

## Chapter 4. Determiner Phrases

### 1 Introduction

Determiner Phrases (DPs) include pronouns and nouns modified by determiners (type  $\langle e \rangle$ ). Pronouns are a special type of nouns, but they differ in the sense that pronouns are referential but nouns are non-referential when they are not determined. That is, pronouns can specify an individual in some possible world, while nouns can do so only with the help of some other overt components such as demonstratives or covert components such as contexts in languages without articles.

Determiners refer to functional words that introduce nouns and provide information about their reference, such as definiteness, quantity, possession, or specificity. Generally, determiners include articles (e.g., *the*, *a/an*), demonstratives (e.g., *this*, *those*), possessives (e.g., *my*, *their*), quantifiers (e.g., *every*, *some*), interrogative determiners (e.g., *which*, *whose*), and numerals (e.g., *one*). Catalan determiners include articles, demonstratives, possessives, interrogative determiners, and quantifiers. When a noun is modified by a determiner, it becomes referential.

### 2 Articles

Articles are one of the most crosslinguistically used determiners that indicate how specific or identifiable the noun is, i.e., they pick a member from the set denoted by the noun.

Generally speaking, articles can be divided into definites and indefinites. Definites pick a specific member that is unique in a given context (the iota operator  $\iota$ ). Indefinites pick a non-specific member from the set (the existential operator  $\exists$ ). See (1):

- (1) a.  $\llbracket \text{the man} \rrbracket = \iota x. \text{MAN}(x)$   
 b.  $\llbracket \text{a man} \rrbracket = \lambda P. \exists x. [\text{MAN}(x) \wedge P(x)]$   
 c.  $\iota x. \varphi(x) = y \iff \exists y. [\varphi(y) \wedge \forall z(\varphi(z) \rightarrow z = y)]$

There are two systems of definites in Catalan, one for ordinary nouns and the other for personal names, and one system of indefinites. See a summary in Table 1 and examples in (2) - (4).

Table 1: Articles in Catalan

	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Definite	el / l'	la / l'	els	les
Personal definite	en / l'	la / l'	els	les
Indefinite	un	una	uns	unes

- (2) a. *el noi* ‘the boy’  
 b. *l’home* ‘the man’, *l’aigua* ‘the water’  
 c. *la noia* ‘the girl’  
 d. *els nois* ‘the boys’, *les noies* ‘the girls’
- (3) a. *en Joan* ‘Joan’  
 b. *la Maria* ‘Maria’  
 c. *l’Austin* ‘Austin’, *l’Anna* ‘Anna’  
 d. *els Puig* ‘the Puig family’, *les Puig* ‘the Puig sisters’
- (4) a. *un llibre* ‘a book’  
 b. *una casa* ‘a house’  
 c. *uns llibres* ‘some books’

- d. *unes cases* ‘some houses’

### 3 Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to a person in a given context. In general, there are two systems of (personal) pronouns in Catalan, including the lexical pronouns and the clitic pronouns. Lexical pronouns can be used independently as determined nouns, while clitic pronouns can only be used when they are attached to a verb.

#### 3.1 Lexical pronouns

Lexical pronouns have generally been losing their features of case marking. Only the first person in singular is distinguished between subject and object/oblique. See a summary in Table 2 and examples in (5).

Table 2: Lexical pronouns in Catalan		
Person and number	Nominative	Accusative/Dative
1SG	jo	mi
2SG		tu
3SG		ell/ella
1PL		nosaltres
2PL		vosaltres
3PL		ells/elles
HONORIC.SG		vostè
HONORIC.PL		vostès

- (5) a. Jo vaig menjar un poma.  
I 1SG.PST eat a apple  
‘I ate an apple.’
- b. Tu vas menjar un poma.  
you 2SG.PST eat a apple  
‘You ate an apple.’
- c. Ell va menjar un poma.  
he 3SG.PST eat a apple  
‘He ate an apple.’
- d. Nosaltres vam menjar un poma.  
we 1PL.PST eat a apple  
‘We ate an apple.’
- e. Vosaltres vau menjar un poma.  
I 1PL.PST eat a apple  
‘You ate an apple.’
- f. Elles van menjar un poma.  
they 1PL.PST eat a apple  
‘They ate an apple.’
- g. Vostè va menjar un poma.  
you.HON 3SG.PST eat a apple  
‘You ate an apple.’
- h. Vostès va menjar un poma.  
you.HON 3SG.PST eat a apple  
‘You ate an apple.’

