

# Discourse-functional Properties of Indefinite Pronominals

Tomoko YASUTAKE

*Department of Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language, Aichi University of Education,  
Kariya 448-8542, Japan*

## 1. Introduction

One of the leading cellular phone companies in Japan calls itself *NTT DoCoMo*. The word *docomo* (or *dokomo*, as it is usually spelled) roughly corresponds to English ‘anywhere’. The sales strategy of the company is obvious: the name supposedly tells the customers, “If you buy one of our products, you can make a call to anywhere you want.” However, when we take a closer look at Japanese inventory of indefinite pronominals, we find the naming not quite felicitous. The use of *dokomo* is limited to irrealis environments, and it embodies negative implicature much more than English *anywhere*. In fact, Japanese has another indefinite pronominal *dokodemo* which better corresponds to *anywhere* in positive environments. Compare:

- (1) a. *Dokomo* ikenai.  
anywhere go-cannot  
‘(I) can’t go anywhere/I can go nowhere’  
a’. \**Dokodemo* ikenai.  
b. *Dokodemo* ikeru.  
anywhere go-can  
‘(I) can go anywhere’  
b’. \**Dokomo* ikeru.

Apparently, *dokomo* is a negative polarity item, and is much more like *nowhere* than *anywhere*. Why, then, did the cellular phone company pick up an indefinite pronominal with negative inference as their trade name. Did they not think deeply about the lexical properties of the indefinite pronominal or did they imply an intricate double negative catch phrase such as ‘There is no place you cannot reach when you use our cellular phone’?

This paper is an attempt at unveiling discourse-functional properties of indefinite pronominals, with special reference to their discourse functions. I will discuss such issues as non-saliency, irrelevance of identity, polarity and multifunctionality and discourse compatibility. A possible solution to the *NTT DoCoMo* puzzle will be suggested in the course of discussion.

## 2. Delimitation of the Domain of Inquiry

It should first of all be emphasized that the term ‘pronominals’ is used here in its broad sense, in which it comprises not only pro-nouns (i. e. grammatical items that can replace nouns or noun phrases), but also pro-adverbs like *somewhere*, *sometime* (which can replace adverbs or adverbial phrases), and pro-adjectives like *whatever*. As indefinite pronominals normally come in series, like the Japanese *ka*-series, *mo*-series and *demo*-series and the English *some*-series, *any*-series and *no*-series, it would not make any sense to exclude the non-nominal members of these series from our considerations. Also included are indefinite determiners that clearly belong to a series of indefinite pronominals, such as English *some* and *any*. Determiners are not pronouns because they do not replace anything, but in traditional grammar determiners are often treated as pronouns or at least together with pronouns.

What will be under consideration in this paper are expressions like the following:

- (2) a. Susanne is thinking about *something*.  
b. Take *some* apple.  
c. Did you see *anybody*?

- d. You can take *any apple*.  
 e. You must go *somewhere*.

What is excluded from my domain of inquiry is the use of English *some* and *any* as articles of plurality or indeterminate quantity. I maintain that it is crucially important to make a clear distinction between indefinite articles, which are used with plurals and mass, and indefinite determiners, which are used with singular countables. There are massive literature on the uses of *some* and *any* as indefinite articles, with special emphasis on the so-called *some-any* rule. But not much work has been done on their use as indefinite pronominal determiners which denote indeterminate ‘identity’ (not ‘quantity’).

Few linguists have made the article vs. determiner distinction. Bolinger (1977: 25) discussed the difference between *some* [sm] used with plurals and mass and *some* [sōme] used with singular countables. But his discussion was centered around the illegitimacy of *some-any* rule and negative polarity of *any*, and a clear functional distinction was never made between the indefinite article and the pronominal determiners. I will not have much to say about the distinction between *some* and *any*. My principal interest lies in the universal properties of the indefinite pronominal use and the discourse-functional distinctions between indefinite noun phrases, such as *a book*, *a man*, and indefinite pronominals, such as *some book*, *anybody*. Again, not much literature is found on the latter issue, with a possible exception of Du Bois (1980).

