

Arkadiusz Jabłoński

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ELEMENTS AS ABANDONED
PARTS OF SPEECH**

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When all think alike, no one is thinking.

Attributed to Walter Lippmann

*If there is a wrong way to do something,
then someone will do it that way.*

Attributed to Murphy

*Faith is very important –
but it may not substitute for reason (paraphrased)*

Attributed to Józef Tischner

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Introduction

The Japanese language has been the subject of many grammatical descriptions. Numerous works by native and non-native authors have been published, not to mention the innumerable remarks on phenomena of the language in sources of general character. Against this background, it is interesting to observe a striking difference in how the classes of the Japanese lexicon and the related grammatical phenomena are described.

A closer look at Japanese grammatical descriptions reveals that the coverage of two groups, described in traditional terms as nominal elements (Latin *nomen*, Japanese *taigen* 体言) and verbal elements (Latin *verbum*, Japanese *yōgen* 用言), is extremely uneven. For many reasons, related, among others, in a general perspective, to the Chinese roots of Japanese writing and to the typological characteristics of Chinese languages, which are substantially different from Japanese, there are grounds to claim, literally, that the nominal elements have been abandoned in the Japanese tradition of grammatical description. In the overwhelming majority of grammatical sources, they are described with the use of analytic and isolating methodology, not compatible with the synthetic and agglutinative characteristics of Japanese. The review of data in support of this hypothesis, explanation of the actual consequences of this fact for the linguistic description of Japanese, as well as the presentation of certain initial propositions for a more adequate description of Japanese nominal elements and their paradigmatic word forms, based on morphological criteria, are central axes of the reasoning presented throughout this volume.

There undoubtedly are reasons to criticize the classical approaches to nominal inflection, based on the long-established morphological tradition of grammatical description, rooted in the philosophical and linguistic investigation of Indo-European languages. This, however, can be achieved by no means other than those methodologically linked to the original approaches. Morphological phenomena do not fully explain the intricate ontological relations between textual constituents or between signs and their designata. Still, they are immediately available and unambiguously interpretable for the users of a language, constituting a subsystem of relations defined in phonological terms, functioning

at a relatively low level of entropy. Regardless of valid semantic and syntactic rules, it does not seem effective to describe the grammar of a language with inflecting properties without systemic reference to morphological rules and oppositions. At present, there seems to be no coherent description of Japanese nominal phenomena based on purely morphological grounds.

In Japanese linguistics there is no tradition of drawing a clear-cut distinction between lexical and grammatical elements. As a consequence, a rather ambiguous attitude towards the scientific, systemic task of describing paradigmatic relations in terms of the marking of different values of grammatical dimensions by dedicated, non-independent grammatical markers – parts of word forms – may be observed among grammarians. As a substitute for a system-oriented approach, grammatical markers (traditionally described in grammars of Japanese as uninflected particles or postpositions) tend to be viewed as quasi-independent parts of speech, with multiple “meanings”, not systematized within a paradigm. They are defined as dictionary entries, in a manner similar to the lexical elements.

There is no doubt that the choice of research methodology should at least to some extent be viewed as a free decision, not being subject to restrictions. At the same time, little methodological differentiation may be observed among the existing approaches to Japanese nominals. Accordingly, probably not much added value may be expected from research based on inherently unsystemic assumptions, leading to unparadigmatic explanations.

In this book, various descriptions of Japanese grammar are analyzed. The sources of reference include a representation of texts from the area of general and Japanese linguistics, covering both expert publications, writings of general reference, dictionaries, lexicons, and materials for the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language. The basic concern is to demonstrate what linguistic tools are used – and on what assumptions, not necessarily of expert character – to describe nominal phenomena. It is not claimed that all canonical texts on the nominal elements have been quoted or that all conceivable evidence for the validity of the observed facts and rules has been documented. Certain approaches, such as the numerous studies from the fields of transformational grammar or case grammar, could probably have

been analyzed much more thoroughly. This, as far as the author is concerned, does not constitute a substantial flaw from the point of view of the overall objective of this study. It is neither a review of case theories nor a critique of specific aspects of others. Its aim is, first of all, to point out the rather surprising, almost unanimous consent expressed by the majority of existing sources that the nominal elements of Japanese may be explained as uninflected, in an analytic and unsystemic manner. A set of arguments is advanced to support the hypothesis that the complexity of certain analytic theories does not necessarily explain in an effective manner the facts of all conceivable languages, the synthetic Japanese language being but one example. The proposals to adjust the methodology to the actual properties of a code, and to re-visit some classic, intuitive techniques of linguistic description having regard to the actual properties of the language phenomena to which they are applied, remain valid regardless.