Special attention should be given to the 3SG and 3PL, which don't necessarily refer to humans. Instead, they can also refer to objects or places, as shown in (6).

(6) (Context: There is a *taula* 'table' in the Cortes Ingles.)

Hi ha un llibre a ella.  
 LOC HAVE a book LOC 3SG.FEM  
 'There is a book on it.'

### 3.2 Clitic pronouns

Clitic pronouns differ from lexical pronouns in the sense that they can only be used as a clitic of a verb, and they only have forms of accusative and dative. See a summary in Table 3 and examples in (7) and (8).

Table 3: Clitic pronouns in Catalan

Person and number	Accusative	Dative
1SG		em / m'
2SG		et / t'
3SG/HONORIC.SG	el / la / ho (neutral)	li
1PL		ens
2PL		us
3PL/HONORIC.PL	els / les	els

- (7) a. Em va veure.  
 me 3SG.PST see  
 '(S)he saw me.'
- b. Et va veure.  
 you 3SG.PST see  
 '(S)he saw you.'
- c. El vaig veure.  
 him 1SG.PST see  
 'I saw him.'
- d. Ens va veure.  
 us 3SG.PST see  
 '(S)he saw us.'
- e. Us va veure.  
 you.PL 3SG.PST see  
 '(S)he saw you.'
- f. Les vaig veure.  
 them.FEM 3SG.PST see  
 'I saw them.'
- g. No ho sé.  
 NEG it know  
 'I don't know it.'
- h. M' ha vist.  
 me HAVE.3SG seen  
 '(S)he has seen me.'

- (8) a. (A mi) m' agrada.  
to me me be.likable.3SG  
'I like him/her/it (lit. To me, he/she/it is likable).'
- b. T' agrada.  
you be.likable.3SG  
'You like him/her/it (lit. To you, he/she/it is likable).'
- c. A ell li agrada.  
to him him be.likable.3SG  
'He likes him/her/it (lit. To him, he/she/it is likable).'
- d. Ens agrada.  
us be.likable.3SG  
'We like him/her/it (lit. To us, he/she/it is likable).'
- e. Us agrada.  
you.PL be.likable.3SG  
'You like him/her/it (lit. To you, he/she/it is likable).'
- f. Els agrada.  
them be.likable.3SG  
'They like him/her/it (lit. To them, he/she/it is likable).'

Besides, there is a clitic for place in Catalan: *hi* 'there' (neutral):

- (9) Hi ha un llibre a la taula.  
there HAVE a book LOC the table  
'There is a book on the table.'

## 4 Demonstratives

Demonstratives are words we use to point to or indicate things—usually showing which one we mean, especially in terms of distance or location relative to the speaker and listener. One of the most common features of demonstratives is spatial deixis. Typologically, languages with a two-way distinction of demonstratives are most common cross languages (e.g., English, Mandarin Chinese). However, there are languages that employ a three-way distinction (e.g., Japanese, Spanish) or even more ways (e.g., Malagasy (Austronesian)). Catalan applies a two-way distinction in all of demonstrative pronouns, demonstrative adjectives, and demonstratives for place.

### 4.1 Demonstrative pronouns and adjectives

The demonstrative pronouns and adjectives in Catalan share the same form, as summarized in Table 4 and exemplified in (10) and (11).

