

## Definiteness in Yoruba: Weak and Strong Definite

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**Abstract :** This paper examines how the Yoruba language encodes definiteness without definite articles, focusing on weak and strong definites as defined by previous researchers and further explored by recent linguistics scholars. In languages without definite articles, like Yoruba, definiteness is marked using bare nouns (BN) and demonstratives (DEM), with the former often associated with weak or unique definites and the latter with strong or anaphoric definites. Drawing on the earlier classification framework, this study investigates how Yoruba aligns with or diverges from other article-less languages, such as Mandarin and Akan, in marking definiteness. It explores two primary contexts: weak definites, where uniqueness is implied, and strong definites, which refer to previously mentioned or familiar entities. The paper highlights the use of bare nouns in unique environments and the introduction of demonstratives in contexts where further specification or clarification is needed. Additionally, Yoruba's reliance on a salience marker to emphasize familiarity in strong definite environments is discussed, drawing parallels with the behavior of demonstratives in other languages. This study contributes to the ongoing discussion of definiteness in article-less languages by demonstrating the central role of salience and proximity in Yoruba's definiteness marking system.

**Keywords :** definiteness, strong definite, weak definites, Yoruba

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