

N-no *Hito* and the Syntax of Japanese Nominal Phrases*

Sakumi Inokuma
University of Tokyo

inokumas@L.u-tokyo.ac.jp

The syntactic properties of N-no hito construction in Japanese are discussed. It is shown that the occurrence of -no hito after a common noun is restricted to the argument use of the nominal phrase, hence adds to the evidence that argument nominals and predicative nominals are syntactically different in Japanese. In light of the extended DP hypothesis, hito is argued to be an intermediate head lying in between N and D. As for the categorial identity of hito, two possibilities are presented, namely hito-as-#⁰ and hito-as- GenD/Class⁰.

Keywords: predicative nominals, formal nouns, definiteness, number, noun classes

1. Introduction

This paper is a first attempt to investigate the theory of nominal syntax in Japanese. The Japanese language is known to exhibit only impoverished functional elements; in the nominal domain for instance, it does not have an overt D. Many of the recent syntactic studies on Japanese nominals have dealt with (floating) quantifiers and numeral + classifier constructions, with little attention paid to the fine-grained analysis of phrase structure of the language.

Here I will present a clue to investigate the syntactic structure of Japanese nominal phrases, namely, *hito* ‘person’. This item is a member of the class called “formal nouns” or “light nouns”, abundant in the language. Consider (1) and (2).¹

- (1) a. Amerikazin-ga Hanako-o syootaisita.
American-NOM Hanako-ACC invited
‘An American invited Hanako.’
b. Taroo-ga gengogakusya-o nagutta.
Taro-NOM linguist-ACC punched
‘Taro punched a linguist.’
- (2) a. Amerikazin-no hito-ga Hanako-o syootaisita.
American-GEN person-NOM Hanako-ACC invited
‘An American invited Hanako.’
b. Taroo-ga seizika-no hito-o nagutta.
Taro-NOM politician-GEN person-ACC punched
‘Taro punched a politician.’

* I am grateful to Akira Watanabe, Noriko Imanishi and anonymous reviewers for helpful comments and suggestions. I am also thankful to Shun’ichiro Inada and Junya Nomura for reviewing and commenting on the earlier draft. All remaining shortcomings are mine.

¹ Abbreviations: TOP = topic marker; NOM = nominative; ACC = accusative; DAT = dative; GEN = genitive; COM = comitative; COP = copula; SG = singular; PL = plural; CL = classifier. In this paper I will consistently gloss *-no* as GEN, without any theoretical commitments.

To avoid terminological confusion, I will use “nominal phrases” as a cover term for any extended projection of N along with its abbreviation xNP, again with no theoretical commitments. Terms such as DP and NP are reserved for the rigid, ontological notion in phrase structure.

As is well-known, bare nouns can appear quite freely in Japanese, like *Amerikazin* ‘American’ and *gengogakusya* ‘linguist’ in (1). They can optionally be followed by *hito* ‘person’ as shown in (2). In these examples, *hito* occurs within an argument nominal phrase, and at first glance it does not have any semantic or syntactic import. Sentences in (1) and (2) have the same meaning after all. Notice also that the N_1 ’s preceding *hito* in (2) are themselves marked as [+human]; they can be morphologically decomposed as in (3):

- (3) Amerika-zin; seizi-ka²
 America-person; politics-person

That is, N_1 -*no hito* phrases in (2) are redundantly marked as [+human]. When we turn to predicate nominals, however, the optionality in the occurrence of *hito* is lost: N_1 -*no hito* cannot appear in predicative nominals, as shown in (4).

- (4) a. Tom-wa {Amerikazin / gengogakusya}-da.
 Tom-TOP {American / linguist}-COP
 ‘Tom is an American / a linguist.’
 b. *Tom-wa {Amerikazin-no hito / gengogakusya-no hito}-da.
 Tom-TOP {American-GEN person / linguist-GEN person}-COP
 ‘Lit. Tom is an American person / a linguist person.’

The contrast found in (4a) and (4b) is robust. It can be said that an analogue to the argument-predicate asymmetry in nominal syntax (Stowell (1989), cf. Abney (1987)) is manifested by the possibility of redundant *-no hito*. The immediate puzzle is that Japanese shows the argument-predicate asymmetry by means of the presence/absence of an apparently “lexical” element *hito*, while Germanic and Romance languages show it by means of a truly functional element, namely D. A traditional way of capturing the asymmetry in syntactic terms is one like (5).

- (5) Arguments are DP; predicates are NP. (Stowell 1989; Heycock and Zamparelli 2006)

Since the N_1 -*no hito* construction has received little attention in the literature, I will start by presenting basic observations with regard to its syntax. The next section provides the data and makes it clear that this construction indeed gives a window into the syntax of Japanese nominal phrases. Section 3 proposes a phrase-structural analysis of this construction, where I will adopt Watanabe’s (2006) theory of Japanese nominal phrases as a point of departure.

2. Distribution of N_1 -*no Hito*

2.1. Internal Syntax

Not all nominal elements allow the N_1 -*no hito* construction. In fact, the types of nouns that can be followed by *-no hito* are sharply restricted. First, proper names and pronouns cannot cooccur with *hito*.

² *-ka* is usually used to refer to an expert: e.g., *syoosetsu-ka* (novel-*ka*) ‘novelist,’ *hyooron-ka* (criticism-*ka*) ‘critic,’ etc. Other [+human] morphemes include *-sya* in *gengogaku-sya* (linguistics-*sya*) ‘linguist,’ *-syu* in *untten-syu* (driving-*syu*) ‘driver’ and so on.