Table 4: Demonstrative pronouns and adjectives in Catalan		
Number and Gender	Near the Speaker	Far from the Speaker
MAS.SG	aquest	aquell
FEM.SG	aquesta	aquella
MAS.PL	aquests	aquells
FEM.PL	aquestes	aquelles

- (10) a. *aquest llibre* 'this book'  
b. *aquesta casa* 'this house'  
c. *aquests llibres* 'these books'

- d. *aquestes cases* ‘these houses’
- (11) a. *aquell home* ‘that man’  
 b. *aquella dona* ‘that woman’  
 c. *aquells homes* ‘those men’  
 d. *aquelles dones* ‘those women’

Moreover, there is another pair of demonstrative pronouns with the neutral gender, which usually refer to abstract things like an idea or the content of a sentence, see Table 5 and (12) - (13).

Table 5: Neutral demonstrative pronouns in Catalan

Gender	Near the Speaker	Far from the Speaker
NEUTRAL	això	allò

- (12) a. *Què és això?*  
 what be.3SG this  
 ‘What is this?’  
 b. *Això no ho sabia.*  
 this NEG it know.3SG.PST.IMPF  
 ‘I didn’t know this.’
- (13) a. *Allò que vas dir era cert.*  
 that COMP 2SG.PST say be.3SG.PST.IMPF true  
 ‘What you said was not true.’  
 b. *Allò és massa lluny per caminar-hi.*  
 that be.3SG too far for walk-there  
 ‘That is too far to walk there.’

## 4.2 Demonstratives of place

There are three demonstratives of place in Catalan, as summarized in Table 6 and exemplified in (14).

Table 6: Demonstratives of place in Catalan

Specificity	Near the Speaker	Far from the Speaker
SPECIFIC SPOT	aquí	allí
NON-SPECIFIC SPOT (direction)		allà

- (14) a. *Visc aquí a la Plaça Valle Inclán.*  
 live.1SG here LOC the square  
 ‘I live here in the square Valle Inclán.’  
 b. *Deixa-ho allí.*  
 leave.2SG.IMP-it there  
 ‘Leave it there.’  
 c. *L’ escola és allà.*  
 the school be.3SG there  
 ‘The school is around there.’

## 5 Possessives

Possessives are forms that express a relationship between two entities, typically indicating ownership, part-whole relations, kinship, or other close associations. A possessive includes

two participants, namely the POSSESSOR (the entity that holds the relationship) and the POSSESSED (the entity being related to). Morphologically, possessives can be marked by affixes (e.g., Turkish: *ev-im* ‘my house’), clitics (e.g., English: John’s book), pronouns (e.g., English: my), juxtapositions (e.g., Mandarin: 我的书 *wǒde shū* ‘my book’), and prepositions (e.g., English: the book of John), etc. Semantically, they can be divided into alienable possession (e.g., John’s car) and inalienable possession (e.g., my hand). Crosslinguistically, languages vary in whether possessor appears before or after the possessed, whether possession uses agreement, case marking, or adpositions, and whether different morphosyntactic strategies are used for alienable vs. inalienable possession.

Catalan applies the preposition *de* and possessive pronouns for the possession.

### 5.1 Physical and abstract possessions

Both physical and abstract possessions are marked by *de*, the basic structure of which is [POSSESSED + *de* + POSSESSOR], and there is no difference between alienable and inalienable possessions. See some examples:

- (15) a. el llibre d’ en Joan  
the book of the  
‘The book of Joan’  
b. la casa de la Maria  
the house of the  
‘the house of Maria’  
c. el pare de l’ Anna  
the father of the  
‘the father of Anna’

### 5.2 Pronominal possessives

The pronominal possessives in Catalan are marked for person, number, gender, and sometimes definiteness. See a summary in Table 7 and examples in (16).