The focus on “all languages of the world” may impose a perspective of research and reasoning on some properties of detailed elements of language generalized as typical for specific language codes. The author does not mean to challenge the significance of certain universal rules or to deny the necessity of their investigation. Still, the empirical study of intuitional rules and phenomena may also prove useful. In the following chapters, it is mainly the properties of Japanese and the languages in which grammatical descriptions of Japanese have been formulated that are taken into account. The direct relation of the statements and comparisons to universal phenomena, valid in any natural language, is by no means implied.

The lay, intuitive recognition of language rules may not be compatible with the elaborate methods of linguistics. The expert approach is unlikely to change the way native speakers use a language. Modeling some intuitive processes may, however, be helpful in understanding language behavior. Since it may be effective on morphological grounds, a level rarely utilized in a coherent manner in grammars of Japanese, it is proposed that the morphological analysis of Japanese nominal forms be used as an effective starting point for a more advanced examination of nominal phenomena. Such a starting point, not available (yet?), could be useful both to show how native users of Japanese conceptualize the nominal elements of the language and, as the next level of analysis, to

explain in a convincing way various phenomena considered traditionally inexplicable and/or inherently Japanese.

Due to the distinct dominance of the isolating and analytic approaches to the language phenomena of Japanese, it may be tempting to brush aside the assumptions made below as controversial, outrageous or bizarre. They are, however, in the first place, well grounded in the generally confirmed morphological properties of the language, exhibiting the features of systemic and paradigmatic tools.

This book is intentionally written in English. The very concept of declension based on morphological criteria seems to be treated with substantial reserve in contemporary linguistic works in English. This does not alter the fact that effective descriptions of Japanese and English may in some aspects call for different tools. This is because, as the author teaches his students, Japanese is not English. Moreover, English, though undoubtedly the common tongue of contemporary linguistic inquiry, by no means constitutes a model language or a normative standard for linguistic description, any more than any other code. Codes and their descriptions differ. The choice of methods is an expert competence, influencing the results of the investigation.

Chapter 1, the first of five, explains, in a general perspective, the role of nominal elements in the classification of vocabulary and the morphological and non-morphological techniques of their description. Chapters 2 and 3 cover, respectively, selected non-morphological and morphological approaches to the Japanese nominal elements. Chapter 4 provides basic ideas for distinguishing the Japanese grammatical elements proposed to be described as morphological case markers in the next stages of analysis, in the form of a tentative list. Chapter 5 contains conclusions and suggestions for further research.

The romanization of Japanese terms follows the Hepburn standard, with minor deviations, such as the use of apostrophes to mark ambiguous morpheme boundaries (cf. *senpen'ichiritsu*). Long vowels are marked by macrons, as *ō* in *bunpō*, except for long *i*, rendered by *ii*, not *ī*. Grammatical markers accompanying the nominal elements within word forms are divided by hyphens in glossing (as in *watashi-wa*) only with the intention of showing their lexical and grammatical content. This does not alter the general proposal to treat them as constituents of synthetic, paradigmatic nominal word forms. Their syntagmatic

properties, conditioning their usage in phrases and sentences, are related to their paradigmatic forms.

Original Japanese terms are romanized as one-word units, without spaces between their constituents (as *senpen'ichiritsu*), with the exception of romanized elements in the list of references (as *Kōnihonbunpō bekki*). Modern variants (allographs) of ideograms (sinograms) are used in the original versions of terms, although in some sources they appear in their old versions.

Example sentences, pictures and tables are numbered according to the chapters and sections in which they appear. Table 2.1.1 is the first table in section 1 of Chapter 2 and 2.3.a is the first example in section 2.3, regardless of the subsection number.

Quotations generally preserve the original orthography and punctuation. Some editorial conventions have been standardized, unconventional spelling instances being collated with contemporary Hepburn romanization in square brackets, after an equality sign (cf. *va* [= *-wa*]). English translations of source texts, if not mentioned otherwise, are the author's.

The basic formulation of the initial idea of nominal declension in Japanese, which emerged in 2010, and was presented, among others, in Jabłoński (2012, 2015), took mere hours. Its clarification and elaboration required almost 10 years of reading, thinking, discussion and editorial work. One of the fundamental factors and an additional source of motivation which contributed to the current shape of the work was the grant OPUS 10 No. 2015/19/B/HS2/00147, obtained in 2016 from the Polish National Science Centre, to finance the project “Towards a coherent description of Japanese grammar – a Polish dictionary (lexicon) of Japanese grammatical terms” – with the result planned to be published in 2021 (Jabłoński 2021). Another – unexpected though significant – reason to intensify the editorial process and to compile the initial version of this text, typed in less than the biblical forty-day period, was the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe in March 2020. Still, despite the documented attempts to draw his professional inspiration from radically diversified sources, the author does not have at his disposal virtually any means to verify that the material he has collected, collated and analyzed may be of any actual help to scholars and students of Japanese language and linguistics. It nevertheless remains his sincere

hope that the presented hypotheses and way of reasoning, while far from complete and perfect, may be stimulating for further examination of prospects for the morphological description of the nominal facts of the Japanese language.

