

On Number Marking Principles in Japanese

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present informal generalizations concerning plurality marking principles in the Japanese language and to discuss their semantic and functional implications.

A large number of languages in the world exhibit straightforward number specification which is manifested in nominals and agreeing constituents such as nominal modifiers, verbs, or pronouns. Japanese verbs, however, have no special forms to show whether their subjects are singular or plural, and in many cases nouns are invariable for number. There are two or three peculiar ways of showing that a noun is plural, but their distribution is characteristically restricted.

In the following discussions, we shall focus mainly on the so-called plurality suffixes and point out the functional principles behind their usage and distribution. Specifically, concepts such as animacy, referentiality and collectivity will be shown to play vital roles in accounting for the use of this explicit plurality specification measure in Japanese.

2. Three Number Marking Devices in Japanese

In this section we shall survey the basic properties of numerical devices in Japanese and their standing in the overall number marking system. Three types of number marking devices are recognized in the language, *viz.* numerical classifiers ('*josuji*'), plural affixes (e.g. *-tachi*, *-ra*, *-domo*, *sho-*) and nominal reduplication ('*tatamigo*'). A large majority of nouns, however, carry no number specification. This fact is commonly explained by the principle of optionality. The legitimacy of this view will be questioned as soon as the nature and quality of the three plurality marking measures are examined. The first clue to their absence resides not in their optionality but in their mutual exclusiveness.

The use of numerical classifiers is a device for marking singular and numerated plurals in Japanese. They are in wide use both in expressions of cardinal number and expressions of quantity in contexts where the specific quantity of the referents is relevant.¹

(1) a. mizu ip-pai

b. enpitsu ni-hon

	water 1 glass 'a glass of water'		pencil 2 cylindrical 'two pencils'
c.	kami san-mai paper 3 sheet 'three sheets of paper'	d.	kodomo yo-nin child 4 person 'four children'

Each expression in (1) takes the form of bare nominal + numeral + classifier, irrespective of the nature of the referent. This uniformity, as opposed to the distinctive markings of count/mass nouns in English manifested in the gloss, leads us to note the first principle of number marking in Japanese grammar.

- (2) There is no grammatical distinction of nouns into count nouns and mass nouns in Japanese.²

In principle, every noun can be either preceded or followed by a classifier.³

- (3) a. *Koko ni San-mai no kami ga aru.*
here LC 3 sheets LK paper NM be
b. *Koko ni kami ga san-mai aru.*
'Here are three sheets of paper'
- (4) a. *Yo-nin no kodomo ga haitte-kita.*
4 person LK child NM entered
b. *Kodomo ga yo-nin haitte-kita.*
child NM 4 person entered
'Four children came in'

The existence of numerical classifiers in the language, however, does not guarantee their omnipresence. An overwhelming majority of Japanese nouns appear without any sort of number specification, as we shall see below.

Japanese has another well-recognized means of numerical marker, *viz.* a class of morphological plural markers such as *-tachi*, *-gata*, *-ra*, *-domo*. These are a kind of nominal suffixes which are used as in *kodomo-tachi* (children), *anata-gata* (you PL), *aitsu-ra* (those guys), *hae-dome* (flies), but their uses are highly limited. Note the fact that they are not even present in (1b-d) and (4), whereas the English versions all exhibit number plus plural morphology. Here emerges another number-related principle.

- (5) A numerical classifier and a plural suffix normally do not coincide with each other.⁴

Not much attention has been paid to the existence of yet another numerical means of expressing multitude in Japanese. This third device, which I will designate as nominal reduplication takes the form of repetition of a noun consisting of one or two syllables (often accompanying a phonetic change in the first consonant of repeated part) and signifies the existence of a multitude of referents.⁵ Examples follow:

- (6) hitobito, kigi, yamayama, muramura tochitochi
'people' 'trees' 'mountains' 'villages' 'places'

Although these things always come in individual quanta, no reference is made to that individuation. This type of non-numerated plurals are also found in other languages (Moravcsik: 1978).