### 3. Haspelmath’s Study

Haspelmath (1997) is the first comprehensive and encyclopedic investigation of indefinite pronominals (expressions like *someone*, *anything*, *nowhere*) in the languages of the world. It shows that the range of variation in the functional and formal properties of indefinite pronominals is subject to a set of universal implicational constraints, and proposes explanations for these universals. He has demonstrated that indefinite pronominals are generally derived forms. In 63 languages of his sample of 100 languages, interrogative and indefinite pronominals are either identical or derivationally related. In the remaining languages, he finds indefinite pronominals to be made up of an indefinite article (or the numeral ‘one’) and a generic noun like *person*, *thing*, *place*, *time*, etc. (They may also involve the use of only a generic word.) Japanese belongs to the first type, while English is of the second type with a few exceptional forms like *somewhere*, *anyhow*, *somewhat*, which are clearly of the first type. The following are Haspelmath’s pronominal inventories for English and Japanese.

- (3) English has three main series of indefinite pronominals: the non-emphatic *some*-series, (ii) the emphatic *any*-series, and (iii) the negative *no*-series. These are formed by combining the determiners *some*, *any* and *no* with generic nouns or interrogative pronouns.

	interrogative	<i>some</i> -series	<i>any</i> -series	<i>no</i> -series
person	<i>who</i>	<i>some-body</i> , <i>some-one</i>	<i>any-body</i> , <i>any-one</i>	<i>no-body</i> , <i>no one</i>
thing	<i>what</i>	<i>some-thing</i>	<i>any-thing</i>	<i>no-thing</i>
place	<i>where</i>	<i>some-where</i>	<i>any-where</i>	<i>no-where</i>
time	<i>when</i>	<i>some-time</i>	<i>any-time</i>	<i>never</i>
manner	<i>how</i>	<i>some-how</i>	<i>any-how</i>	<i>no way</i>
determiner	<i>which</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>any</i>	<i>no</i>

- (4) Japanese has three series of indefinite pronominals, all of them derived from interrogatives: (i) the non-negative *ka*-series, (ii) the negative *mo*-series, and (iii) the free-choice *demo*-series.

	interrogative	<i>ka</i> -series	<i>mo</i> -series	<i>demo</i> -series
person	<i>dare</i>	<i>dare-ka</i>	<i>dare-mo</i>	<i>dare-demo</i>
thing	<i>nani</i>	<i>nani-ka</i>	<i>nani-mo</i>	<i>nani-demo</i>
place	<i>doko</i>	<i>doko-ka</i>	<i>doko-mo</i>	<i>doko-demo</i>
time	<i>itu</i>	<i>itu-ka</i>	<i>itu-mo</i>	<i>itu-demo</i>
manner	<i>doo</i>	<i>doo-ka</i>	<i>doo-mo</i>	<i>doo-demo</i>
amount	<i>ikura</i>	<i>ikura-ka</i>	<i>ikura-mo</i>	<i>ikura-demo</i>
	<i>ikutu</i>	<i>ikutu-ka</i>	<i>ikutu-mo</i>	<i>ikutu-demo</i>

determiner	<i>dore</i>	<i>dore-ka</i>	<i>dore-mo</i>	<i>dore-demo</i>
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As Haspelmath himself observes, typological breadth necessarily implies some loss of depth in individual languages. A crucial flaw is found in the Japanese paradigm, specifically in the last line. The interrogative determiner form corresponding to *which* in English is *dono*, not *dore* (pro-noun). The confusion may have arisen from the fact that English spelling does not distinguish between the pron-noun *which* and the determiner *which*. The last line in the Japanese inventory should, in fact, be as follows:

	interrogative	<i>ka-series</i>	<i>mo-series</i>	<i>demo-series</i>
(5)	‘which’ (noun) <i>dore</i>	<i>dore-ka</i>	<i>dore-mo</i>	<i>dore-demo</i>