Sincere thanks are offered to all who helped, supported or motivated the author and withstood the acts related to the compilation of this tiny volume. Additional expressions of gratitude are addressed to all who did not interfere.

Poznań, April 2020

1. Vocabulary, Intuition, Universality

“In elementary school, I was taught that a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing. In college, I was taught the basic linguistic doctrine that a noun can only be defined in terms of grammatical behavior, conceptual definitions of grammatical classes being impossible. Here, several decades later, I demonstrate the inexorable progress of grammatical theory by claiming that a noun is the name of a thing.”

(Langacker 2008: 93)

The proposal to classify vocabulary on purely scientific grounds is not always easy to carry out. Thorough considerations of the intricacies of semantics and syntax may result in approximations and doubts. In this light, with semantic and syntactic rules and limitations considered valid, the level of morphology may often be recognized as the one that reveals least entropy and most certainty.

1.1. Noun as a Vocabulary Unit

The linguistic criteria used to distinguish the parts of speech differ. Three commonly known methodological approaches may be roughly defined as phonological, syntactic and semantic (Lyons 1977: 373). Non-English general sources (Polański 1995: 92-94, Tanaka et al. 1988: 469-471) confirm the triad: morphology, syntax, semantics. The former source introduces a different order of elements: semantics, morphology, syntax, motivated probably by the rather intuitive character of semantic reference. This does not alter the basic character of the properties linked to phonemic structures and morphemes in terms of forming “a bridge between the syntax and the morphology” (Lyons *ibid.*).

The difference between the levels of phonemes and morphemes (the latter being further divided into carriers of lexical and grammati-

cal information) and the level of semantics and syntax may be defined generally, but highly effectively, in Hjelmslevian terms, within the opposition between the expression plane and the content plane (Hjelmslev 1969: 47-60). Semiotics operates on both planes, the issue of meaning not being immediately related to the phonemic structure of the sign. Relations of both levels are not necessarily unidirectional and obvious. As has been convincingly demonstrated since the time of de Saussure, the lexical (arbitrary) and the grammatical (revealing relative motivation) factors are “two opposing currents which share the movement of language” (Saussure 1959: 133-134). The grammatical value, carried exclusively by phonemes within the expression plane, does not always enable the same semantic interpretation on the content plane.

The most appealing advantage of the phonological/morphological level is the explicitness of the expression plane, assured also by the clear-cut linear rules of its construction. Further complications may emerge when too specific definitions are applied, which is virtually impossible at the phonological/morphological level. On purely semantic grounds (the content plane), as shown in the motto to this chapter, it is rather unlikely that unambiguous definitions will be achieved on a high level of abstraction (Langacker *ibid.*). The same author finds it necessary to add to the above-quoted fragment the footnote: “My definition of ‘thing’ is highly abstract. It subsumes people and places as special cases and is not limited to physical entities” (*ibid.*). Similar issues emerge when phonological and semantic phenomena are mapped onto syntactic categories, as exemplified by the frequent recognition of the primary role of a noun or nominal element as the subject of a sentence.

The three heterogeneous points of view do not make it impossible to achieve a balanced approach towards the noun and nominal elements, quite independently in some respects from the actual properties of a code. As a great simplification, from the semantic (lexical) point of view, nominal elements may often be quite effectively distinguished by their designata, as more or less concrete objects (*things*). They are identified with phoneme strings, each generally in a single form in languages with no or scarce inflection, but in more than one form, within inflectional paradigms, in languages with inflection. They may be assigned more or less typical syntactic roles, related to their lexical meaning and, in languages with inflection, usually related also

to their morphological form. While this schematic solution requires certain extensions to deal effectively with the detailed description of some codes' features, it is fairly adequate for the nominal phenomena observed in Japanese.

1.2. Categorization Criteria

The naive view of nominal properties, presented among others by Wittgenstein (1958: 2) after Augustine, is based on the notion of *object* or *thing* (*res* in the Latin original) and a possible answer to the fundamental questions: *What? Who?* It is the lexical basis that provides means to categorize the elements of the famous toolbox (Wittgenstein 1958: 6) as one coherent category of objects, with diverse functions, but with common categorial affiliation. This common sense rule is manifested in grammatical terms. The English *noun* is *nomen* (*substantivum*) in Latin, *Substantiv* or, with direct reference to its crucial role in the language system, *Hauptwort* in German, *nom* in French, *substantivi* in Finnish, *имя* in Russian, *jméno* in Czech, *rzeczownik* (with overt reference to *rzecz* 'thing') in Polish and *meishi* 名詞 in Japanese. Most of these terms allude to the *name* of the designatum. The rather unambiguous lexical foundation of the category does not exclude certain differences on a more detailed level of investigation.

