THE ALLEGED "NON-SPECIFICITY" IN JAPANESE NOMINALS WITH FLOATING NUMERAL QUANTIFIERS*

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1. Introduction

Nominal expressions in articleless languages such as Japanese and Mandarin Chinese are known to be compatible with a wide range of uses. In (1) below, the unmodified count noun *inu* ('dog') is used inside a predicate that is rather useless in determining in what sense 'dog' was alluded to, as suggested by the accompanying translations.

(1) Hana-ga   **inu** nitsuite hanashita.
     Hana-NOM dog about   talked

     'Hana talked about a dog/some dog(s)/the dog(s)/dogs.'

Even if we set aside the number-neutrality of Japanese count nouns, with (1), one may be talking about Hana's general desire to own a pet dog, or about the menacing dog that she always sees on her way to nursery school, or about her enthusiasm about the general attributes of the canine species: their physiology, behavior, populations, etc.

Note that I refer to the possible "uses" of (1), not its "interpretations," so that I can avoid the presumption that (1) must have the underlying syntax and semantics that somehow yield various distinct interpretations. It may be the general pragmatic capacities that give rise to different uses of (1) on the basis of its single semantic interpretation.

An interesting line of approach, however, posits structural complexity in the nominals of articleless languages. On this approach, even the bare nominal in (1) can have multiple layers of functional projections whose semantic features determine its various interpretations. This paper examines one particular analysis of Japanese nominals along this approach.

In what follows, in Section 2, I will introduce Watanabe's (2006, 2008) analysis of Japanese nominals that occur with "floating numeral quantifiers" (FNQ) such as *san-nin* ('three'-classifier), which are preceded by the head noun and its case. According to the analysis, a nominal argument involving an FNQ has a D projection that encodes "non-specificity." I will give an overview of the analysis and two pieces of evidence Watanabe puts forward in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. In Section 3, I will introduce the behaviors of

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nominals in Turkish (3.1) and Bangla (3.2) that are seemingly in support of Watanabe's proposal. One problematic aspect of Watanabe's analysis is that he doesn't specify the semantic-pragmatic details of the posited non-specificity feature. In Section 4, I will present three standard ways to understand the conception of specificity (4.1) and examine Japanese nominals with FNQs in light of them (4.2). I will argue that the alleged "non-specific" nominals containing FNQs are in fact compatible with both specific and non-specific uses, and so there is no good reason to posit a head with the "non-specificity" feature. In Section 5, I will conclude the paper by discussing the rather limited scope of my argument and pointing to further work for understanding the nominal system of articleless languages.

2. Watanabe's (2006) "Non-specific" D in Japanese

In this section, first, I will present an overview of Watanabe's (2006) analysis of Japanese nominals with FNQs. Second, I will introduce two sets of facts that Watanabe shows in favor of the analysis. Both are claimed to involve non-specificity. In the later part of the paper, I will question if the claim is sufficiently grounded.

2.1. An overview of the proposal

Here is a brief overview of the part of Watanabe (2006) that is relevant to our purposes. The central fact that Watanabe sets out to explain is the following variation in the relative positions of a numeral quantifier, a case particle, and the head noun.

(2) a. John-wa   hon **san-satsu**-o katta.
        John-TOP book 3-CL-ACC bought

   'John bought three 3 books.'

   b. John-wa **san-satsu**-no hon-o katta.

   c. John-wa hon-o **san-satsu** katta.

   d. John-wa **san-satsu** hon-o katta.   (Watanabe 2006, p. 244, ex. 3)

According to Watanabe, Japanese NPs can be embedded inside a number of functional projections such as CasePs and DPs, and a series of phrasal movements account for the observed variation. I will suppress many potentially distracting details and focus on (2b) and (2c) here. The Noun-Numeral-Classifier-Case order in (2a) is derived first. The noun *hon* there occupies Spec of CaseP headed by the accusative case. The numeral-classifier *san-satsu* then moves to Spec of Q(uantifier)P to result in (2b). (2c), the Noun-Case-FNQ order, is derived from (2b) by virtue of the presence of a silent D that encodes "non-specificity." The CaseP *hon-o* is raised to Spec of DP projected by the silent D. The derivation of (2c) from (2b) can be sketched as follows.