- (6) a. *Taroo-no hito³
 Taroo-GEN person
 ‘(intended.) Taroo’
 b. *{watasi/anata/aitu}-no hito
 {1SG/2SG/3SG}-GEN person
 ‘(intended.) I/you/that guy’

Second, even among common nouns, N₁-no hito is restricted to certain types of nouns: examples below are unacceptable. The examples in (7) are of kinship terms; those in (8) are of character/personality.

- (7) a. *otooto-no hito⁴
 younger.brother-GEN person
 b. *haha-no hito
 mother-GEN person
 (8) a. *baka-no hito (ok baka-na hito)⁵
 idiot-GEN person
 b. ??tensai-no hito (*tensai-na hito)
 ingenious-GEN person

In contrast, nouns that mean a person’s profiles, e.g., nationalities, religions, job titles and so on, can be used as N₁ in the construction at issue.

- (9) a. Amerika.zin-no hito nationality
 America.person-GEN person
 ‘(an) American’
 b. Bukkyoo.to-no hito religion
 Buddhist-GEN person
 ‘(a) Buddhist’
 c. bengo.si-no hito occupation
 lawyer-GEN person
 ‘(a) lawyer’

In fact, most of the nouns that can be used in the N-no hito construction belong to what de Swart et al. (2007) call “capacity nouns”. The class includes nouns of socially stable profiles. The list of capacity nouns by de Swart et al. is given below.⁶

³ Apparent counterexamples might be ones such as *JFK-no hito* (JFK-GEN person). In examples like this, however, the expression never refers to the individual who the proper name in N₁ refers to, John Kennedy in this case. Rather it means something like ‘the person who acts John Kennedy’ (say in a film). I will put aside these cases.

⁴ Again, (7a) might be acceptable under the reading ‘the person who has an elder sibling’. I take this reading as a particular case of “capacity nouns”. See below. (7b) does not have this reading since *haha* ‘mother’, unlike *haha.oya* ‘(Lit.) mother.parent’ and possibly *okaasan* ‘mom’, never allows a capacity reading as ‘a woman who has a child’.

⁵ Assuming that those expressions like *baka* and *tensai* are adjectival nouns (a mysterious category) is not enough. They can refer to individuals, with an epithet flavor, as the following example shows:

- (i) Ano baka-ga gookakusuru-to-wa omowanakatta.
 that idiot-NOM pass.exam-COMP-TOP didn’t.think
 ‘I didn’t think that that idiot would pass the exam.’

⁶ The idiosyncrasy of nouns that express job titles and nationalities was already mentioned in early studies such as Stowell (1989) and Longobardi (1994).

- (10) a. *Capacity Nouns:*
 teacher, manager, slave trader, computer scientist, doctor, actor ... *Occupation*
 Belgian, Malian, American ... *Nationality*
 Catholic, Christian ... *Religion*
- b. *Non-Capacity Nouns:*
 boy, genius, braggart, sneak, woman, child, hero, impostor, reader, smoker ...
- (de Swart et al. (2007))

The correspondence between (9) and (10) is unlikely to be accidental, though we find some borderline cases (for instance *kituen.sya-no hito* ‘smoker’ is acceptable in Japanese, while *smoker* is not a capacity noun according to (10)). I will not try to delimit the class of capacity nouns and spare their exact definition for semantic work. Notice incidentally that all of the examples in (10a) carry [+human] morphemes, e.g., *-er*, *-ist*, *-ian* etc, again suggesting the affinity to Japanese counterparts (see also Fábregas (2007)).

According to de Swart et al., capacity nouns form a class that can be used as bare singular predicate nominals. Thus sentences like below are acceptable in many Romance and Germanic languages.

- (11) a. Jean est médecin. French
 b. Juan es medico. Spanish
 c. Gianni è dottore. Italian
 John is *(a) doctor
- (12) a. Herr Weber är katolik. Swedish
 Mr. Weber is Catholic
 ‘Mr. Weber is a Catholic.’
 b. Er ist praktizierender Katholik. German
 he is practicing Catholic
 ‘He is a practicing Catholic.’
 c. She is captain of the high school band. English⁷
- (de Swart et al. 2007)

Returning to the main track, the second restriction is that the N_1 in the N_1 -*no hito* construction cannot be marked as plural. Japanese does not have a systematic pluralization strategy, but at least [+animate] nouns can be “pluralized” by adding *-tati*.⁸ When we try to pluralize the N_1 -*no hito* phrase, *hito* rather than N_1 must be pluralized.

- (13) a. gengogaku.sya
 linguist

⁷ Munn and Schmitt (2005) observe that in English the occurrence of bare singular predicate nominals is more restricted than in other languages. Bare singulars (BS) in English are subject to a uniqueness condition, where the referent of the BS must be uniquely determinable at a given time. Observe the contrast below.

- (i) a. *The voters elected Smith council-member at large.
 b. The voters elected Smith council-member for the 5th district.

See also Heycock and Zamparelli (2003) and Roodenburg (2004) for a similar uniqueness/definiteness condition on coordinated bare singular nominals in argument positions.

⁸ To be precise, Japanese *-tati* should be analyzed as an associative marker rather than a plural marker, as the acceptability of examples like below suggests:

- (i) Taroo-tati
 Taro-tati
 ‘Taro and his colleagues/friends (Not necessarily several Taro’s)’

The present discussion does not hinge on the ultimate analysis of *-tati*. See Nakanishi and Tomioka (2004).