The naive, intuitive view of language matters is also confirmed by the first position (traditionally) given to nominal elements in the structure of European grammars. Indeed, in the simple model presented by Augustine, communication with only nominal elements appears much more effective and immediate than communication attempted with only verbal elements, which are traditionally placed in opposition to them. It is the nominal elements that seem to be acquired in first place in the processes of native language acquisition and foreign language learning. It may also be surmised that in a test in which individual language users were asked to select any few words at random, a list of nominal elements like *water, sky, Goethe, wood, sister* would be a more typical result than, for example: *to run, yellow, silently, of course, up*. Needless to say, a common sense attitude may not suffice for the explanation of actual language phenomena. On the other hand, the expert description

of grammar should probably not utterly ignore that approach in its practical application to the language facts.

While the general semantic (lexical) features of nominal elements probably do not foster many controversies among the users and researchers of numerous already described languages, significant incompatibilities should be pointed out at the morphological and the syntactic level of analysis. This concerns especially the phenomenon of nominal inflection, obvious in some languages, but unknown or of little significance in others. In extremely naive terms, some definitions may overtly allude to the traditional view of declension in terms of “turning aside” or “deviating from a norm of some kind” (Crystal 2017: 35). Variations of the basic form may be discovered in several areas: 1) cenemic vs. pleremic properties, 2) lexical vs. grammatical features, 3) synthetic vs. analytic units, 4) paradigmatic vs. syntagmatic approach, and 5) inflected (agglutinative or fusional) vs. uninflected (isolating) characteristics of specific language phenomena.

1. The opposition between the expression plane and the content plane may result in different basic units of analysis. On the former, the recognition of basic units in phonological/morphological terms may lead to the enumeration of a set of simple structures deprived of lexical meanings, occurring with high frequency, according to systemic rules, opposed further as grammatical markers on the content plane. Performed primarily on the content plane, it may result in an almost infinite collection of compound phonological structures with lexical meanings and less significant systemic features. This opposition may further be influenced by the characteristics of writing, rendering in various ways the properties of both planes. A script revealing phonological features may expose more precisely the internal structure of basic units, while ideographic features may obscure the morphological phenomena.
2. In various languages, different lexical and grammatical oppositions are coded with various techniques. In a broad sense, there is probably no obstacle to describing virtually any dimension and its values in both lexical and grammatical terms. The difference lies in the more systemic and formal character of the latter. Lexical description techniques leave more flexibility in taking into account various individual instances of usage, resulting in a substantially

greater dispersion of the final results. The grammatical, systemic point of view, with finite paradigms and clear oppositions between their elements, emphasizes regular relations, despite unavoidable exceptions. Regardless of how the two are balanced, the obvious opposition between rules and exceptions is a considerable added value. It is particularly important to distinguish words (dictionary units carrying primarily lexical information) from word forms (with lexical and grammatical information).

3. The synthetic or analytic character of word forms influences the choice of description techniques. Declensional forms of Latin or Slavic languages are described as synthetic. The lexical content and grammatical modifiers of classical Chinese, on which the ideographic elements (graphomorphemes, sinograms) of contemporary Japanese writing are based, are considered analytic. There is little use in applying synthetic description to the analytic cases, or vice versa. The distinction may also be supported by grammatical tradition, as can be seen in the traditionally oriented morphological description of German's four cases, applying more to the articles and pronouns than to nouns as such.
4. A paradigmatic approach results in an abstract (users of the language rarely experience the paradigm in its full form), finite (the number of values is clear and constant), organized (the order of elements is fixed) set of variants assigned to one central, canonical element. Surface oppositions between the element and its variants – and between the respective variants themselves – may not explain the complexity of all possible grammatical relations. They constitute a foundation for further study. The notion of paradigm is a formalized abstraction from particular phenomena. A syntagmatic approach, concerned with the actual (concrete) relations of elements of a message or of a part of a message, their linear order as well as semantic and syntactic functions, is a necessary supplement to the paradigmatic approach. It reveals relations of a rather less systemic type, with more precise coverage of individual phenomena.
5. “It is arguable that languages fall into different types (isolating, agglutinative, fusional, etc [...]); and that for certain languages, though not for others, it is necessary to set up a separate level of morphological analysis” (Lyons 1977: 376). It is, however, clear that specific