It is natural, on semantic ground, that a nominal reduplication does not accept explicit number specification (**futari no hitobito*, **mittsu no muramura*) nor plural suffixes (**hitobito-tachi*). What we have here is the following principle.

- (7) A nominal reduplication does not coincide with either a numerical classifier nor a plural suffix.

The principles (5) and (7) jointly state the complementary distribution of the three number making devices in Japanese.

- (8) A numerical classifier, a plural suffix and a nominal reduplication are, in principle, mutually exclusive.

Principle (8) illustrates a significant feature of the number marking system in Japanese that has fallen under observations of many linguists and grammar writers. The general practice for Japanese grammar books is simply note the existence of optional plural markers without providing any principled explanation for their usage.

The non-cooccurrence of numerical classifiers, plurality suffixes and nominal reduplications noted above, points to the essentially semantic nature of those devices. If the plural affix and nominal reduplication are grammatical devices, it is natural for them to accompany numerals larger than one, just as plural suffixes in most European languages do. That neither of them do so is puzzling from the customary view on number marking system that everything in the world must be either singular or plural and that all noun phrases must be marked as either singular or plural. The rest of this paper will center around the function of plurality suffixes, whose infrequency is unexpected from the familiar view on number marking in Indo-European linguistics.

3. Animacy Constraint and Division of Labor Among Plurality Suffixes

A widely held view on the use of different plurality suffixes in Japanese recognizes four basic conditions on their usage, i.e. the animacy constraint, the applicability to proper names, the politeness scale and the overall infrequency.

We shall note first the animacy constraint. We can say *otoko-tachi* (men), *inu-tachi* (dogs), *mushi-tachi* (insects) but not *hon-tachi* (books), *chawan-tachi* (bowls).⁶ What is at work here is the following constraint.

- (9) The use of a plurality suffix in Japanese is restricted to animate nouns.

(This rule sanctions personification of inanimate objects in fairy tales and fantasy.) The

animacy constraint (or more typically humanness constraint) is found in one form or another in a wide variety of natural languages. In English, for example, it is manifested in the pronominal opposition between *who* and *what/which*, *he/she* and *it*, *somebody* and *something*, etc. Similar oppositions are also found in other areas of Japanese grammar, e.g. the choice between the two verbs of existence; *viz*, *iru* is reserved for animate beings and *aru* for inanimate objects.

As is well recognized there exists a division of labor among *-tachi*, *-ra*, *-gata*, and *domo*, which exhaust the list of plurality suffixes in common use in present-day Japanese. The choice among these different morphological forms is controlled primarily by the politeness hierarchy and subsidiarily by the speaker's empathy or compassion for the referent.⁷ Thus, *-tachi* can be attached to almost any animate noun, but *-ra* and *-gata* are limited to humans and *-domo* is reserved for animals and humans beneath notice. Each of them has some inherently affective lexical content that restricts its application to certain classes of nouns. The least affective and reasonably polite one is *-tachi*. *-Gata* is honorific and often used for so called 'second person pronoun' and is considered more polite than *-tachi*. *-Ra* is humble or despising, and *-domo* is contemptible.

- (10) a. *watashi-tachi* (we), *anata-tachi* (you PL), *neko-tachi* (cats), *mushi-tachi* (insects)
 b. *anata-gata* (you PL), *go-fujin-gata* (the ladies)
 c. *boku-ra* (we), *omae-ra* (you PL), *shojo-ra* (girls)
 d. *watashi-domo* (we), *inu-domo* (dogs), *hae-domo* (flies)

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that *-tachi* and *-ra* among others are often affixed to human proper names.

- (11) a. *Tanaka-san-tachi*, *Michiko-tachi*
 b. *Tanaka-ra*, *Michiko-ra*

(The forms in (11b) are most typically used in reference to criminals.) This practice of marking proper names, as well as the permeation of animacy constraint and politeness hierarchy is unfamiliar to European marking of simple plurality in the sense of two or more single entities based on countable/uncountable distinction.

