring   also slave.Pl   from Siak

        'There were also Malay boats bringing slaves from Siak.'
        [Abdullah 1963 [1849]: 225]

     c. Maka di-tinggalkan-nya,   dĕngan sĕnapang-sĕnapang
        then   Pass-leave.behind-by.him   with   rifle.Pl

        ia   lari.
        he run

        'He ran past leaving (them) holding (their) rifles.' [Abdullah
        1963 [1849]: 203]

Nouns with overt plural inflection can even combine with a numeral plus
an overt classifier, though this is not usual. Consider the following example
from the *Hikayat*:[8]

(15)   Maka ku-lihat ada   lima ĕnam puloh orang
        then   I-see   exist five six   ten   Classif

        hamba-hamba laki-laki pĕrĕmpuan di-bawa   Bugis.
        slave.Pl   male   female   Pass-take by.Bugis

        'I saw fifty or sixty slaves male and female being led by a
        Bugis man.' [Abdullah 1963 [1849]: 222]

The fact that a morphologically plural noun and an overt classifier can occur
within the same DP provides telling evidence that these pieces of mor-
phology are produced by a single linguistic system, not by two separate
but coexisting systems.

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[8] Grammars of Indonesian report that when a NP is combined with a numeral greater than
'two' and an overt classifier, the noun usually does not undergo reduplication. Nonetheless,
even in the contemporary language, examples of this sort do occasionally occur.

3. CONCLUSION

There are probably languages besides Indonesian in which bare NP arguments and a classifier system are found alongside a singular-plural contrast in nouns. Assuming this to be so, a question is raised. What is the significance of Indonesian and other such languages for the Nominal Mapping Parameter?

The answer depends on the extent to which one is committed to a tight mapping between semantics on the one hand and morphosyntax on the other. Suppose one believes, as Chierchia evidently does, that the settings of this semantic parameter must have transparent morphological and syntactic consequences. Then Indonesian offers evidence that the Nominal Mapping Parameter needs to be revised in some way. On the other hand, suppose one believes, as I do, that the mapping between semantics and morphosyntax is not so rigidly determined. Then the Indonesian evidence might, at first glance, seem benign. The facts just described would certainly pose no threat to the core insight of the Parameter, namely, that bare NPs can in principle reach their denotations as properties or as kinds. And because there would be no reason to expect particular parameter settings to correlate with particular clusters of morphosyntactic properties, there would be nothing surprising about the Indonesian profile.

The situation becomes more complicated, it seems to me, if one pursues the line of thought a little further and asks just what Indonesian's setting would be for a Nominal Mapping Parameter reconfigured along these lines. Would Indonesian be like Chinese in requiring NPs to be kind denoting? Or would it be like Russian in permitting NPs to be kind denoting *or* property denoting? In the absence of clear morphosyntactic cues, how could one tell, given that – as Chierchia observes – all options lead ultimately to the same semantic interpretation? To put the point differently, the acquisition issue of how the Nominal Mapping Parameter comes to be set in one way as opposed to another (see Chierchia 1998: 400–401) would arise more insistently if the parameter were reconfigured so that it had no morphosyntactic consequences. But if the original connection to the morphosyntax is maintained, then there seems to be no straightforward way of accommodating Indonesian.

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