For English *some* and *any*, Japanese has no equivalents based on the interrogative determiner *dono*. Hence, the list of indefinite determiners is not very long. Instead, there exists another interrogative determiner *dooiu*, which corresponds to English *what/what kind of*.

	interrogative	<i>ka-series</i>	<i>mo-series</i>	<i>demo-series</i>
(6)	‘which’ (determiner) <i>dono</i>	<i>dore-ka-no</i>	—	—
	‘what’ (determiner) <i>dooiu</i>	—	—	—

We could further enrich the Japanese inventory by adding another column to the paradigm under the heading ‘determiner’, since all forms in the list, except *doo* (which corresponds to ‘how’), have *ka*-based determiner forms<sup>2</sup>:

	determiner		
(7)	person	<i>dare-ka-no</i>	‘somebody’s’
	thing	<i>nani-ka-no</i>	‘of something’
	place	<i>doko-ka-no</i>	‘of somewhere’
	time	<i>itu-ka-no</i>	‘of sometime’
	manner	—	
	amount	<i>ikura-ka-no</i>	‘of some amount’
		<i>ikutu-ka-no</i>	‘several of’
	‘which’ (noun) <i>dore-ka-no</i>		‘of whichever’

The list does not stop here. We are able to add more indefinite pronominals or compound forms, based on such interrogatives as *dochira* (*docchi*) ‘where/which’, *naze* ‘how’, *doosite* ‘how/why’, *izure* ‘which/where’, *nanimono* ‘who’, to the above, or even more if we include slightly archaic forms, such as *ikani* ‘how/why/how much/what’, *ikanisite* ‘how’, *izuko* ‘where’, *naniyue* ‘why’.

Morphologically speaking, Japanese interrogative-pronominal markers can be divided into three types: *do*-series, *na*-series and *i*-series, but not much is known regarding the morphology or the etymology of the lexical networks. The analysis requires another intensive study.

So much for the less trodden areas of Japanese inventory of indefinite pronominals. What are of particular interest for the purpose of this paper are the facts that both Japanese and English have three contrasting series of indefinite pronominals and that the two systems overlap partially. However, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the Japanese *ka*-series, *mo*-series and *demo*-series on one hand and the English *some*-series, *any*-series and *no*-series on the other. As to the inherent properties of those indefinite markers, we find incorrect information even in linguistic literature. The following is an example quoted from Bhat (2000: 392).

(8) Japanese (Martin 1975: 1073, Hinds 1986) is another case in point. Interrogative pronouns like *dare* ‘who’ can take the particle *mo* ‘and’ to denote ‘anyone’ or ‘everyone’ and the particle *ka* ‘or’ to denote ‘someone’. How the generalization in (8) fails is evident in examples such as the following (9)–(13):

(9) a. *Dareka* kimasu.  
           come  
           ‘Someone will come’

      b.\* *Daremo* kimasu.

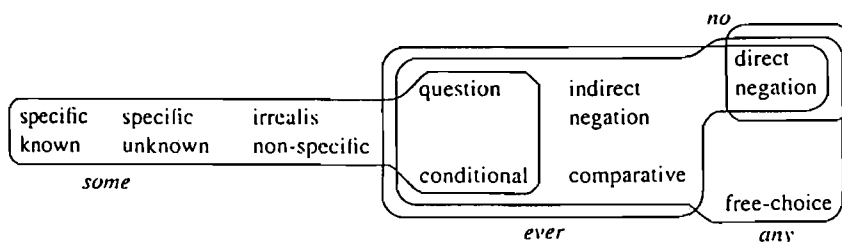
(10) a. *Dareka* imasu ka?  
           be    Q  
           ‘Is there anyone?’