A vast majority of data on grammatical agreement in natural languages is provided by Moravcsik (1978), who detects the following universal tendency concerning number marking on nominals.

- (12) If a language has a means of number specification, it is used primarily with definite, animate or topic other than indefinite, inanimate or nontopic constituent.⁸

However, contrary to our expectation, the concepts of definiteness and topicality have no direct bearing on the plurality marking of nouns as far as Japanese is concerned, since the definite or topic element in Japanese discourse are typically though not always ex-

pressed by zero form. Thus, there is no place for the plurality suffixes to come in. Compare the following pairs of English and Japanese expressions:

- (13) a. We had four visitors, but they have left now.
 b. *Okyaku ga yo-nin kimashita ga, mo kaerimashita.*
 guest NM 4 person came but already left
- (14) a. A puppy fell into a pit. We must rescue it.
 b. *Koinu ga ana ni ochi-ta. Tasuke-nakucha.*
 puppy NM pit LC fall PAST rescue must

We see here that the second mention of an object nominal takes the form of a pronoun in English but zero in Japanese.

4. Absence of Plurality Suffix and Numerical Neutrality

The animacy constraint noted in the previous section, however, is but a necessary condition for the use of plurality suffixes. The need for other concepts is illustrated in the following passage.

- (15) *Mukashi, hama ni chikai aru mura ni Urashima Taro toiu*
 long ago beach to near certain village in named
ryoshi ga sunde imashita. . . Mura no kodomo-tachi wa
 fisherman NM living was village LK children TP
Urashima ga daisuki deshita. Urashima mo kodomo o kawai-
 NM very fond were too child AC love
gatte imashita. . .
 was

‘Once upon a time in a beach-side village there lived a fisherman named Urashima Taro. . . The village children are very fond of Urashima. Urashima loved the children, too.’

The behavior of *kodomo-tachi* and *kodomo* in (15) demonstrates that absence of plurality marking from an animate noun does not guarantee presence of a single referent.

Our focus is then shifted to a new type of concern, *viz.* to other factors than animacy that determine the conditions for the use and nonuse of plurality suffixes. Compare the following:

- (16) a. *Watashi-domo wa nokorimasu. Osaki ni dozo.*
 we TP remain ahead LK please
 ‘We’ll remain. You go ahead, please’
- b. *Kono ko-tachi o mite kudasai.*
 this children AC look please
 ‘Please look at these children’

- c. *Gakusei-tachi* ga sawaide-iru.
 students NM make noise be
 ‘The students are noisy’
- (17) a. *Watashi-tachi* no kurasu wa *joshi* ga ooi.
 we LK class TP female NM many
 ‘There are many females in our class’
- b. *Washi* wa *kodomo* wa suki ja nai.
 I TP children TP like TP not
 ‘I don’t like children’
- c. *Kono kata-tachi* wa *Chugoku-jin* desu.
 this person pl TP China person be
 ‘they are Chinese’

The sentences in (16) illustrate some of the typical environments for plural suffixation in Japanese. Those in (17), on the other hand, show some instances of bare singular forms used in places where the plural suffix is required in the English translation. Affixation of plurality morphemes to underlined words in (17) results in unnaturalness or importunity.

- (17) a'. **Watashi-tachi* no kurasu wa *joshi-tachi* ga ooi.
 b'. ?*Washi* wa *kodomo-tachi* wa suki ja nai.
 c'. **Kono kata-tachi* wa *Chugoku-jin-tachi* desu.

The above facts are often taken to show optional nature of plurality morphology in Japanese. Such a view is found, for instance, in Tamamura (1986.5–6) and Kindaichi (1988.2.67–71).

- (18) Plurality suffixes are used in Japanese only when the speaker/writer is particularly conscious of the plurality of the referent or there is a contextual need.