- b. gengogaku.sya-tati
linguist-PL
- (14) a. gengogaku.sya-no hito
linguist-GEN person
- b. gengogaku.sya-no hito-tati
linguist-GEN person-PL
- c. *gengogaku.sya-tati-no hito
linguist-PL-GEN person
- d. *gengogaku.sya-tati-no hito-tati
linguist-PL-GEN person-PL

To summarize, the restrictions on the N_1 in the N_1 -*no hito* construction are as follows.⁹

- (15) a. N_1 cannot be proper names or pronouns.
b. N_1 must be capacity nouns.
c. N_1 cannot be pluralized.

These restrictions strongly point to an analysis in which N_1 is a category smaller than a full-fledged DP; and consequently, *hito* heads an intermediate projection within a nominal phrase.

In the next subsection we will turn to the properties of N_1 -*no hito* construction with respect to its external syntax.

2.2. External Syntax

As mentioned in the introduction, the most remarkable property of the N_1 -*no hito* phrase is that it cannot occur in the predicative nominal position ((4), repeated below).

- (4) a. Tom-wa {Amerikazin / gengogakusya}-da.
Tom-TOP {American / linguist}-COP
'Tom is an American / a linguist.'
- b. *Tom-wa {Amerikazin-no hito / gengogakusya-no hito}-da.
Tom-TOP {American-GEN person / linguist-GEN person}-COP
'Lit. Tom is an American person / a linguist person.'

The same restriction holds true in apparently argumental positions as exemplified by (16) and (17).

- (16) a. Suzuki.si-ga gityoo-o tutometeiru.
Suzuki.Mr-NOM chair-ACC serve
'Mr. Suzuki serves as the chairperson. / Mr. Suzuki is in charge of the chair.'
- b. *Suzuki.si-ga gityoo-no hito-o tutometeiru.
Suzuki.Mr-NOM chair-GEN person-ACC serve
- (17) a. Wareware-wa Suzuki.si-o gityoo-ni suisensita.
1.PL-TOP Suzuki.Mr-ACC chair-DAT recommended.
'We recommended Mr. Suzuki as chairperson.'
- b. *Wareware-wa Suzuki.si-o gityoo-no hito-ni suisensita.
1.PL-TOP Suzuki.Mr-ACC chair-GEN person-DAT recommended

⁹ Of course, (15a) could be reduced to (15b). See also note 2.

The nominal phrase at issue, *gityoo(-no hito)* ‘a chairperson’, is case-marked by accusative *-o* and dative *-ni*, respectively. In these examples, however, it is safe to say that *gityoo* does not refer to any individuals. That it does not constitute an ordinary referential argument is also shown by the fact that it most naturally translates into English *as* phrases, which can be analyzed as some sort of copula devoid of temporal information (cf. Munn and Schmitt 2005).

The N_1 -*no hito* phrase cannot occur even in argument positions, if it receives a generic interpretation (see Krifka et al. (1995) for a general introduction to genericity). Sentences such as (18) and (19) are unacceptable under intended readings.

- (18) a. *Nihon.zin-no hito-ga hatarakisugida (to BBC-ga tutaeta).
 Japanese-GEN person-NOM workaholic (that BBC-NOM reported)
- b. *Nihon.zin-no hito-tati-ga hatarakisugida (to BBC-ga tutaeta).
 Japanese-GEN person-PL-NOM workaholic
- c. Nihon.zin-ga hatarakisugida (to BBC-ga tutaeta).
 Japanese-NOM workaholic
 ‘(BBC reported that) Japanese people are workaholic.’
- (19) a. Hanako-wa Amerika.zin-no hito-ni akogareteiru.
 Hanako-TOP American-GEN person-DAT revere
 ‘Hanako has affection for a (certain) American.’ NOT ‘Hanako reveres Americans in general.’
- b. Hanako-wa Amerika.zin-ni akogareteiru.
 Hanako-TOP American-DAT revere
 ‘Hanako reveres American in general. / Hanako wants to be like American.’

As suggested by the English translation in (19a), nominal phrases with *hito* seem to favor a specific or definite reading. “Bare” nominals, in contrast, prefer a non-specific reading.

- (20) a. Hanako-wa isya-to tomodati-ni naritagatteiru.
 Hanako-TOP doctor-COM friend-DAT want.to.be
 ‘Hanako wants to make friends with a doctor.’ *non-specific*
 ??‘Hanako wants to make friends with a certain doctor.’ *specific*
- b. Hanako-wa isya-no hito-to tomodati-ni naritagatteiru.
 Hanako-TOP doctor-GEN person-COM friends-DAT want.to.be
 ?‘Hanako wants to make friends with a doctor.’ *non-specific*
 ‘Hanako wants to make friends with a certain doctor.’ *specific*

As subtle as the judgment in (20b) might be, the contrast in (20a) is quite clear: bare nouns are strongly biased toward generic or non-specific readings.

3. *Hito* as an Intermediate Nominal Head

3.1. *N-no Hito Is Not a Modification/Adjunction*

Now that we have reviewed the basic properties of the N_1 -*no hito* phrase, we are in a position to analyze its syntactic structure. First we have to exclude the possibility that N_1 is an adjunct/modifier of *hito*, since Japanese nouns are known to allow modification via a linker *-no* rather freely, as long as some loose aboutness relation holds between the modifier and the modifiee. I believe, though, that the task is already done, by the “selectional” restriction on N_1 presented in section 2.1. Recall the restriction that the N_1 cannot be proper names or pronouns,

and must be capacity nouns. Further arguments against the modification analysis come from predicate nominal cases. If N_1 -*no hito* had a structure $[[_{xNP} [_{ADJUNCT} N_1\text{-}no] [_{xNP} hito]]$,¹⁰ it could not be explained why predicative nominals must be “bare”. The awkwardness of (21) would also be a mystery, in which only an adjunct N_1 -*no* is dropped.