- b.\* *Daremo* imasu ka?  
 (11) a.\* *Dareka* imase-n.  
 b. *Daremo* imase-n.  
       be NEG  
       ‘There is no one’  
 (12) a. *Dareka* kita-ra osiete kudasai.  
       come-COND tell please  
       ‘Please tell me if someone/anyone comes’  
 b.\* *Daremo* kita-ra osiete kudasai.  
 (13) a. *Dareka* ko-nai to komaru.  
       come NEG COND be in trouble  
       ‘I will be in trouble if nobody comes’  
 b. *Daremo* ko-nai to komaru.  
       come NEG COND be in trouble  
       ‘I will be in trouble if nobody comes’

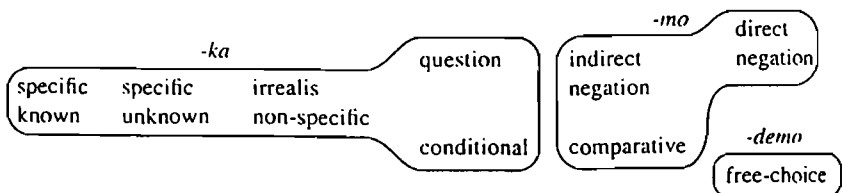
Haspelmath (1997: 46, 75) summarizes the distribution of the English and the Japanese series as follows.

(Relevant details will be explained later in Section 6):

(14) English



Japanese



What our Japanese examples above show is that the distribution of the Japanese series is not as clear-cut as Haspelmath presents in (14). In comparing the Japanese and the English series, Haspelmath (1997: 85–6) notes the following:

- (15) In contrast to English, where the *some*-series is possible in negative sentences but is then interpreted as not being in the scope of the negation, the Japanese *ka*-series is completely impossible with negation, where the *mo*-series is obligatory. However, in negated polar questions this ban is lifted. As McGloin (1976: 409) points out, *ka*-indefinites are used in polar questions when the speaker has a firm basis for believing that the presupposition is true, i.e. when the speaker expects a positive answer.

The following (16a) is McGloin’s example of an information-seeking question, whereas (16b) is interpreted as an explicit invitation.

- (16) a. *Nani-mo* tabe-mas-en-ka?  
       eat POL NEG Q  
       ‘Are you not going to eat anything?’  
 b. *Nani-ka* tabe-mas-en-ka?  
       eat POL NEG Q  
       ‘Aren’t you going to eat something?’

Negated polar questions, however, are not the only environment where *ka*-series is possible with negation. As (16b) shows, it also occurs in negated conditionals without any positive speaker expectation.

As to the *mo*-series, unlike Bhat (2000: 392), Haspelmath recognizes that its primary use is in negated environment, as in (14). We need to admit, however, that it is also used in non-negative environments. Consider the following:

- (17) a. Doremo hosii.  
       want.  
       ‘I want everything.’  
 b. ?Doredemo hosii.
- (18) a. Dochira-sama-mo o-kiotukete o-kaeri kudasai.  
       HON HON-take care HON-return please  
       ‘We kindly ask everyone to take care going home’  
 b. \*Dochira-sama-demo o-kiotukete o-kaeri kudasai.

Despite Haspelmath’s classification of *demo*-series as ‘free-choice’ indefinite, they are unsuitable in the above contexts. These facts may have been the source of Bhat’s observation in (8) above. I do not have much to say here about the *demo*-series but what (17) and (18) indicate is that it is not suffice to regard it as free-choice indefinite<sup>3</sup>. At present nothing conclusive can be said about the uses of the three Japanese series of indefinite pronominals without a thorough investigation of naturally occurring data, but Haspelmath’s distributional map cited in (14), is in need of revision in several points.

Turning our attention to English, contrary to the popular belief in the so-called *some-any* rule, Haspelmath’s map indicates that *any* is not a form that is automatically triggered by a negative or an interrogative, and that *some* can occur in environments that supposedly should allow only *any*. Furthermore, the pragmatic contrast between Japanese *ka*-series and *mo*-series noted in (16), can be observed in the English *some/any* contrast as well (cf. e. g. Bolinger 1977: 24). Thus, there is no one-to-one correspondence, but usage patterns of individual items in the English and the Japanese inventories may have much more in common than is customarily believed.