On closer inspection, however, the notion “optionality” is not only insufficient but inappropriate to account for the overall infrequency of Japanese plurality suffixes on one hand and the preponderance of bare nominals on the other.

The sentences in (15)–(17) appear to show the restriction of plural morphology to syntactic subject position. However, consider the following expressions:

- (19) *Kinjo* no *okusan-tachi* ni o-hana o oshiete-imasu.
 neighborhood LK wives to flower-arrangement teach
 ‘She teaches flower arrangement to some housewives in the neighborhood’
- (20) *Musume-tachi* to issho ni yushoku o tabemasu.
 daughter pl and together with dinner AC eat
 ‘I eat dinner with my daughters’

Here *okusan-tachi* and *musume-tachi* are not subjects but dative and oblique object, respectively. Thus, we are obliged to look through other areas of grammar for underlying principles.

5. Unmarked Nominals as Class Designators

Having seen above the inapplicability of both pragmatic notions (of definiteness and topicality) and the syntactic notion (of subjecthood), we shall turn to semantics of the nouns with/without plural morphology. Yasutake (1988), observing the preponderance of unmarked (bare) nominals in Japanese, identifies their class-designating function. An unmarked nominal, which consists solely of a single noun (or conjoined nouns) with no accompanying affix nor modifier, connotes but not denotes a class of entity. The referential status of an unmarked nominal is beyond the immediate concern of the speaker/hearer. The categorial absence of plurality suffix is indicative of the non-referentiality as well as numerical neutrality of class designators, which constitute a special subtype of “nouns without plural morphology.” In this new perspective, let us look into the referential status of plurality suffixes.

Consider the following;

- (21) A: Ano *kata-tachi* wa *nan* desu ka?
 that person pl TP what be QM
 ‘What are they?’
 B: *Isha* desu.
 doctor be
 ‘They are doctors’

Nan, just like its equivalent *what* in English, is an interrogative pronoun used to question the property of a referent. *Isha* in (21B) is also a “property noun phrase” with no reference of its own. As is discussed in Kuno (1968), predicate nominals of this kind belong to the semantic category of non-referential noun phrase. Compare (21B) with the following:

- (21) B': *Watashi* o *naoshite-kureta o-isha-san-tachi* desu.
 I AC cure gave favor HON doctor pl be.
 ‘They are the doctors that cured me’

Here the NP *watashi o naoshite-kureta o-isha-san-tachi* is referential, and sentence (21B') equates its group of referent with the people referred to as *ano kata-tachi* in (21A). Plural morphology on the former ostensibly marks its referential status. Note that removal of *-tachi* from (21B') results in oddity.

- (21) B'': #*Watashi* o *naoshite-kureta o-isha-san* desu.

(# marks contextual deviance. (21B'') is felicitous as an answer to a question about a

single doctor: ‘Ano kata wa nan desu ka?’)

We are now in a position to posit another necessary condition for the use of plurality suffix.

(22) Referentiality is a necessary condition for the use of plurality suffix.

This successfully accounts for the presence and absence of plurality suffix in (15)–(17) above. In (17a) and (17c), for example, the initial noun phrases, being referential, are marked with *-tachi*, whereas the predicate nominals remain unmarked. *Joshi* in (17a) and *Kodomo* in (17b) exemplify non-referential noun phrases other than predicate nominals. They do not refer to any specific individual(s) but designate female/children in general, and the sentences as a whole express characteristic features of the subjects. Attachment of *-tachi* results in oddity as is illustrated by (17'). Presence of possible referents in the universe of discourse is not essential.

Let us examine further examples of nonreferential noun phrases.

(23) a. Dick wa *hito* ni jirojiro mir-are-ta.
 TM person by curiously look PASS PAST
 ‘Dick was stared at by many people’

b. *Dick wa *hito-tachi* ni jirojiro mir-are-ta.