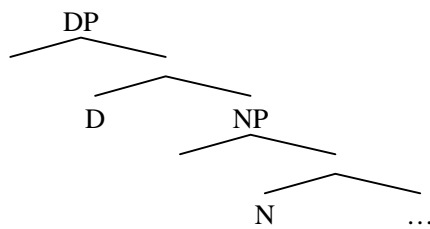
- (21) #Taroo-wa hito-da.
 Taro-TOP person-COP
 #‘Taro is a person.’

Thus I conclude that *hito* heads an intermediate extended projection of N_1 in the sense of Grimshaw (1991/2003).

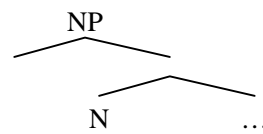
3.2. *Hito and Split Nominal Projections*

The core question by now is, what is the categorial status of *hito*? In the early DP hypothesis (Abney (1987), Stowell (1989, 1991) among others), nominal phrases are assumed to have structures such as (22), with the head-final counterpart in Japanese-type languages in (23).

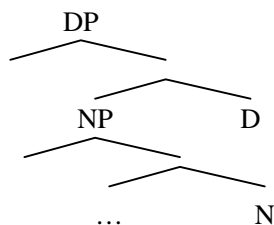
- (22) a. *arguments:*



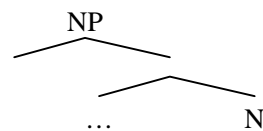
- b. *predicates:*



- (23) a. *arguments:*



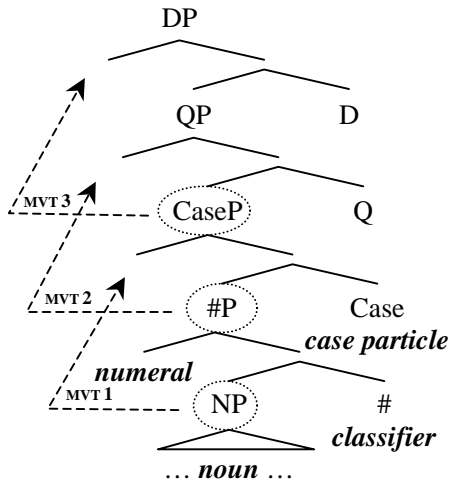
- b. *predicates:*



With this two-layered structure, the only candidate for the position of *hito* is D. This seems implausible, for it fails to capture the intuition that *hito* has lexical contents. A more direct problem is that it is independently argued that nominal phrases in Japanese, as well as those in Germanic and Romance languages, have a much more elaborated structure. Watanabe (2006) argues that we need at least four projections above NP in order to account for the word order variation involving the numeral + classifier construction. Watanabe proposes the following structure for Japanese (argument) nominal phrases.

¹⁰ I adopt Matushansky’s (2008) shorthand notation for extended nominal phrases, xNP. See also note 1.

(24)



- (25)
- | | | |
|----|-------------------------|---------------------|
| a. | seizi.ka | san-nin-ga ... |
| | politician | 3-CL-NOM |
| b. | san-nin-no | seizi.ka-ga ... |
| | 3-CL-GEN | politician-NOM |
| c. | seizi.ka-ga | san-nin ... |
| | politician-NOM | 3-CL |
| | 'Three politicians ...' | |
| d. | *san | seizi.ka-nin-ga ... |
| | 3 | politician-CL-NOM |

Watanabe (2006) exploits the elaborated structure in (24), with three phrasal movements, in his account for the word order variation in (25). The first movement of NP (MVT 1) must be obligatory, otherwise (25d) would be grammatical. If no movement other than MVT 1 occurs, (25a) is attained; if MVT 1 is followed by (remnant) #P movement (MVT 2), we get the word order in (25b); if further followed by CaseP movement (MVT 3), we have (25c).

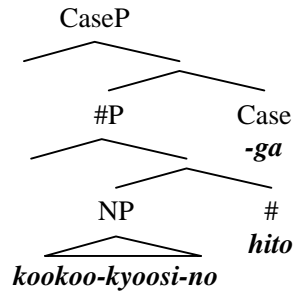
In fact, splitting the nominal structure this much is not Watanabe's innovation. Zamparelli (1995 et. seq.) and Heycock and Zamparelli (2005), for instance, propose a similar structure, especially in that a functional projection that deals with the number feature in ϕ -theoretic terms (called NumP, #P, or PIP by various authors) is assumed in a lower position, in addition to the higher QP, which typically deals with traditional quantifiers and/or cardinality. Here I will adopt Watanabe's structure and examine how far we can proceed in analyzing N_1 -no hito phrases. This theoretical choice is tentative, though for an obvious reason: Watanabe (2006) takes most seriously the fine structure of the nominal-internal syntax of Japanese.

First let us consider argument nominals, where hito can be overt. A touchstone is the position of a case particle. As illustrated by (26), hito must be followed by a case particle, which suggests that hito is at least in a position lower than CaseP.

- (26)
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|
| a. | Kookoo-kyoosi-no | hito-ga | kita. |
| | high.school-teacher-GEN | person-NOM | came |
| | 'A high school teacher came.' | | |
| b. | *Kookoo-kyoosi-ga | hito(-ga) | kita. |
| | high.school-teacher-NOM | person(-NOM) | came |

If we stick to the four-layered structure in (24), then, hito must occupy the #⁰ position. The structure is as in (27).