(3) a. [$_{QP}$ san-satsu [$_{CaseP}$ hon-o] Q]

    b.   [DP hon-o [QP san-satsu [CaseP ~~hon-o~~] Q] D]

Crucially, (3b) is obtained because the silent D has a semantic feature that requires movement. Thus, Watanabe's proposal advances the view that even articleless languages like Japanese have D projections that are comparable to those in languages with articles.

2.2. Evidence from FNQs

Watanabe (2006, p. 297) quite rightly notes that "Case agreement between D and the Case head still falls short of establishing that the Case head has semantic content," and introduces the following two examples, which he considers to provide sufficient ground for positing the "non-specific" D head.

First, Watanabe cites a widely-known fact that the Noun-Case-FNQ order isn't compatible with an "individual-level predicate" in the sense of Diesing (1992), Kratzer (1995), such as *is good at English*, whereas a "stage-level predicate," such as *spoke English*, is permissible in the same construction, as shown by (4c).

(4) a. Gakusei **san-nin**-ga eigo-ga   umai/eigo-o   hanashita.
          students 3-CL-NOM English-NOM good/English-ACC spoke

         'Three students are good at/spoke English.'

    b. **San-nin**-no gakusei-ga eigo-ga umai/eigo-o hanashita.

    c. Gakusei-ga **san-nin** *?eigo-ga umai/eigo-o hanashita.

                                       (Watanabe 2006, p. 298, ex. 94, 95)

(4c) contains an FNQ and seems degraded with the individual-level predicate *eigo-ga umai*, compared to (4a, b). Watanabe's interpretation of the observation is that individual-level predicates are incompatible with non-specific indefinite subjects, and hence the nominal subject in (4c) must contain the non-specific D head.

Second, Watanabe also embeds the NP-Case-FNQ inside an intensional construction as follows.

(5) a. John-wa   piano **ni-dai**-o   kai-tagatta.
          John-TOP piano 2-CL-ACC buy-wanted

         'John wanted to buy two pianos.'

    b. John-wa **ni-dai**-no piano-o kai-tagatta.

    c. John-wa piano-o **ni-dai** kai-tagatta.   (Watanabe 2006, p. 298, ex. 96)

Watanabe claims that (5a, b) are ambiguous between specific and non-specific readings,

whereas (5c) only has the non-specific reading. In the specific reading, there are a pair of particular pianos that are "the target of desire," while in the non-specific reading, "any two pianos will do" (p. 299). According to Watanabe, the nominal in (5c) is semantically forced to have the non-specific interpretation, and hence there has to be a semantic constituent that triggers a non-specific interpretation in the NP-Case-FNQ structure in general.

In Section 4, I will closely scrutinize the conception of specificity and if the FNQ sentences are really related to the lack of it. I will argue that there is no sufficient reason to believe that the NP-Case-FNQ structure in general semantically encodes non-specificity. But before doing so, let us consider two different facts from two different languages that are seemingly in support of Watanabe's proposal.

3. Seemingly Related Facts

In this section, first, I will discuss the fact about Turkish objects that Watanabe cites in defense of the proposed semantic specificity in Japanese nominals. Second, I will introduce an analysis of Bangla DPs that appears to directly support Watanabe's proposal.

3.1. Specificity in Turkish objects

Watanabe points to Enç's (1991) observation that, in Turkish, an overt accusative case particle must be present for a specific interpretation.

(6) a.   Ali bir piyano-**yu** kiralamak istiyor.
      Ali one piano-ACC rent   wants

      'Ali wants to rent a certain piano.'

  b.   Ali bir piyano kiralamak istiyor.
      Ali one piano   rent   wants

      'Ali wants to rent a (nonspecific) piano.'   (Enç 1991 pp. 4-5, ex. 12, 13)

(6a) contains the accusative case suffix *-(y)i*, and it is obligatorily interpreted as being concerned with a specific piano, whereas (6b) lacks the suffix and obligatorily has a non-specific reading. The observation strongly indicates that the suffix *-(y)i* semantically encodes specificity. Assuming some sort of connection between Case and D, Watanabe considers the Turkish fact to be comparable to the Japanese facts discussed above, and he analyzes them in one fell swoop. Turkish has [+/-F]—"specificity" feature [F], presumably—whereas Japanese has [-F] and [øF], where [øF] purports to account for the specific/non-specific ambiguity in Japanese nominals in general.