(24) a. Dick wa *neko* o katte-iru.
 TP cat AC keep be
 ‘Dick keeps a cat/cats’

b. *Dick wa *neko-tachi* o katte-iru.

It could be argued that *hito* and *neko* here are referential, and hence disprove the hypothesis (22). However, in order to explain the acceptability of (23a) and (24a) as opposed to the unacceptability of (23b) and (24b) it is necessary to take into consideration context and above all the speaker’s communicative intent. In unmarked interpretations of (23a) and (24a), it is beyond the speaker’s intention to draw the hearer’s attention to the existence of any specific people or cat(s). Rather, (23a) and (24a) are a statement about Dick’s experience and his lifestyle, respectively.

We have seen in this section that the lack of number marking on Japanese nouns is a case of numerical neutralization. A noun phrase with an unmarked animate noun as its head can be either referential or nonreferential. When referential, it refers to a single animate being, and when nonreferential, it simply designates a class of being. It is not the case, however, that plus or minus referential is an intrinsic property of each noun. Generally, if a noun is used to refer to a specific animate being then it is delimited in certain ways, e.g. by numeral ‘one’, by the choice of postposition particle (*joshi*) or by various sorts of determiners and/or modifiers. Furthermore, the referential status of a noun phrase is determined by sentence type and ultimately by overall context.

6. Grammatical De-personification of Nonreferential Nominals

The use of inanimate interrogatives e.g. *nan/what* rather than animate (typically human) *dare/who* in non-referential positions both in Japanese and English, as is exemplified by (21a), is particularly significant. It illustrates the possibly universal equation of non-referential nominals with inanimate nominals, which provides an independent motivation for our theory. Specifically it supports our coupling of the principles of animacy and referentiality in stating the conditions for the use of plurality suffixes. Thus a non-referential use of a noun phrase can be regarded as a case of grammatical depersonification (or in-animation).

The same principle is observed in more than one areas of the grammars in the two languages. In the case of Japanese, it plays a decisive role in the area of non-referential nominals and interrogative/relative pronouns. In English, it figures in the choice of personal pronouns as well as interrogative/relative pronouns, as is discussed in Kuno (1970).

- (25) a. LBJ is the president of the United States. He has been *it/*him* since 1963.
 b. The Speaker of the House is always an old man. *It/*He* has been McCormack since 1960.
 c. He is a gentleman, *which/*who* his brother is not.
 d. *What* you need is a devoted wife, *which/*whom* you don't have.

The denominator of all the italicized inanimate pronouns in (25) is non-referentiality of their antecedent noun phrase.

7. Plurally-marked Noun and Collective Reference

We have seen in Section Three the essentially animate nature of plurality suffixes. The suffix *-ra*, however, is exceptional in that it is combinable with deictic pronouns (*kore* (this), *sore* (that), *are* (that over there) and *dore* (which)) and can be used in reference to inanimate objects or abstract notions. Thus, *kore-ra* (these), *sore-ra* (those) and *are-ra* (those over there) behave like English *they* in its inanimate reading.⁹

What is most noteworthy in this connection is the behavior of genitive (prenominal adjectival) forms of these deictic pronouns. The singular prenominal forms *kono*, *sono*, *ano* and *dono* are all indifferent to animacy and can apply to animate beings and stuff alike.

- (26) *kono kami* *sono hon* *ano musume* *dono hanashi*
 paper book girl story
 'this piece of paper' 'that book' 'that girl' 'which story'

But the plural forms *korerano*, *sorerano*, *arerano*, *dorerano* apply primarily to things.

- (27) korerano johō sorera no hon arerano kuruma
 information book car
 ‘these pieces of information’ ‘those books’ ‘those cars’

The existence of deictic plurals thus makes up for the absence of plurality suffix from inanimates. Plurality of animate nouns is marked by direct suffixation, whereas that of inanimate nouns is marked indirectly through deictic pronominal determiners.