(27)



(higher structures omitted)

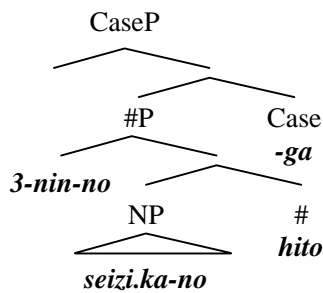
The immediate prediction is that *hito* does not co-occur with numeral + classifiers, since if the structure in (27) is correct, *hito* and a classifier compete for one and the same position: #⁰. The prediction does not seem to be borne out, however.

- (28)
- | | | | | |
|----|----------------|----------------|------------|-----------------------|
| a. | ?seizi.ka-no | hito | san-nin-ga | (party-ni sankasita). |
| | politician-GEN | person | 3-CL-NOM | (party-DAT attended) |
| b. | ?san-nin-no | seizi.ka-no | hito-ga | (party-ni sankasita). |
| | 3-CL-GEN | politician-GEN | person-NOM | (party-DAT attended) |
| c. | seizi.ka-no | hito-ga | san-nin | (party-ni sankasita). |
| | politician-GEN | person-NOM | 3-CL | (party-DAT attended) |
- ‘Three politicians attended the party.’

These sentences sound a little awkward, but are not unacceptable. To the extent (28a) and (28b) are acceptable, we are left with two alternatives. One is to maintain *hito* as #⁰ and reanalyze numeral + classifier construction. The other is to posit another projection between N and #, whose head position *hito* occupies. Both analyses have drawback and advantage. Let us examine each analysis.

First, consider the former analysis, in which *hito* occupies #⁰ position, as in (27). The immediate question in this analysis is about the treatment of classifiers: how do we derive Watanabe’s paradigm (25), and its counterpart with *hito* in (28)? Now that we assume *hito* as #⁰, classifiers must find their place in some other position. A possible way out is to put the classifiers in Spec#P, together with numerals. We have a structure as shown in (29) for (28b) (compare (24)).

(29)



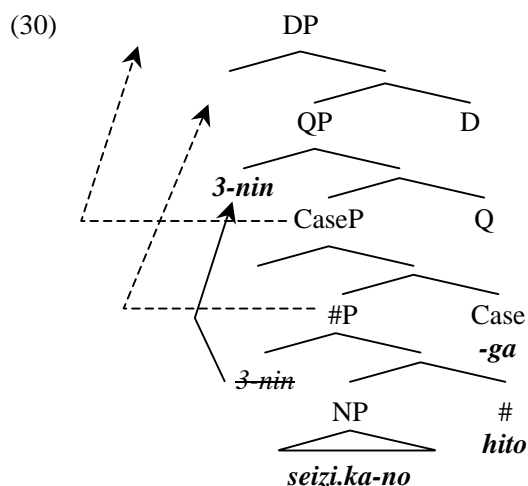
(higher structures omitted)

Placing a classifier in Spec#P, together with the numeral, gains plausibility for the following reasons. First, since no element can intervene between the numeral and classifier, the two elements should be base-generated as a single, quite small constituent, contrary to the structure advocated in (24). Second, a classifier by definition has some sort of “noun class features” (hence its name). *Hito* also carries a “noun class feature” [+human]; in fact, it is a minimal element which is specified for [+human]. Then it is natural to assume that the two elements, a classifier and *hito* hold a local relation in syntax, namely, a Spec-Head relation in (29).¹¹

¹¹ These considerations point to an analysis that treats classifiers as a “morphological junk” which results from an Agree relation (with regard to, say [CLASS] feature) between #⁰ and the classifiers. A technical complication immediately arises.

Let us go through the word order varieties in (28) with the structure in (29). All of them can be derived by a combination of several phrasal movements.

- (28) a. ?seizi.ka-no hito san-nin-ga ...
 politician-GEN person 3-CL-NOM
 b. ?san-nin-no seizi.ka-no hito-ga ...
 3-CL-GEN politician-GEN person-NOM
 c. seizi.ka-no hito-ga san-nin ...
 politician-GEN person-NOM 3-CL
 ‘Three politicians ...’



First consider (28b), the simplest case. I assume that the numeral+classifier, base-generated in Spec#P (but see note 10), always raises up to SpecQP, thanks to its number-related feature.¹² (28b) is derived if this movement is all that happens. (28a) is derived if the derivation is further followed by (remnant) #P movement into SpecDP. This movement seems to be triggered by a definiteness-related feature. Consider the following contrast.

- (31) a. Wareware-wa san-nin-no buturigaku.sya-no hito-o bosyuusiteiru.
 we-TOP 3-CL-GEN phycists-GEN person-ACC seek-PROG
 ‘We are seeking three phycists.’

In the structure advocated in (29), the numeral+classifier is assumed to occupy Spec#P. Since this position is inaccessible from #⁰, the numeral+classifier must originate in a yet lower position in the domain of #⁰ and move into Spec#P, if we adopt the Probe-Goal theory à la Chomsky (2000 et seq.). This implies that we must further split the NP with more intermediate projections, a possibility I will not pursue anymore in this paper. Or we could avoid this problem by assuming the relation between #⁰ and the numeral+classifier to be one of Selection rather than of Agree. In this case, the [CLASS] features would be interpretable features on both items, with less syntactic interest.

¹² As expected, a quantifier cannot cooccur with numeral+classifier:

- (i) *Subete-no san-nin-no kenkyuu.sya-ga kessekisita.
 all-GEN 3-CL-GEN researcher-NOM were.absent
 ‘(Intended.) All (of) the three researchers were absent.’