Table 7: Pronominal possessives in Catalan

Gender and Number	MAS.SG	MAS.PL	FEM.SG	FEM.PL
1SG	el meu	els meus	la meva	les meves
2SG	el teu	els teus	la teva	les teves
3SG/PL	el seu	els seus	la seva	les seves
1PL	el nostre	els nostres	la nostra	les nostres
2PL	el vostre	els vostres	la vostra	les vostres

- (16) a. *el meu llibre* ‘my book’  
b. *la teva casa* ‘your house’  
c. *el seu professor* ‘his/her/their teacher’  
d. *els seus ordinadors* ‘his/her/their computers’  
e. *el nostre amic* ‘our friend’  
f. *les vostres classes* ‘your classes’

### 5.3 Omission of POSSESSED

The POSSESSED can be omitted when it is clear from the context.

- (17) a. (Aquest llibre) és d' en Joan.  
           this     book be.3SG of the  
           ‘(This book) is Joan’s.’  
       b. (Aquella casa) és la meva.  
           that     house be.3SG the mine  
           ‘(That house) is mine.’

#### 5.4 Partitive

When the POSSESSED is a numeral or *alguns/algunes* ‘some’, the noun (the abstract POSSESSOR) can be replaced by the clitic pronoun *en* attached before the verb.

- (18) a. Vaig llegir tres dels llibres.  
           1SG.PST read three of.the books  
           ‘I read three of the books.’  
       b. En vaig llegir tres.  
           of.them 1SG.PST read three  
           ‘I read three (of them).’  
       (19) a. Conec algunes de les persones.  
               know.1SG some of the persons  
               ‘I know some of the people.’  
           b. En conec algunes.  
               of.them know.1SG some  
               ‘I know some (of them).’

## 6 Interrogatives

Interrogatives are clauses whose primary function is to request information. A major subtype is WH-interrogatives, which are interrogative clauses introduced or headed by a WH-word (also called an interrogative word). Interrogative words can be divided into interrogative pronouns and interrogative determiners.

### 6.1 Interrogative pronouns

Like pronouns, Catalan interrogative pronouns are determined in nature. See a summary in Table 8 and examples in (20).

Table 8: Interrogative pronouns in Catalan

WH-word	Catalan
who	qui
what	què
where	on
which	quin / quina / quins / quines
when	quan
why	per què
how	com
how much	quant / quanta / quants / quantes

- (20) a. Qui és aquest home?  
who be.3SG this man  
'Who is this man?'
- b. Què vols menjar avui?  
what want.2SG eat today  
'What do you want to eat today?'
- c. On vius ara?  
where live.2SG now  
'Where do you live now?'
- d. Quins prefereixes?  
which prefer.2SG  
'Which do you prefer?'
- e. Quan torna el tren?  
when return.3SG the train  
'When does the train come back?'
- f. Per què estàs trist?  
why be.2SG sad  
'Why are you sad?'
- g. Com es diu aquesta ciutat?  
how PASS say this city  
'What is the name of this city? (lit. How is this city called?)'
- h. Quant costa això?  
how much cost.3SG this  
'How much is this?'

## 6.2 Interrogative determiners

Catalan interrogative determiner includes *quin / quina / quins / quines* 'which', which behave more like demonstratives and possessives, in the sense that they determine a noun to form a DP.

- (21) Quin llibre estàs llegint?  
which.MAS.SG book be.2SG reading  
'Which book are you reading?'

## 7 Quantification

Generalized quantifiers are expressions that denote relations between sets (or properties), rather than individuals. Numerals, or cardinal quantifiers are quantificational expressions that specify the exact number (cardinality) of individuals in the intersection of two sets. Catalan has ways of quantification as such:

- (22) a. Universal quantifiers: e.g., *cada* 'every', *tots / totes* 'all'  
b. Free-choice: e.g., *qui sigui / quisevulla* 'whoever', *qualsevol* 'any / whichever'  
c. Existential quantifiers: e.g., *algun / alguns / alguna / algunes* 'some', *algú* 'someone'  
d. Negative concords: e.g., *cap* 'none of', *ningú* 'nobody', *res* 'nothing'  
e. Context-dependent quantifiers: e.g., *molts / moltes* 'many'  
f. Numerals: e.g., *un / una* 'one', *dos / dues* 'two'