In English, deictic pronouns show numerical agreement with the noun they modify but in Japanese the plurality marker is affixed only once, either to the pronoun or to the head noun, depending on the animacy of the noun. When the noun is animate, a plurality suffix is attached to itself, and when inanimate to the modifying pronoun. Thus, the meanings equivalent to ‘these girls’, and ‘those students’ are expressed by singular deictic + plural nominal:

- (28) kono musume-tachi, ano gakusei-tachi

The following (29) and (30) are not completely out but considerably worse than (28). (It appears that (29) are acceptable for some speakers by analogy with English.)

- (29) korerano musume-tachi, arerano gakusei-tachi
 (30) korerano musume, arerano gakusei

Both (29) and (30) violate the inanimacy constraint, moreover (29) appears to be a case of excessive marking, but there is more than that. The goodness of (28) as opposed to the awkwardness of (29) and (30) derives from the fact that *tachi*-marked nouns categorically reject plural determiner, which indicates their syntactic singularity. A plurally marked noun semantically identifies more than one discrete entities but no reference is made to the individuation. In other words, a Japanese noun with plurality suffix refers collectively to a group of referents.

- (31) Plurality suffixes in Japanese do not mark simple plurality in the sense of two or more single entities, but rather they function semantically as a collective noun formative.

The rest of this section will be devoted to the demonstration of the correctness of our hypothesis. To begin with, let us re-examine the referential quality of *watashi o naoshite kureta o-isha-san-tachi* in (21B’). This noun phrase refers to a team of doctors who cured the speaker by joint effort. There is no distributive interpretation whereby each of the doctors cured the speaker at one time or another (of different diseases/at separate hospitals).

One characteristic behavior of Japanese plurality suffixes that has not been paid much attention to is that they can be freely affixed to proper names, as *Takashi-tachi*, *Yamada-ra*. Obviously, these do not normally mean that there are more than one Takashi’s or Yamada’s. They refer collectively to ‘Takashi and his group’ and ‘the gang led by Yamada.’

Basically the same group referring interpretation is applied to common nouns. For example *sensei-tachi* in Japanese is not exactly the same as *teachers* in English. It means a teacher and his/her group (not necessarily all teachers), which may consist of a teacher, a school nurse, a custodian and some mothers of students. Also, personal pronouns, e.g. *watashi-tachi* (or English *we* for that matter) do not normally mean that there are more than one speakers, but refer collectively to the speaker and his/her group.¹⁰

Another strong support to our theory is found in the fact that Japanese plurality suffix can be attached to conjoined nominals as in *kinjo no okusan ya ojosan-tachi* 'housewives and single girls in the neighborhood'. *-Tachi* here is affixed not to *ojosan* but to the conjoined nominal *kinjo no okusan ya ojosan* as a whole.

Another relevant fact that is often overlooked in literature is the existence of reflexive plurals *jibun-tachi/jibun-ra* that require an antecedent consisting of two or more individuals. We argue that they also call for collective interpretation. Look at the following sentence.

- (32) Jiro to Yasuko wa jibun-tachi no heya de benkyo-shita.
and TM self LK room in study did
'Jiro and Yasuko studied in their room'

The sentence (32) means that Jiro and Yasuko studied in the same room, and does not accept the distributive interpretation "Jiro and Yasuko studied in their (separate) rooms."

10. Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed number marking practice in Japanese with special emphasis on the group-referring function of plurality suffixes. One piece of evidence for the possible cross-linguistic existence of collective noun formative is found in old Turkish (cf. Nilsson 1985:27).¹¹ It may well be that the same type of plurality marker exists in many other languages, most likely among languages in the Southeast Asia, where lack of grammatical number is a common attested phenomenon. In a broader perspective, our present study is viewed as a corroboration of the thesis presented in such works as Bickerton (1971), Moravcsik (1978) and Elliot (1981) that the properties of number marking in natural languages are more various than the simple distinction between singular and plural.