In the light of *mo*-series in positive environments, such as in (17) and (18), one possible solution for the puzzle about the naming of the Japanese cellular phone company would be that they are mixing up *dokomo* with the ‘free-choice’ use of English *anywhere*. This is in direct contrast to the popular Japanese futuristic cartoon series, where the name *Dokodemo Door* (‘anywhere door’) is given to a time machine-like gadget. *Dokomo Door* simply does not sound right.

#### 4. Discourse Non-saliency

As Haspelmath demonstrated after an extensive investigation of world languages, indefinite pronominals normally occur in series which have one member for each of the major ontological categories such as person, thing, property, place, time, manner, amount, plus a few others (cf. e.g. the English and the Japanese cases in (3) and (4)). Bhat (2000: 57), in the same line, claims that the primary function (or requirement) of indefinite pronominals is to indicate a general concept like person, thing, place, time, manner, etc. Thus, in the following sentences, details are not provided regarding the concept referred to by the indefinite pronominal phrases. The reason is either that the speaker considers them to be irrelevant or that (s)he does not possess them, as in (19a) and (19b) below.

- (19) a. *Somebody* is at the door.  
 b. Is there *anything* I can do for you?

Jespersen (1933: 180) states that indefinite determiner *some* has the meaning of the ‘unknown’ or ‘unspecified’. In reality, however, as Du Bois (1980: 219) illustrates below, there are cases where *some* is used even when the identity of the individual is known to both the speaker and the addressee.

- (20) I once said to a friend *I made squid with someone’s help once*. The person who had helped me was known by name to my addressee, so I could have named her, but since the import of the discussion was simply whether I would be able to bring off a squid dish, I did not deem the name of my fellow cook relevant. This is possible as long as the speaker do not deem its identity relevant for the purpose of communication. Speakers thus have facultative control over the matter. Consider the following examples:

- (19) c. *Somebody* told me so.  
 d. \*I have *some* car.

(19c) can be uttered even when the identity of ‘somebody’ is known by name to both the speaker and the addressee. The choice of indefinite mention is made in accordance with the speaker’s communicative intention: (s)he may just want to communicate the indirectness of the information, ignoring details including the identity of the source. (19d), however, is unacceptable because it is inconceivable that the speaker do not know the identity of his own car.

Here, we may set up non-saliency principles of indefinite pronominal use, as (21):

- (21) i. An indefinite pronominal indicates a general concept like person, thing, place, time, manner, etc.  
 ii. An indefinite pronominal is used when the identity or details about the ‘object’ is peripheral to the discourse topic or outside the speaker’s primary concern.

The insignificance of identity is often strengthened by the addition of *or other*, or is evidenced by the expression *or something*.

- (22) a. *Someone (or other)* must have touched my papers since I went out.  
 b. She won a competition in *some* newspaper *or other*.  
 c. The car hit a tree *or something*.

The meaning of contempt, often associated with determiner *some* in such sentences as (23a–b) is induced by the speaker’s indifference to the identity. A positive opinion expressed in sentences like (23c), on the other hand, may be explained as a case of scale reversal (cf. e. g. Haspelmath 1997: 113).

- (23) a. She says she doesn’t want to spend her life in *some* moldy office.  
 b. She is always having trouble with *some man or other*.  
 c. I want to be *somebody* when I grow up.

## 5. No Cognitive Files

My next question concerns the discourse-functional difference between an indefinite noun phrase, e.g. *a man*, and an indefinite pronominal, e.g. *somebody*. Available literature on this topic is sparse. The following are found in Du Bois (1980: 219–1) and Bhat (2000: 373–375).

Du Bois (1980: 219–1) points out that, though both the indefinite article (e.g. *a kid*, *a bicycle*) and indefinite pronouns (e.g. *somebody*) are used to mark non-identifiable mentions, the former has a further, positive function: to establish a new “file” in the hearer’s consciousness. Thus, in a sentence like (24), the indefinite articles serve both to assure the hearer that (s)he needs not look elsewhere to identify the referents and to encourage him to establish two new cognitive files, one for a particular kid and one for a particular bicycle.