language phenomena reveal various morphological features. While even in contemporary English some agglutinative construction rules (uni-functional grammatical morphemes connecting to lexical stems in fixed order, in various word forms) may be observed (cf. Lyons 1977: 377), most of the relevant nominal and verbal phenomena may effectively be described on the level of semantics and syntax. The synthetic description of the few English regular nominal forms (not more than four, the singular and plural nominative *N* – identical with the nominal stem – and *Ns*, and the singular and plural genitive *N's* and *Ns'*, distinguished most unambiguously in writing, alongside the analytic variant of the genitive *of N*) does not seem to enrich significantly the perspectives of theoretical insight. English adjectives inflect only for the values of degree, with mainly semantic interdependencies. Regular verbal forms (present/infinitive *V* identical with the verbal stem, simple present third person singular *Vs*, continuous *Ving* and simple past/past participle *Ved*) are not numerous either. In addition, the synthetic inflectional word forms of contemporary English rarely (if ever) exhibit more than one grammatical marker. Even a small number of inflected forms in a language proves its typological status as an inflected language. Still, the diversity of actual English word forms, nominal and verbal, is manifested mainly in analytic constructions with multiple nominal and adnominal or verbal and adverbial elements (as nominal adpositions or verbal tenses). Contemporary English is based on isolating features (with scarce inflection and with grammatical relations marked mainly by the order of the analytic components in a phrase or sentence). Additionally, it is usually impossible to determine clearly on the sole basis of the morphological forms of English words, in isolation from their semantics and syntax, even whether they are nominal or verbal synthetic units (cf. *make, takes, walking*). The relevant opposition is not solely between inflected and non-inflected phenomena. The light functional load of synthetic forms, viewed as a narrow range of grammatical values covered by the set of synthetic elements, is a factor not to be overlooked in the analysis of contemporary English. This does not exclude a further diversity of analytic forms – less compact, and for this reason considered secondary to the synthetic ones.

Approach type	Morphological	Non-morphological
coverage	inflecting languages (agglutinative or fusional)	nominally: all languages
primary properties	morphological, with semantic or syntactic extensions	semantic or syntactic
phenomena	superficial, abstract	complex, individual
main focus	synthetic forms	analytic forms
basic units	word forms (lexical and grammatical information)	words and constructions
basic notions	case, government, agreement	phrase, head, argument, adjunct
lexical/grammatical units	rather clearly differentiated	not always differentiated
grammatical dimensions	determined by word forms	determined by syntax and semantics
grammatical values	finite, systemic (word forms)	infinite (lexical and syntactic)
paradigm	fixed (based on a relatively small number of phonological variants)	virtually unlimited (a large number of primarily syntagmatic constructions)
number of cases	self-evident	unclear
case terms	semantic labels	syntactic labels
adpositions, word order	often neglected	main focus
potential merits	immediate, intuitive applicability to inflecting languages	applicability beyond morphology, also to isolating phenomena
potential flaws	ambiguity towards non- inflecting phenomena	less systemic coverage of inflecting phenomena

Table 1.2.1. Morphological and non-morphological approaches to nominal phenomena – a tentative comparison

In a general perspective, it may be effective to claim that in intuitive descriptions the following two basic approaches are preferred for nominal units.

A high degree of morphological complexity on the level of synthetic word forms (regular variants of dictionary word units) makes it possible to encode both lexical meaning (free morphemes) and grammatical oppositions by phonological structures with bound morphemes. This leads primarily to the approach based on the paradigm of morphological case forms. They are synthetic, with the same lexical content, being differentiated by grammatical content viewed in terms of phoneme strings, with specific terms and functions.

In languages with less significant morphological complexity, lexical oppositions are mainly encoded by synthetic phonological structures. Other oppositions are rendered by analytic structures, with grammatical morphemes recognized as different word units (free morphemes), which may be described on the level of their semantics and syntax, with no morphological paradigm of nominal forms. Table 1.2.1 presents a tentative comparison of the two roughly sketched approaches: morphological and non-morphological.

It is by no means assumed that the features and values of nominal elements compared in Table 1.2.1 are of equal significance to regular language users and to researchers. They may appear too schematic or not clear enough. Still, the basic distinction between the two roughly sketched types of approach is usually maintained. This basic opposition is shown in the comparison of different grammatical description techniques presented in detail below.