I believe that an apparent counterexample in (ii) involves a partitive structure and does not pose a problem on the present discussion. For partitives, see e.g. Zamparelli (1998) and Sauerland and Yatsushiro (2003).

- (ii) San-nin-no kenkyuu.sya-no subete-ga kessekisita.
 3-CL-GEN researcher-GEN all-NOM were.absent
 ‘All of the three researchers were absent.’

- b. Wareware-wa buturigaku.sya-no hito-o san-nin bosyuusiteiru.
 we-TOP physicist-GEN person-ACC 3-CL seek-PROG
 ‘We are seeking three phycists.’
- c. *Wareware-wa buturigaku.sya-no hito san-nin-o bosyuusiteiru.¹³
 we-TOP phycist-GEN person 3-CL-ACC seek-PROG

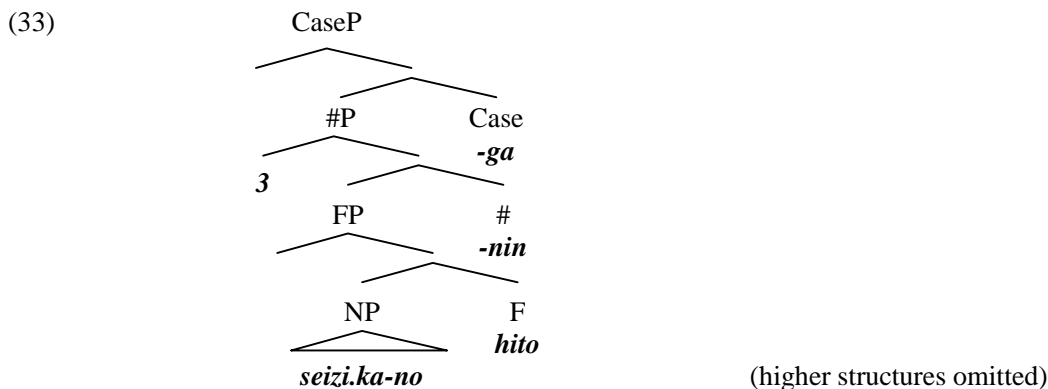
When we use the nominal phrases in (28) in the scope of an intensional verb (e.g. *bosyuusuru* ‘seek’) which forces an indefinite reading on the object nominal, the word order (31c) is disallowed. This is due to the feature conflict between the definite nominal phrase and the selectional property of the verb that requires an indefinite nominal phrase.

Finally, (28c) is derived via DP-external “scrambling” of (remnant) CaseP. That this movement targets a DP-external position is shown by the fact that an adverb can intervene between the two.¹⁴

- (32) a. Seizi.ka-no hito-ga kinoo san-nin yattekita.
 politician-GEN person-NOM yesterday 3-CL came.up
 ‘Three politicians came up yesterday.’
- b. *Seizi.ka-no hito kinoo san-nin-ga yattekita.
 politician-GEN person yesterday 3-CL-NOM came.up

As is expected, nothing can intervene between *hito* and numeral+classifier in the word order in (32b).¹⁵

Next let us turn to the other alternative. If we take the latter analysis, in which a classifier sits in #⁰, with *hito* in a head below it, the structure will look like:



Watanabe’s (2006) theory is kept intact in this analysis, by substituting NP for Watanabe with FP in (29). The question now is about the identity of the FP. What is the category of F? The above discussion has already hinted at the possibility that it is Gender or Noun Class. The ontological status of GendP in syntax, i.e., whether it projects in syntactic structure or is a morphological, featural element, is a topic of much debate, especially in Romance languages (see e.g., Harris (1991), Bernstein (1993), Ritter (1993), Alexiadou (2003) among many others; see also Alexiadou et al. (2007) for a general survey). Here I have nothing to add to this debate, and will refrain from presenting any standpoints with regard to the morpho-syntactic ontology of Gender. The implication that can be minimally elicited from the present consideration is that if Gender has its own projection in syntax, rather than being parasitic on Number, its projection must be lower than #P; otherwise the word order of nominal phrases in

¹³ Some native speakers find the contrast between (31a-b) and (31c) less clear than I do in the text.

¹⁴ At this point the analysis presented in the text diverges from Watanabe’s (2006), according to which the movement of CaseP targets SpecDP.

¹⁵ I realize that the motivations for the various phrasal movements employed in the present analysis to account for the word order variation are still weak and call for further evidence.

Japanese discussed at length can never be derived in any straightforward manner. In any case, we can make a choice between the two analyses presented here only in a broader context, that is, how ϕ -features are morpho-syntactically realized, which goes beyond the scope of this paper and I will reserve the topic for future research (but see papers in Harbour et al. (2008)).

In sum, it is clear by now that *hito* must be placed in a quite low position within a nominal projection, whether it is #⁰ or Gend/Class⁰. With this result in mind, in the next subsection I will return to the first puzzle in this study: the impossibility of *hito* in predicative nominals.

3.3. Predicative Nominals

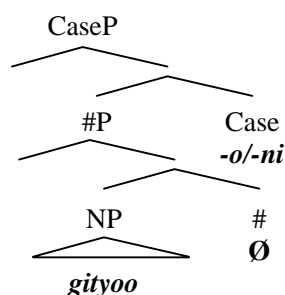
Recall our central data with regard to the availability of *hito*, repeated below.