- (24) ...*a kid* comes by on *a bicycle*.

The opening of a new file with an *a*-form mention tends to raise the expectation that the file will continue to be used, as more information is added to it to update that file. As to the indefinite mentions, Du Bois was tentative without extensive data, but he observed the tendency for pronouns like *someone*, *somebody* to be used for an unimportant character who will not be spoken about later in the discourse.

Following Du Bois, Bhat (2000: 373–375) makes discourse-functional distinction between indefinite noun phrases and indefinite pronominals. He argues that the mere occurrence of an indefinite noun phrase has the effect of making the referent definite and that this occurs even when a speaker is lying—the addressee is forced to open a new cognitive file. According to Bhat, this is because in the case of articles indefiniteness occurs only at the “verbal” level. In the case of pronouns, on the other hand, it occurs at one of several “non-verbal” levels such as the factual, fictional, mythological, dreamed, and so on.

Compare the following two discourse samples:

- (25) a. A little girl is singing, playing with her ball.  
 b. Someone is singing my favorite song on television.

Upon hearing (25a), the addressee opens a new cognitive file for a particular little girl and expects that the file will continue to be used, as more information is added to it. At this point, the referent of the indefinite

noun phrase becomes definite, even though the definiteness is “verbal”, since the addressee cannot identify her anywhere but in the speaker’s words. Thus, (25a) cannot be followed by (25c).

(25) c. Go and get *the ball* from *the little girl*.

In spite of the verbal definiteness of the referents (second mention), the addressee is still in the dark concerning the identity of the girl and her ball, making it impossible for her/him to carry out the order.

The indefinite pronominal in (25b), on the other hand, merely indicates the ontological category (a person) and signals that the details concerning the identity is lacking. The speaker is not likely to expand on the indefinite pronominal. Consider the following examples (Warfel 1972: 43-4, quoted in Haspelmath 2000: 47):

(26) a. John is looking for *some* book on reserve (\*and I know which one).

b. Hortense is watching for *some* sailor who’s due in port today. (\*He is a friend of mine.)

c. Ralph is worried because he lost *some* letter he was supposed to mail (\*but I have it right here.)

In (26), the continuations in parentheses presuppose identifiability by the speaker, which is in conflict with the discourse meaning of *some*, and are therefore excluded. Based on these facts, Haspelmath claims that an indefinite pronominal implies that the speaker cannot identify the referent. However, as we saw in the previous section, an indefinite pronominal may be chosen irrespective of the speaker’s knowledge as long as the identity of the referent is irrelevant for the purpose of communication. The decisive factor is thus not the identifiability but discourse saliency of the referent.

To sum up, an indefinite pronominal does not establish a new mental “file” that can be referred to later: the addressee assumes that the speaker will not talk about that ‘someone’ and that no details will be given about her/him. The speaker may choose indefinite mention irrespective of the identifiability of the referent. I propose the following hypotheses concerning the discourse-functional difference between the indefinite noun phrase and the indefinite pronominal.

(27) i. An indefinite noun phrase with the article *a* serves to establish a new cognitive file in the mind of the hearer.

ii. An indefinite pronominal signals lack, insufficiency or irrelevance of information, establishing no new file<sup>4</sup>.

## 6. No Inherent Polarity

Haspelmath (1997: 33-4) maintains that so-called negative polarity pronominals in some languages are associated with negative environments, but are not restricted to the expression of non-existence. In addition to negative clauses, they can be used in conditional and interrogative clauses, in the standard of comparison, and in some further environments. As we saw in Section 3 above, Haspelmath’s map (14) indicates that *any* is not a form that is automatically triggered by a negative or an interrogative, and that *some* can occur in environments that supposedly should allow only *any*. We also observed the pragmatic contrast between Japanese *ka*-series and *mo*-series in (16), and between English *some*-series and *any*-series. Let us look at the following interrogatives where both *some* and *any* are possible.