NOTES

1. Cardinal numbers *hitotsu* (one), *futatsu* (two), *mitsu* (three) etc., which are reserved for inanimate and abstract nouns, are recognized as a crude member of numerical classifiers.
2. There are pairs of Sino-Japanese compounds like *tasuu* (a large number) and *taryoo* (a large quantity) which appear to manifest count/mass opposition, but native Japanese expression *takukan* and *ippai* can be used to mean either.

3. The numeral-noun order is not always reversible. Note the following:

- i. Sono san-satsu no hon o kudasai.
the 3 volume LK book ACC give-me
'Give me those three books'
- ii. Sono hon o san-satsu kudasai.
'Give me three copies of that book'

In principle, prenominal position is a restrictive modifier position and hence a marked position for a numeral. The unmarked position for Japanese numerals is the postnominal position.

This has an important consequence. Examine the numerical ambiguity of the following English sentence (Bickerton: 1971).

iii. I read a book every day.

(iii) is ambiguous even on the assumptions of past tense and unmarked tone, having at least the following two interpretations:

- iv. a. There was a book, and one book only, which I read day after day.
- b. Every day, I read some book or other, neither necessarily the same, nor necessarily different from, any that I had already read or would later read.

No such ambiguity arises in Japanese. The meanings equivalent to (iva) and (ivb) are distinctively expressed by (va) and (vb).

- v. a. Watashi wa mainichi issatsu no hon o yomi-mashita.
I TP everyday 1 vol LK book AC read PAST
- b. Watashi wa mainichi hon o issatsu yomi-mashita.

- 4. Prefix *sho-*, which is used with nominal expressions of Chinese origin to show multitude, can cooccur with a plural suffix in pronominal expressions such as *sho-kun-tachi* ('you—all of you here'). This exceptional double marking is the joint effect of collective reference and the recognition of variety within the group.
- 5. We may note in passing the existence of equally wide-spread adjectival and adverbial expressions of the same type, e.g. *akaaka* (burning red), *shizushizu* (very gently) and *tokidoki* (sometimes).
- 6. Kindaichi (1988.1.84) points out that it used to be possible to apply the plurality suffix *domo* to inanimate objects in Heian period Japanese (9–12 centuries). Thus, it used to be possible to say things like *fumi-domo* (letters), *tsukue-domo* (desks), but not nowadays.
- 7. This is in contrast to English and many other languages which have, in principle, isomorphic plural suffixes applicable for all countable nouns including inanimate beings. That there exist irregular plural forms like *foot*, *oxen*, *sheep*, etc., is irrelevant to the present discussion.
- 8. Our analysis of numerical classifiers above shows that their behaviors do not conform to this generalization, since numerical classifiers are used to mark contextually new information, which is normally carried by indefinite and nontopic constituent.
- 9. *Kochi-ra* (here), *sochi-ra* (there) and *achi-ra* (over there) are also used to refer to humans politely.
- 10. The same can be said about *anata-tachi*, *anta-ra* but not *you* or French *vous*. The latter two are isomorphic with the singular forms. They are ambiguous between singular and plural interpretation. It may be that delimitation of referent is not essential in second person, since it is evident from the discourse situation. Third person plurals, e.g. *karera* (they), behave like English plurals referring to collection of individuals. This may have something to do with the fact that they are new comers to Japanese language, introduced under the influence of English and other European languages.
- 11. Turkish plural marker *-IAr* appeared in the 8th century. It was used to form new collective nouns rather than plural nouns. The development towards a distinction between singularity and

plurality in the noun started around the 9th century in Uighur, under the influence of Indo-European languages.

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正誤表

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		誤	→	正
p. 15	l. 23	tatamigo		jogo
p. 16	l. 36	of repeated		of the prepeated
p. 17	l. 23	do		does
p. 17	l. 25	as either		either as
p. 19	l. 24	found		fond
p. 20	l. 12	they		They
p. 23	l. 28	in animate		inanimate