One may wonder, like myself, exactly how we can compare a semantic feature in a case morpheme with a semantic feature of a posited unpronounced constituent. But there is a more directly comparable fact in the Bangla DP, where the movement of the head noun is claimed

to lead to a specific interpretation.

3.2. The alleged "specificity" in Bangla nominals

Bhattacharya (1999) claims that a Bangla nominal can have a leftward movement of an NP, which is very similar to Watanabe's proposed movement of CaseP discussed above. The relevant pair of sentences are the following.

(7) a. ami boi **du-To** dekhechi
      I   book two-CL seen-1P

     'I have seen the two books.'

    b. ami **du-To** boi dekhechi
       I   two-CL book seen-1P

     'I have seen two books"   (Bhattacharya 1999, ex. 40)

According to Bhattacharya, (7a) is derived from (7b) by means of the leftward movement of the NP *boi* to Spec of QP, in which the Q head can have a strong specificity feature that is checked by movement. Bhattacharya argues that the numeral-classifier *du-To* is the head of QP. On this view, as sketched by (8a, b), NP initially starts as the complement of QP and optionally moves to Spec of QP in virtue of the specificity feature. As a result, (7a) is claimed to have a specific reading.

(8) a. [$_{QP}$ [$_Q$ two-CL] [$_{NP}$ book]]

    b. [$_{QP}$ [$_{NP}$ book] [$_Q$ two-CL] ~~book~~]

Bhattacharya's analysis of Bangla seems parallel to Watanabe's proposal in (3). The leftward movement of a noun is caused by a particular semantic feature, the precise nature of which can vary from language to language. One may as well further speculate that, in Bangla, [+F] is lexically encoded and in Japanese, [-F] is lexically encoded, though it remains unpronounced.

In Section 4.3, we will come back to Bangla and consider Dayal's (2012) argument that it is indeed "definiteness" not "specificity" that Bangla DPs semantically encode. If Dayal is correct, then it would be very difficult to motivate "specificity" in Japanese.

4. FNQs and "Non-specificity"

In this section, first, I will separate and illustrate three distinct notions of specificity referring to standard examples in the literature. Second, I will examine FNQs in light of the three notions of specificity. It will be shown that none of the notions correlate to Japanese nominals with FNQs, *pace* Watanabe's proposal.

4.1. Various forms of specificity

The term "specificity" is associated with a variety of notions that are broadly related to the use and interpretation of nominal expressions, and there is no single notion that theorists collectively use in discussing "specificity." For example, von Heusinger (2012, 2019) identifies seven different notions of specificity that have been introduced and examined in the literature. The following discussion is by no means exhaustive. I will focus on three, potentially related, notions of "specificity": (i) "referential specificity," (ii) "scopal specificity," and (iii) "partitive specificity." The first two types of specificity are what theorists almost always acknowledge in discussing nominal expressions that have specific uses, and the third one is also important, because it is the partitive specificity that Enç (1991) assumes to be encoded in the Turkish accusative marker discussed above.

Karttunen's (1976) example of the indefinite phrase *a Swede* below illustrates the notion of (i) referential specificity.

(9)   Mary may want to marry a Swede.   (Karttunen 1976, ex. 43)

(9) is ambiguous at least in two different ways. On one reading, the speaker has a particular person in mind and alludes to the possibility of Mary's marrying to that person. On this specific use, (9) can be anaphorically followed by a sentence such as *And **she/he** is a linguist I know*. On the other reading, the speaker has no particular person in mind and merely entertaining what kind of person Mary would desire to marry to. On this non-specific use of *a Swede*, (9) can only be followed by a sentence such as *But she hasn't found **one** yet*.

One might suppose that the indefinite in (9) is an ordinary quantificational phrase that can undergo QR to have a wide scope reading. Fodor and Sag (1982), however, have shown that indefinites have (ii) scopal specificity, which cannot be easily reduced to the wide scope interpretations of existentially quantified phrases. Fodor and Sag (1982) discuss what is often referred to as the "exceptional scope" behaviors of indefinite phrases.

(10) a.   If a friend of mine from Texas had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune.

   b.   If each friend of mine from Texas had died in the fire, I would have inherited a fortune.