(28) a. Was there *any/some* attempt at escape?

b. Was *any/some* exception made?

c. Has *any/some* rule been violated?

d. Is there *any/some* cure for it?

What plays a crucial role in selecting an indefinite pronoun series in these environments is the speaker expectation. When *any* is used, existence is not presupposed nor asserted, whereas a *some* indicates a particularity, an assumed something<sup>5</sup>. Haspelmath (1997: 82) notes that in a number of unrelated languages, the pragmatic contrast between positive, negative or neutral expectations of the speaker is relevant for the choice of indefinite pronominal series within the conditional and (polar) question functions.

As for the polarity issue, Bolinger (1977: 26) demonstrated that *some* and *any* do not have affirmation and negation built into their meaning: what correlation there is between the two systems is a matter of semantic compatibility. According to Bolinger (1977: 33) the logical difficulty of *some* in negations is its

unsuitability for categorical negation: ‘when a statement involves *some* (or in particular *something*), attachment of *not* to its main verb does not in general produce a denial of the statement. Thus, *Something does not bore George* is by no means the denial of “*Something bores George*”.

As for *any*, Jespersen (1933, 17. 9. 1) stated that *any* indicates one or more, no matter which; therefore *any* is very frequent in sentences implying negation or doubt (question, condition). Following Jespersen, Bolinger (1977: 33) claims that *any* means ‘whatsoever, no matter which’, and gives the following logical account for its compatibility with negation:

(29) The use of *any* with negation enables us to ‘deny statements severally and conjoin the denials’ —*I don’t have any friends* means ‘I don’t have friend A + I don’t have friend B + I don’t have friend C + ...∞—I don’t have whatever friend may be indicated’.

This explains why *any* is extremely useful to negation and hence highly frequent in negation but is not in a one-to-one mechanical relationship with negation. The relationship is one of semantic compatibility, of ontological, not grammatical, sense.

## 7. Irrelevance of Identity

Looking back on Haspelmath’s inventories and distributional maps in Section 3, we find no unitary lexical explanation for any of the indefinite pronominals. He identifies different uses of each pronominal series in terms of basic functional distinctions, and proposes a two-dimensional implicational map for the nine uses/functions of the indefiniteness markers: ‘specific known’, ‘specific unknown’, ‘irrealis nonspecific’, ‘question’, ‘indirect negation’, ‘direct negation’, ‘conditions’, ‘comparative’ and ‘free-choice’. The maps in (14) are examples of this implicational map, which show that the majority of the series of indefinite pronominals are used to express more than one of the functions. For this, Haspelmath (1997: 59) uses the neutral term multifunctionality, which does not imply the presence of multiple meanings, but subsumes polysemy as a special case<sup>6</sup>. In many cases there is no obvious meaning difference between the different functions—these often seem to be just different contexts rather than different meanings.

In search for a general meaning of indefinite pronominals. I postulate that the core meaning of indefinite pronominals is ‘irrelevance of identity’, which is essentially closest to the use/function of ‘free choice’ situated at the end (bottom line, extreme right) of Haspelmath’s implicational map. We have seen, in the previous section, that *any* implies that the existence is not presupposed nor asserted, whereas a *some* indicates a particularity, an assumed something. This difference between *some* and *any* is that of implication not of meaning. I maintain that in either case the speaker communicate his indifference to the identity of the referent at speech time. Note the presence of contexts such as (31) below, where either *some-* or *any-*series can be used without a great meaning difference:

(30) a. If you see *someone/anyone*, tell me.

Whichever pronoun is chosen in (31), the speaker communicate to the hearer that (s)he does not care about the identity of the referent of *someone/anyone*.

## 8. Interactional Situation

This section is a brief remark about the hitherto unexplored areas of the stylistic values of indefinite pronominals and the registers/genres. No literature is found on these topics, and no statistical research seems to have been conducted on the frequencies of indefinite pronominals in different genres or styles of writing. Given the inherently subjective nature of indefinite pronominals, they are unlikely to be favored in expository or scientific discourses, where indeterminate, indifferent or affective expressions are avoided.