- (34) a. Tom-wa {Amerikazin / gengogakusya}-da. (= (4))
 Tom-TOP {American / linguist}-COP
 ‘Tom is an American / a linguist.’
 b. *Tom-wa {Amerikazin-no hito / gengogakusya-no hito}-da.
 Tom-TOP {American-GEN person / linguist-GEN person}-COP
 ‘Lit. Tom is an American person / a linguist person.’
- (35) a. Suzuki.si-ga gityoo-o tutometeiru. (= (16))
 Suzuki.Mr-NOM chair-ACC serve
 ‘Mr. Suzuki serves as the chairperson. / Mr. Suzuki is in charge of the chair.’
 b. *Suzuki.si-ga gityoo-no hito-o tutometeiru.
 Suzuki.Mr-NOM chair-GEN person-ACC serve
- (36) a. Wareware-wa Suzuki.si-o gityoo-ni suisensita. (= (17))
 1.PL-TOP Suzuki.Mr-ACC chair-DAT recommended.
 ‘We recommended Mr. Suzuki as chairperson.’
 b. *Wareware-wa Suzuki.si-o gityoo-no hito-ni suisensita.
 1.PL-TOP Suzuki.Mr-ACC chair-GEN person-DAT recommended

How can we account for this argument-predicate asymmetry with the syntactic structure advocated above? The most simplex answer is to truncate the projection headed by *hito*, that is, the projection right above NP. The examples in (35a) and (36a) argue against this approach, since the nominal phrases in these examples are case-marked by ACC *-o* and DAT *-ni*, respectively. These case particles occupy the Case⁰ position in structures in (29) or (33). Thus the predicative nominals in the above instances must have at least CaseP.

I would like to propose that the crucial distinction between arguments and predicates are made by the presence vs. absence of the projection of D. Argument nominals have a full DP. Predicative nominals are smaller than DP; in fact, I propose that predicative nominals project up to (at most) CaseP. The structure of predicative nominals is given in (37) (I will assume the *hito*-as-#⁰ analysis below for the sake of discussion).

(37) *Predicative Nominals:*



That QP as well as DP cannot appear in predicative nominals is evidenced by the unavailability of the numeral + classifier, even when *hito* is absent (38).¹⁶

- (38) a. *Taroo-to Ziroo-wa hutari-no gengogaku.sya-da.
 Taro-and Ziro-TOP 2.CL-GEN linguist-COP
 b. *Taroo-to Ziroo-wa gengogaku.sya(-no) hutari-da.
 Taro-and Ziro-TOP linguist(-GEN) 2.CL-COP
 ‘(Lit.) Taro and Ziro are two linguists.’

If we assume, as in the section 3.2, that numeral+classifiers must always raise to QP, the ungrammaticality of (38) is explained by the failure to license the numeral. The licenser of the numeral, i.e. QP, is absent from the structure in (37).

The unavailability of *hito* is explained in the same manner. As pointed out above, *hito* is closely related to the definiteness feature on D^0 . Since predicative nominals do not project DP, nothing licenses *hito*, resulting in the impossibility of *hito* in predicative nominals. Notice incidentally that the value of definiteness feature, say [DEFINITE] or [INDEFINITE], is orthogonal to its licensing property of *hito* (recall the discussion on examples (18)-(20) and on (31); the ungrammaticality of (31c) was due to the conflict between the selectional property of the verb and [DEFINITE] feature on D^0 , and *not* due to the value of definiteness feature on D^0 itself). In other words, *hito* can be licensed when either [DEFINITE] D^0 or [INDEFINITE] D^0 is present above it, but it cannot be when no D^0 is present at all.¹⁷

3.4. Speculations on Noun Classes

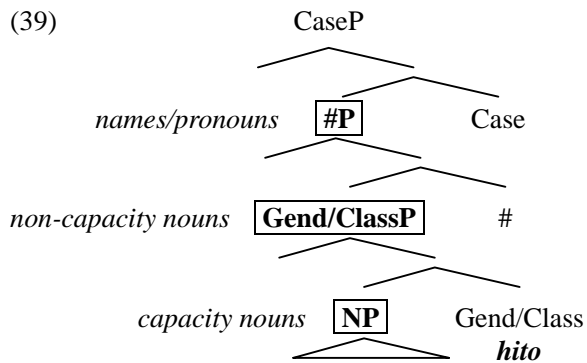
Up to now we have focused on the phrase-structural properties of N-*no hito* nominal phrases. The property of this construction yet to be examined is the restriction on N, namely, the restriction that the N must be capacity nouns. The exclusion of proper names and pronouns from the N_1 of this construction can be accounted for if we assume that they are #P rather than NP.¹⁸ The assumption makes sense if we recognize that what distinguishes them from common nouns is their inherent capacity of taking referents directly, and that information on number is a prerequisite for reference-fixing property.

A remaining puzzle, then, is why nouns other than capacity nouns cannot be used in this construction. I have not come up with any clear answers, but I would like to present some speculations. If, as in the case of proper names and pronouns, the distinction were made in terms of syntactic projections, then the independent Gend/ClassP analysis would be preferable. This is because the capacity vs. non-capacity distinction among nouns cannot be drawn by NP vs. #P distinction; otherwise non-capacity nouns would show the same properties as proper names and pronouns. It is possible to describe the distribution difference by having the projection split into #P and Gend/ClassP, as illustrated in (39).

¹⁶ *hutari* (2-CL [+HUMAN]) shows morphological suppletion: *ni-nin* (2-CL) >> *hutari*.

¹⁷ A more radical hypothesis might be to say that #P is “skipped” in predicative nominals and NP directly merges with CaseP, the resulting structure being a “defective” nominal phrase. This direction seems problematic, given the fact that in many Romance languages predicative nominals show ϕ -agreement. C.f. Schmitt and Munn (2002) and Munn and Schmitt (2005) for “skipping” NumP in argument nominals in Brazilian Portuguese.