1.3. Intuition First – the Foreign Approach to Latin

The traditional manner of approaching inflected nominal elements is well documented in the history of linguistic thought. This is visible in descriptions of the phenomena of Latin – a language with synthetic nominal word forms and rich inflectional properties. Latin has for long been considered the standard for foreign language education in Europe, regardless of the native language of its learners and its specific morphological properties. One of the authoritative Polish sources on Latin

grammar introduces the following division into parts of speech shortly after the initial comments on the script and pronunciation:

“Similarly as in Polish, we have inflected and uninflected parts of speech in Latin. The inflected parts of speech are the following:

1. noun – **substantivum**
2. adjective – **adiectivum**
3. pronoun – **pronomem**
4. numeral – **numerale**
5. verb – **verbum**

The first four of the above inflect by case, number and gender – such inflection is called declension; in the inflection of the verb, which is called conjugation, persons, numbers, tenses, moods and voices are differentiated.” (Wikarjak 1978: 15)

The division is followed by comprehensive information on the inflection patterns. They are described in terms of paradigms (finite sets of forms presented as tables), revealing oppositions between the main (canonical) element (dictionary form: nominative singular for nouns, adjectives and pronouns and infinitive for verbs) and the remaining constituents of the paradigm. For a user of Polish, a language with rich inflection patterns, in some respects similar to Latin, this may be an intuitive means of explanation (cf. 1.5). The same method, with certain necessary modifications, is also used in English descriptions of Latin. In one 19th century grammar, a brief comment on the names and functions of the Latin nominal cases appears in the initial part of the handbook:

“Cases

1. The names of the cases in Latin are: *nominative, vocative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative*.
2. The vocative case is the case of address, but it does not differ in form from the nominative, except in the singular of nouns and adjectives in *us* of the second declension, and hence is not elsewhere given separately in the paradigms.
3. Another case, the *locative*, which denotes the place of an action, is mostly confined to proper names, and has the form of the ablative (sometimes dative) singular or plural, or of the genitive singular.” (Collar, Grant Daniell 1891: 5-6)

Next, the pattern (paradigm) of the first declension of Latin is given, with simple, intuitive *ad hoc* translations of the cases' meanings (not present in Polish sources on Latin), linking the morphological (phonological) and the semantic properties of the cases, as in Table 1.3.1.

Paradigm	
N. V. tuba , <i>a trumpet</i>	N. V. tubae , <i>trumpets</i>
G. tubae , <i>of a trumpet</i>	G. tubārum , <i>of trumpets</i>
D. tubae , <i>to or for a trumpet</i>	D. tubīs , <i>to or for trumpets</i>
Ac. tubam , <i>a trumpet</i>	Ac. tubās , <i>trumpets</i>
Ab. tubā , <i>with a trumpet</i>	Ab. tubīs , <i>with trumpets</i>

Table 1.3.1. First declension in Latin (Collar, Grant Daniell 1891: 7)

Table 1.3.1 is accompanied by explanations on the nominal stem (“the common base to which certain letters are added to express the relation of the word to other words”, *ibid.*), case-endings and terminations (“case-endings joined with the final letter of the stem”, *ibid.*) Its provisional character may be demonstrated by the following footnote to the Ab. case: “The ablative is variously rendered, according to its connection. It is therefore recommended that, in declining words, no translation of the ablative be given till its use has been illustrated.” (*ibid.*) This is followed by the explanation: “In Latin there is no article: **tuba** may be translated as *a trumpet*, *the trumpet* or *trumpet*” (*ibid.*: 8) and the instruction: “The pupil should commit to memory the table of terminations” (*ibid.*).

English cases		Latin cases	
Declension of <i>who?</i>	Name of case and use	Declension of <i>domina</i> 'lady'	Name of case and use
Who?	Nominative – case of the subject	domin-a <i>the lady</i>	Nominative – case of the subject
Whose?	Possessive – case of the possessor	domin-ae <i>the lady's,</i> <i>of the lady</i>	Genitive – case of the possessor
Whom?	Objective – case of the object	domin-am <i>the lady</i>	Accusative – case of the object
Who?	Nominative – case of the subject	domin-a <i>the ladies</i>	Nominative – case of the subject
Whose?	Possessive – case of the possessor	domin-ae <i>the ladies,</i> <i>of the ladies</i>	Genitive – case of the possessor
Whom?	Objective – case of the object	domin-am <i>the ladies</i>	Accusative – case of the object

Table 1.3.2. Tentative comparison of English and Latin cases (D'Ooge 1911: 17)

A slightly different approach is embodied by another Latin handbook of the time. The basic rules are introduced at the beginning, as first principles, like: “**Inflection.** Words may change their forms to indicate some change in sense of use, as, *is, are; was, were; who, whose, whom; farmer, farmer's; woman, women.* This is called **inflection**. The inflection of a noun, adjective, or pronoun is called its **declension**, that of a verb is **conjugation**” (D'Ooge 1911: 14). Table 1.3.2 serves as an intuitive comparison of English and Latin semantic and syntactic rules concerning the morphological structure of the Latin cases.

The content of Table 1.3.2 may be very helpful for the English student of Latin. It should be noted that, despite its not necessarily expert character, much attention is paid to including all oppositions necessary for the comparison of homogeneous values, that is, both case and number (gender is partly marked by the Latin declension pattern). Also on the level of terms, “English cases” are compared, but not described as identical, to their Latin partial equivalents.