                    (Fodor and Sag 1982, pp. 369-70, ex. 60, 63)

(10a) can be interpreted not only as a conditional statement whose antecedent is an existential claim about any of the speaker's friends from Texas, but also as a conditional statement about a certain, specific friend of the speaker. On the other hand, (10b) can only be interpreted as a conditional statement whose antecedent is a universal claim about the speaker's friends from Texas. They all would have to suffer from the fire for the speaker to have inherited a fortune. Crucially, (10b) doesn't have the reading in which for each friend, if she or he had died, the speaker would have inherited a fortune. That is, the quantificational phrase *each friend of*

mine from Texas cannot take wide scope escaping the island constraint introduced by the *if*-clause. By contrast, the indefinite in (10a) somehow escapes the conditional island or has an apparent wide scope interpretation.

The same observation can be made using a nominal island, as shown by the contrast between (11a) and (11b) below.

(11) a. John overheard the rumor that a student of mine has been called before the dean.

 b. John overheard the rumor that each of my students had been called before the dean.

<div style="text-align:right">(Fodor and Sag 1982, p. 369, ex. 58, 56)</div>

(11b) says that the content of the rumor involves universal quantification, and the *each*-phrase cannot be interpreted as taking wide scope over the matrix verb *overheard*, whereas the indefinite *a student of mine* in (11a) can be interpreted as referring to a particular student of the speaker. Thus, indefinites phrases can also be "specific" in the sense of (apparently) evading scope islands as well.

Enç (1991) associates (iii) partitive specificity with the Turkish accusative case marker. The partitive specificity of an indefinite can be illustrated by the following.

(12)   Some children entered the room. I knew a girl.   (von Heusinger 2019, p. 147, ex. 3)

A partitive reading of (12) says that the speaker knows one girl among the already mentioned set of children—*a girl* is understood to be part of the aforementioned children. The children who entered the room probably included several boys and girls, and the speaker intends to talk about one of them. On the other hand, a non-partitive reading of (12) says that a girl is not among the children mentioned earlier. The speaker knew a girl who was presumably already in the room when the children showed up. Although (12) is compatible with both partitive and non-partitive readings, according to Enç (1991, p. 6), the Turkish counterpart of (12) that contains the explicit accusative morpheme discussed above obligatorily has the partitive reading, and one without the morpheme obligatorily has the non-partitive reading.

Let us now turn to Japanese nominals and consider if their uses are constrained in terms of any of the senses of specificity elucidated here.

4.2. The independence of "non-specificity" from FNQs

(i) Referential specificity may be what Watanabe has in mind when he claims that the FNQ structure forces a non-specific interpretation. It is true that the Japanese counterpart of (9) with an FNQ, (13a) below, tends to be read non-specifically when no elaborate description of the context is provided. Perhaps Professor Abe prefers to hire a linguist rather than hiring a philosopher. On the other hand, in accordance with Watanabe's analysis, (13b) seems to have both non-specific and specific readings, the latter of which indicates that the

speaker has a particular linguist in mind and refers to her using the indefinite phrase *hito-ri-no gengogakusya*.

(13) a.   Abe-sensei-wa   gengogakusha-o **hito-ri** yatoi-tagatta.
          Abe-teacher-TOP linguist-ACC   1-CL   hire-wanted

          'Professor Abe wanted to hire a linguist.'

   b.   Abe-sensei-wa   **hito-ri**-no gengogakusha-o yatoi-tagatta.
          Abe-teacher-TOP 1-CL-GEN linguist-ACC   hire-wanted

Nevertheless, we must realize that specific and non-specific readings are not equally available to all occurrences of indefinite phrases. Fodor and Sag (1982, sec.2.1) identify several different factors that influence the judgments of speakers. For example, words such as *certain* and *particular* strongly suggest that the given sentence must be read specifically. Also, a specific reading is likely to be assigned to an indefinite phrase when the descriptive content of it is sufficiently elaborate, as illustrated by (14) below.

(14)   A student that Betty used to know in Arkansas cheated on the exam.

                         (Fodor and Sag 1982, p. 359, ex. 4)

Now, let us enrich (13a) by modifying the nominal phrase and providing some contextual background.