¹⁸ Or they might be N that must obligatorily head-raise to #⁰, along the line of Longobardi (1994).



As successful as the description might be, much more has to be said to explain why this is the case. I will spare further discussion for another occasion.

4. Conclusion

This paper has presented a little-noticed construction in Japanese, *N-no hito*, and offered preliminary analyses of its syntax. It has been made clear that this construction is sensitive to argument-predicate asymmetry. On the one hand, *hito* is shown to occupy a position relatively low within the extended nominal projection, whether it is #P or Gend/ClassP. On the other, it is shown that Japanese, with no overt functional head D^0 , nevertheless has a DP projection in much the same way as well-studied Romance or Germanic languages. A theoretical implication is that syntactic structure is in fact as universal across languages as can be expected, with crosslinguistic variation reserved for the morphological component and the lexicalization of extended functional heads, in accordance with the current view of the grammatical architecture. Further investigation is needed for the elaboration as well as the examination of the analyses presented here.

References

- Abney, Steven Paul (1987) *The English Noun Phrase in Its Sentential Aspect*, Doctoral dissertation, MIT.
- Alexiadou, Artemis (2004) "Inflection Class, Gender and DP Internal Structure," *Explorations in Nominal Inflection*, ed. by Gereon Müller, Lutz Gunkel and Gisela Zifonun, 21-50, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Alexiadou, Artemis, Liliane Haegeman and Melita Stavrou (2007) *Noun Phrase in the Generative Perspective*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Bernstein, Judy (1993) "The Syntactic Role of Word Markers in Null Nominal Constructions," *Probus* 5, 5-38.
- Chomsky, Noam (2000) "Minimalist Inquiries: The Framework," *Step by Step: Essays on Minimalist Syntax in Honor of Howard Lasnik*, ed. by Roger Martin, David Michaels, and Juan Uriagereka, 89-155, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Chomsky, Noam (2001) "Derivation by Phase," *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, ed. by Michael Kenstowicz, 1-52, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Fábregas, Antonio (2007) "The Internal Syntactic Structure of Relational Adjectives," *Probus* 19, 1-36.
- Grimshaw, Jane (1991/2003) "Extended Projection," *Words and Structure*, Jane Grimshaw, 1-73, CSLI, Stanford.
- Harbour, Daniel, David Adger and Susana Béjar (eds.) (2008) *Phi-Theory: Phi-Features across Modules and Interfaces*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Harris, James (1991) "The Exponence of Gender in Spanish," *Linguistic Inquiry* 22, 27-62.
- Heycock, Caroline and Roberto Zamparelli (2003) "Coordinated Bare Definites," *Linguistic Inquiry* 34, 443-469.
- Heycock, Caroline and Roberto Zamparelli (2005) "Friends and Colleagues: Plurality, Coordination, and the Structure of DP," *Natural Language Semantics* 13, 201-270.

- Krifka, Manfred, Francis Jeffrey Pelletier, Gregory N. Carlson, Alice ter Meulen, Godehard Link and Gennaro Chierchia (1995) "Genericity: An Introduction," *The Generic Book*, ed. by Gregory N. Carlson and Francis Jeffrey Pelletier, 1-124, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Longobardi, Giuseppe (1994) "Reference and Proper Names: A Theory of N-Movement in Syntax and Logical Form," *Linguistic Theory* 25, 609-665.
- Matushansky, Ora (2008) "On the Attributive Nature of Superlatives," *Syntax* 11, 26-90.
- Munn, Alan and Cristina Schmitt (2005) "Number and Indefinites," *Lingua* 115, 821-855.
- Nakanishi, Kimiko and Satoshi Tomioka (2004) "Japanese Plurals Are Exceptional," *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 13, 113-140.
- Ritter, Elizabeth (1993) "Where's Gender?," *Linguistic Inquiry* 24, 795-803.
- Roodenburg, Jasper (2004) "French Bare Arguments Are Not Extinct: The Case of Coordinated Bare Nouns," *Linguistic Inquiry* 35, 301-313.
- Sauerland, Uli and Kazuko Yatsushiro (2003) "A Silent Noun in Partitives," *NELS* 34, 505-516.
- Schmitt, Cristina and Alan Munn (2002) "The Syntax and Semantics of Bare Arguments in Brazilian Portuguese," *Linguistic Variation Yearbook* 2, 185-216.
- Stowell, Tim (1989) "Subjects, Specifiers, and X-Bar Theory," *Alternative Conceptions of Phrase Structure*, ed. by Mark R. Baltin and Anthony S. Kroch, 232-262, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Stowell, Tim (1991) "Determiners in NP and DP," *Views on Phrase Structure*, ed. by In Katherine Leffel and Denis Bouchard, 37-56, Kluwer, Dordrecht.
- de Swart, Henriëtte, Yoad Winter and Joost Zwarts (2007) "Bare Nominals and Reference to Capacities," *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 25, 195-222.
- Watanabe, Akira (2006) "Functional Projections of Nominals in Japanese: Syntax of Classifiers," *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 24, 241-306.
- Zamparelli, Roberto (1995/2000) *Layers in Determiner Phrase*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester. Revised version published in *Outstanding Dissertations in Linguistics* series from Garland (2000).
- Zamparelli, Roberto (1998) "A Theory of Kinds, Partitives and *of/z* Possessives," *Possessors, Predicates and Movement in the Determiner Phrase*, ed. by Artemis Alexiadou and Chris Wilder, 259-300, John Benjamins, Amsterdam.