A similar, intuitive but useful, link between morphological case and its semantic or syntactic properties is provided by another English source on Latin grammar.

“There are six Cases in Latin:

Nominative, Case of Subject;

Genitive, Objective with *of*, or Possessive;

Dative, Objective with *to* or *for*;

Accusative, Case of Direct Object;

Vocative, Case of Address;

Ablative. Objective with *by, from, in, with.*” (Bennett 1908: 11)

A brief mention of “the vestiges of Locative” and of the “oblique cases” (other than nominative and vocative) follows (*ibid.*). The same, primarily morphological technique of description, with semantic and syntactic comments useful for an English student, is applied, with appropriate changes, to other nominal elements: adjectives, numerals and pronouns.

The inflectional properties of Latin nominals are not only mentioned *in abstracto*, in the form of declensional paradigm tables. Possible semantic functions and syntactic positions are marked unambiguously by the synthetic case of Latin and by the analytic constructions of English. This reveals the actual usage of synthetic Latin case forms. A further consequence is the order of English sentences and their Latin counterparts:

“For example, the sentence *The lady her daughter loves.* might mean either that the lady loves her daughter, or that the daughter loves the lady.

If the sentences were in Latin, no doubt could arise, because the subject and the object are distinguished, not by the order of the words, but by the endings of the words themselves.” (D’Ooge 1911: 16)

The basic rules are presented by the source in Table 1.3.3.

Domina filiam amat. Filiam domina amat. Amat filiam domina. Domina amat filiam.	<i>The lady loves her daughter.</i>
Filia dominam amat. Dominam filia amat. Amat dominam filia. Filia amat dominam.	<i>The daughter loves the lady.</i>

Table 1.3.3. Nominal cases and correspondence to syntactic rules (D’Ooge 1911: 16)

The foreign approach to the facts of Latin was presented above using selected examples. It is not impossible to multiply them, without significant effect on the flow and the result of the reasoning. The intuitive, morphological approach, traditionally also used in the grammars of ancient Greek, was transferred to Rome to be applied to Latin, and inherited also in the medieval linguistic and philological approach to language. The primacy of morphological patterns and rules was perceived as a reflection of general rules governing language, as in the following quotation by Dyscolus on syntax phenomena (with philological comments from the translator in square brackets):

“Since such constructions are perfectly clear, some people think that even if they don’t pay attention to theory, they will still get the grammar right. These people are a lot like those who have acquired the forms of words simply by use, without any help from the facts of written Greek tradition [i.e. the usage of writers], and the regularities inherent in their usage [“analogy”, i.e., usually, rules and patterns of declension and conjugation]. These people are in the situation that if they make a mistake with some form, they cannot correct their error because of their inherent ignorance. Just as the utility of the literary tradition is very great for correcting both the texts of poems and the usage of every-day speech, and determining the application of words among classical authors as well, in the same way also our present investigation of grammaticality will provide a rational correction for all sorts of errors.” (Dyscolus 1981: 42-43)

The assumption is simple but effective. Morphological oppositions constitute proofs *per se* of underlying relations of more complex character. The same attitude to the study of language may be seen in the famous work of Varro:

“The first topic to be discussed must therefore be that of similarity and dissimilarity, because this distinction is at the very basis of all inflections and comprises the systemic relationship of words. Similar refers to what is seen to have most features identical to those of whatever it is to which it is similar; what is seen to be the opposite of this is dissimilar. Each and every proposition regarding what is similar as well as what is dissimilar consists by definition of at least two elements, because nothing can be similar without being similar to something else, and the corollary is that dissimilar cannot be predicated of anything unless there is an indication of what it is unlike.” (Varro 1996: 59)

While such an approach may, at least in some of its aspects, be considered naive, it is strongly linked to the morphological features of inflecting languages. It is sufficient for the student of the language and grammar to grasp the basic oppositions and rules. Quite independently of whether such an approach renders the actual language facts and rules on a deeper level of linguistic analysis, it may undoubtedly serve as a good starting point for such.

1.4. Intuition First – the Native Approach to English

In a similar way as the inflecting properties of Latin are reflected in the grammatical descriptions of the language from the foreign point of view, the generally non-inflecting properties of English influence the descriptions of the English grammar rules in the native approach. In one of the popular classic compendia of English grammar, compiled by native speakers for the use of foreign students of the language (Thomson, Martinet 1985), the nominal elements are described first. They come soon after the initial remarks on supplementary adnominal markers, such as articles (*a, an, the*), demonstrative pronouns (*this, that*) and quantity adjectives related to the countable or uncountable properties of

nouns (*few, little*). They are defined by their (primarily semantic) kinds and functions (common, proper, abstract, collective) as well as by their syntactic functions (subject, complement, object, possessive case) (ibid.: 24). Remarks on gender, number and countable/uncountable properties follow (ibid.: 24-29). The explanations of the possessive/genitive case are mainly concerned with its marking in writing and with the collocation of articles, along with the interchangeability of its synthetic (*N's*) and analytic (*of a/the N*) forms (ibid.: 29-31). Explanation on compound nouns follows (ibid.: 31-32). The same, primarily analytic, technique of description is applied to adjectives.