(15) a.   Baba-sensei-wa   (toaru) MIT-o   deta-bakari-no   sugoku yuushuuna
          Baba-teacher-TOP (certain) MIT-ACC graduated-just-GEN very   excellent

          gengogakusha-o **hito-ri** yatoi-tagatta.
          linguist-ACC   1-CL   hire-wanted

          'Professor Baba wanted to hire a very smart linguist who just graduate from MIT.'

   b.   Dakara anoyoona yosanan-o   teiansita.
          so   such   budget.plan-ACC proposed.

          'That's why she proposed that budget plan.'

It is obvious that (15a), perhaps together with the background (15b), can have a specific reading that is about a particular linguist, not about any random linguist who happens to fit the description. On Watanabe's view, however, the specific reading must be ruled out because the nominal phrase in (15a) must be headed by the "non-specific" D.

I would also like to suggest that, with enough contextual information, Watanabe's own example becomes compatible with a specific reading.

(16) a. John-wa   ookushon-ni sankashi,   kiniitta-mono-o rakusatsushiyootoshita.
       John-TOP auction-in   participate, liked-thing-ACC made.bid

       'John participated in the auction and made bids for what he liked.'

   b. John-wa (Elton John-ga   tsukatta) piano-o   **ni-dai** to
      John-TOP Elton John-NOM used   piano-ACC 2-CL and

      (Gohho-no)   kaiga-o   **ichi-mai** kai-tagatta.
      (van)Gogh-GEN painting-ACC 1-CL   buy-wanted

      'John wanted buy two pianos (that were used by Elton John) and a painting (by
      van Gogh).'

It seems to me that the preferred reading of (16b) is that John intended to purchase a
particular pair of pianos and a particular painting sold at the auction. It is probably very
unlikely that multiple van Gogh paintings are auctioned at the same time, and (16b) can
hardly express John's general, unspecified desire for paintings by van Gogh.

These considerations show that the structural pattern involving an FNQ does not
necessarily give rise to a non-specific reading in the sense of (i) referential specificity. Of
course, we can legitimately wonder why some nominal phrases are more likely to lead to
specific or non-specific readings. At any rate, the examples here, (15) and (16) above, are
counterexamples to Watanabe's proposal, if it regards referential non-specificity is what the
alleged D head encodes.

Let us now turn to (ii) scopal specificity. I will make two points about Japanese nominals
regarding this notion of specificity. First, some instances of quantifiers remain "non-specific"
on this notion: they remain within the scopes of islands, whether they "float," that is, being
separated from the head noun. Recall that, as in (10) above, an indefinite phrase in English
can take scope over a conditional island. By contrast, neither (17a) nor (17b) seems to have
the specific, wide-scope reading that, for each student, the speaker will give a lecture if she or
he shows up.

(17) a. Moshi **subete**-no gakusei-ga   kuru-nara, watashi-ga jugyoo-o   yarimasu.
       perhaps every-GEN student-NOM come-if,   I-NOM   lecture-ACC do.polite

       'If every student shows up, I will give a lecture.'

   b. Moshi gakusei-ga   **subete** kuru-nara, watashi-ga jugyoo-o   yarimasu.
      perhaps student-NOM every come-if,   I-NOM   lecture-ACC do.polite

Although Watanabe's (2006) main focus is on the numeral-classifier form, not on other
quantifiers such as *subete* ('every'), (17b) is possible presumably because CaseP *gakusei-ga*
undergoes movement because of D with [-F]. If that is accurate, and [F] here encodes (ii)
scopal specificity, then it would be unclear why the nominal in (17a) cannot escape the

conditional island unlike specific indefinites in English, since [øF] has to be compatible with both specific and non-specific interpretations.

The same point can be made using a nominal island, as we have seen in (11) regarding English. (18a) below contains no islands, and the quantificational phrase *subete-no gakusei* can take wide scope. On the other hand, whether the quantifier floats (18b) or not (18c), when *subete* is embedded inside a nominal island, the nominal phrase cannot take scope over the matrix predicate. (18b, c) can only mean that Professor Chiba received a universally quantified report.