I suspect that indefinite pronominals are essentially conversational in nature and are, in principle, limited to informal person-to-person interactive contexts: e.g. conversations, narratives and descriptive modes of writing. But to prove this an extensive corpus study will be required.



## 9. Conclusion

I have discussed above various aspects of indefinite pronominals, with special reference to English and Japanese. Among the issues that remain, of particular interest are the following.

- (31) i. The principle behind the choice between *some*-series and *any*-series.  
 ii. The diachronic study of development of indefinite pronominals.

As for (31i), a promising area of future study is the semantic compatibility of each series of pronominals with various contexts. Consider, for example, the contrast between *some* and *any* in the following sentence:

- (32) You may come *any* day, but you must come *some* day (or other) to see me. (Jespersen 1933: 181)

It appears to be the case that the *any*-series is acceptable in contexts of possibility, but unacceptable in contexts of necessity, while the *some*-series is compatible with contexts of necessity but not with contexts of possibility.

- (33) a. You can take any apple.  
 b.\* You must take any apple.  
 (34) a.? You can take some apple.  
 b. You must take some apple.

In the absence of a thorough investigation, nothing conclusive can be said at present.

In connection with (31i), of particular significance is the existence of a large subclass of interrogative-based indefinite pronominals in world languages. Though Present-day English has only a few interrogative-based ones (e.g. *somewhere*, *somewhat*, *anywhere*), Old English word for 'somebody' was *nathwa*, which had been derived from *ne wat hwa*, which meant '(I) don't know who'. Haspelmath (1997: 131) contends that its original source structure was an indirect parametric (or 'wh-') question embedded in the matrix clause 'I don't know'. Later, the greater part of the embedded question is omitted by 'sluicing' operation, because it is obvious from the context. In a next step, this sentence is inserted into another sentence where the interrogative pronoun occupies some syntactic position, such as in the following.

- (35) She told him *I don't know what*.

This is a kind of 'syntactic amalgam' of the type discussed in Lakoff (1974) (cf. Lakoff's example *I saw you'll never guess how many people at the party*).

Concrete evidence will be needed to confirm this analysis, but the process of sluicing followed by syntactic amalgam is certainly a plausible scenario for the derivation of interrogative-based indefinite pronominals.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Possible candidates for the Japanese equivalents of *any* and *some* are *nanra*, *nanra-no*, *nanra-ka* and *nanra-ka-no*. This series is etymologically related to *nani* 'what': *nanra* is derived from a sort of plural form of *nani*, but none of these is used as an interrogative. *Nanra* and *nanra-ka* syntactically behave like adverbs and *nanra-no* and *nanra-ka-no* are determiners. Their use, however, is limited to formal discourses.

<sup>2</sup>Gaps in the inventories are not an unusual phenomenon in many of the world languages.

<sup>3</sup>The difference between the *mo*-series and the *demo*-series may be accounted for in terms of distributive vs. non-distributive interpretation, but no substantial research has been done on the issue.

<sup>4</sup>The semantic contrast between singular and plural is not applicable to indefinite pronominals. Since they represent a qualitative abstract of the ontological category, which expresses no objective reality, a determination of quantity is not relevant.

<sup>5</sup>Bolinger (1977: 29) notes that minimal contrasts show how subtle the negative and affirmative shadings may be in order to induce a *some* or an *any*. In *Don't do anything I wouldn't do*, *anything* is a bit more likely than *something*; but in *Don't go and do something I wouldn't do*, the *go and* is just positive enough to tip the balance slightly in favor of *something*.

<sup>6</sup>We are used to multifunctionality elsewhere in the semantics, pragmatics and syntax of grammatical items, or grammatical categories, e.g. English future tense, which may express pure future time reference (but not in conditional and temporal clauses), intention, and generic situations. (Haspelmath 1997: 59)

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