(18) a.　Chiba-sensei-wa　　**subete**-no gakusei-ga　　hyooshoosareta to　　kiita.
　　　　Chiba-teacher-TOP every-GEN student-NOM was.awarded　　COMP heard

　　　　'Professor Chiba heard that every student was awarded.'
　　　　∀ > heard, heard > ∀

　　b.　Chiba-sensei-wa　　**subete**-no gakusei-ga　　hyooshoosareta toiu
　　　　Chiba-teacher-TOP every-GEN student-NOM was.awarded　　COMP

　　　　hookoku-o kiita.
　　　　report-ACC heard

　　　　'Professor Chiba heard the report that every student was awarded.'
　　　　*∀ > heard, heard > ∀

　　c.　Chiba-sensei-wa　　gakusei-ga　　**subete** hyooshoosareta toiu
　　　　Chiba-teacher-TOP student-NOM every　was.awarded　　COMP

　　　　hookoku-o kiita.
　　　　report-ACC heard

　　　　*∀ > heard, heard > ∀

Thus, again, If Watanabe's [F] is related to (ii) scopal specificity, it would become unclear why [øF] in (18b) is unable to produce a wide scope reading.

The second point that I would like to make here is that at least some instances of numeral quantifiers may allow specific, wide scope readings, although my judgments with respect to these cases are not particularly clear.

(19) a.　Moshi　**futa-ri**-no gakusei-ga　　kuru-nara, watashi-ga jugyoo-o　　yarimasu.
　　　　perhaps 2-CL-GEN student-NOM come-if,　　I-NOM　　lecture-ACC do.polite

　　　　'If the two students show up, I will give a lecture.'　　　　(specific reading)
　　　　'If two students show up, I will give a lecture.'　　　　(non-specific reading)

b. Moshi (rei-no   sugoku yuushuuna) gakusei-ga **futa-ri** kuru-nara,
perhaps (aforementioned very   excellent)   student-NOM 2-CL   come-if,

watashi-ga jugyoo-o   yarimasu.
I-NOM   lecture-ACC do.polite

'If the two (aforementioned, very smart) students show up, I will give a lecture.'
(specific reading)
'If two students show up, I will give a lecture.'   (non-specific reading)

Both (19a) and (19b) clearly can have a non-specific reading. Additionally, they seem to be compatible with an apparent wide scope reading, which may be naturally described in terms of definite phrases as shown in the accompanying translations. Possibly, we are here dealing with the definiteness in Japanese nominals, not specificity. I will not pursue this point any further in the current paper. At any rate, given (18) and (19), it is legitimate to ask in what sense FNQs are related to "non-specificity."

One may as well set aside the scopal notion of specificity as being orthogonal to the specificity of Japanese nominals (although it is unclear how the move can be justified). Then, let us now consider (iii) partitive specificity in the sense of Enç (1991). (20) is the counterpart of (12) above, where (20b) contains an FNQ.

(20) a. Suu-nin-no   kodomo-ga   heya-ni haittekita. Boku-wa **hito-ri**-no
several-CL-GEN children-NOM room-to entered.   I-TOP   1-CL-GEN

onnanoko-o shitteita.
girl-ACC   knew.

'Some children entered the room. I knew a girl.' (= 12 above)

b. Suu-nin-no   kodomo-ga   heya-ni haittekita. Boku-wa onnanoko-o **hito-ri**
several-CL-GEN children-NOM room-to entered.   I-TOP   girl-ACC   1-CL

shitteita.
knew

I think that we overwhelmingly prefer the partitive specific reading to the non-partitive reading for both (20a) and (20b). We most naturally entertain that the girl mentioned is among the children who just entered, and to think otherwise is rather difficult. Without further contextual information, it may be even impossible to assign the non-partitive reading to either sentence.

The observation here poses a serious challenge to Watanabe's proposal, because Watanabe directly compares the alleged D head in Japanese with the Turkish accusative case morpheme. Then, the D head presumably encodes partitive non-specificity, and it must exist in (20b). Yet (20b) obviously has the partitive specific reading.

I have considered three types of specificity that are discussed in the literature, one of which is what Watanabe explicitly brings up. None of them, however, clearly correlate to the positions of quantifiers in Japanese nominals. At least these forms of specificity are quite independent from FNQs in Japanese.

4.3. D in Bangla and individual-level predicates reconsidered

Let me tie up loose ends by revisiting DPs in Bangla and briefly discussing individual-level predicates.

Recall that Bhattacharya (1999) claims that the Noun-Numeral-Classifier order in Bangla is the result of the movement of NP from the post classifier position, which is triggered by the posited "specificity" feature. Dayal (2012) concurs with Bhattacharya that NP raising exists inside the Bangla DP, and that it is brought about by a semantic feature of a head. On the basis of her field work, however, Dayal contends that it is definiteness not specificity that triggers NP raising. Let me schematically examine one example Dayal presents, (21) below, which encourages the Enç (1991) style partitive specific reading.

(21)   Three students came. {a. [**two-CL** student] sat, *b. [student **two-CL**] sat}.

(adapted from Dayal 2012, p. 205, ex. 15)

The partitive reading of (21) is the following: the first sentence introduces a set of students, and the phrase "two students" in the second sentence picks out two students from the introduced set. The nominal phrase in (21b) is the result of NP raising, and according to Bhattacharya, it must have a specific reading. According to Dayal, however, (21a) can have the partitive reading, whereas (21b) cannot. If I understand Dayal's discussion correctly, (21b) not only fails to have the partitive reading, it is also unacceptable in the current context. Dayal claims that the fact is most naturally accounted for if we associate the definite/maximality interpretation with NP raising. The phrase "the two students" presupposes that there are at most two students in the relevant context, and so it is incompatible with the preceding "three students."

Now, perhaps one may say, in defense of Watanabe, that Japanese nominals also encode definiteness/maximality, not specificity. We cannot, however, make the same observation as Bangla regarding Japanese FNQs. As we have already seen in (20a) and (20b) above, both Numeral-Quantifier-Noun and Noun-Case-FNQ orders can have the partitive specific readings, as shown by (22a, b).

(22) a.   San-nin-no gakusei-ga   heya-ni haittekita. **Futa-ri-no** gakusei-ga
          3-CL-GEN student-NOM room-to entered.   2-CL-GEN student-NOM

          seki-ni tsuita.
          seat-at took.

          'Three students entered the room. Two (of the) students sat down.'

b. San-nin-no gakusei-ga   heya-ni haittekita. Gakusei-ga   **futa-ri** seki-ni tsuita.
    3-CL-GEN student-NOM room-to entered.   student-NOM 2-CL   seat-at took.

We have no reason to associate definiteness or the lack thereof with FNQs.

Let us conclude the current section by briefly discussing individual-level predicates, which are known to have numerous peculiar characteristics. We need to realize that the reference to non-specificity does not account for why FNQs are incompatible with individual-level predicates. It is of course possible to attribute a stable, individual-level property to an unspecific person.

(23) (Dareka-wa shiranai ga) dareka-ga   eigo-ga   umai daroo.
     who.Q-TOP know.not but, who.Q-NOM English-NOM good should

'(I don't know who, but) someone should be good at English.'

(23) is a mere existential claim, which can be used either specifically or non-specifically. Suppose, for example, that the speaker expects there to be someone who is capable of speaking English well at the party, without presuming which person in fact has a good command. Then, (23) is an example of the acceptable use of *eigo-ga-umai* ("be good at English") with a non-specific subject. It is unclear how we could account for the relevant data by positing a non-specific head. There is a promising line of research that treats FNQs as adverbial expressions, and it can presumably account for the behaviors of individual-level predicates without invoking specificity (Nakanishi 2007, 2008). The considerations here at least count in favor of such accounts.

5. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have examined the idea of positing a silent head that encodes "non-specificity" in Japanese nominals. I have basically argued that there is no sufficient reason to believe that the alleged "non-specific" nominals that occur with FNQs are semantically forced to have "non-specific" interpretations. I have introduced three separate notions of specificity: (i) referential specificity, (ii) scopal specificity, and (iii) partitive specificity. I have presented reason not to believe that there is a silent head in Japanese that encodes either one of these forms of specificity (or the lack thereof) with respect to FNQs. In many cases, FNQs turned out to be compatible with both specific and non-specific uses.

In the current paper, I have not examined other notions of specificity discussed in the literature (von Heusinger 2011, 2019). So it is of course possible that FNQs are correlated to some other form of specificity. Also, even if there is no silent head that encodes (non-) specificity in Japanese, there might be silent nominal heads that encode other semantic-pragmatic features such as definiteness, just as Dayal rather convincingly argued for in the case of Bangla. Future research must look into these other possibilities as well. The

discussion presented here, however, weighs in favor of the view that Japanese is genuinely a determiner-less language.

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