English nominal phenomena are not described as synthetic nominal cases. This is due to the above-mentioned scarce inflectional properties (limited paradigm of morphological forms) of contemporary English and the relatively light functional load of the synthetic form oppositions (cf. 1.2). This translates into the low significance of the non-genitive vs. genitive synthetic oppositions (*N* vs. *N's/of N* and *Ns* vs. *Ns 'of Ns*) as compared with the (many and frequent) analytic, syntactic constructions with the use of the non-genitive form (*N*). Furthermore, the genitive/possessive form exhibits mainly adnominal usage. There is, in other words, no need or possibility to compare the various usages of the contemporary English non-genitive/non-possessive and genitive/possessive forms as regards their syntactic positions and semantic properties, as presented for the Latin cases in Table 1.3.3 above. It would not be an unjust simplification to state that most of the respective English sentence arguments (quite independently of the less free order of sentence elements in English) appear in their non-genitive/non-possessive form. This also explains why the non-genitive/non-possessive form of contemporary English should rather not be described as the nominative case form.

The above facts do not entirely deny the inflectional properties of English synthetic nominal elements. In this light, however, the synthetic, morphological features of contemporary English may be considered much less significant than the semantics and syntax of analytic forms, with the morphological non-genitive/non-possessive synthetic form of nominal elements (singular or plural form oppositions being significant mainly on the level of semantics) as predominant in the actual semantic and syntactic context. This moves the focus from morphological phenomena to the more general level of linguistic investigation, where

concise morphological paradigms do not necessarily hold. In this context, in comparison with the definitions of case in terms of purely morphological forms, the non-morphological definitions may reveal substantial progress in the methodology of approach:

“**Case** is a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads.” (Blake 2001: 1)

There are indeed languages with prevailing non-morphological features, perceived instantly and unambiguously by their native and non-native users as similar to English. The rule of analogy supports the intuitive classification of their nominal phenomena as not relevant on the level of morphology. Such a point of view may be recognized as intuitive and well-suited to the contemporary properties of not only Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, but also to the Romance languages, with much closer relations to Latin, such as French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese. To sum up briefly: in English and languages with similar morphological characteristics it does not seem rational to investigate the morphological forms of nominal elements as related solely and directly to their semantic and syntactic functions, since there are usually not many nominal forms in actual use. In other words, the nominal forms in these languages exhibit the features of one-element paradigms, being described in most cases of their semantic and syntactic usage as uninflected.

1.5. Intuition First – the Native Approach to Polish

A representative group of languages does not exhibit significant morphological phenomena in nominal elements. The statistical and factual significance of this group is largely supported by the current international status of English, functioning not only as the *lingua franca* of international and inter-cultural business and tourism. English also holds the position of a code perceived as universal and default when it comes to the study of language. At the same time, it is one thing to assume that scarce morphological features of a language are irrelevant for its description as inflecting and another to claim that lack of inflection of synthetic nominal forms

is a feature typical of all natural languages of the world or perhaps even the ultimate result of language development. While some diachronic data may support this conclusion, it is true only partially.

Indeed, at least English and Dutch used to have morphological nominal cases, as did the proto-languages of the contemporary Romance languages. Abandonment of morphological nominal cases may be a stage in a language's development – or it may not be. Contemporarily a group of European languages, including Polish, the native language of the author, as well as other Slavic languages such as Kashubian, Russian, Czech, Slovakian, Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian, Belarusian and Ukrainian, Finno-Ugric languages such as Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian, and the Baltic languages, Latvian, Lithuanian and Latgalian, exhibit morphological nominal phenomena of high complexity that did not become extinct. It is not possible to use these languages without morphological competence. Nominal inflection is a fact that simply cannot be neglected in their description, rather than a proof of backwardness. This is partly confirmed by the second, less emphasized part of Blake's definition, the first part of which was provided above:

“The term **case** is also used for the phenomenon of having a case system and a language with such a system is sometimes referred to as a **case language**.” (Blake 2001: 1)

As Blake specifies, this refers to “an inflectional case system” (ibid.: 197). The morphological features of Polish are typically mentioned in descriptions of the language as dominant (Grzegorzczkova et al. 1999). Inflection of nominal and verbal elements (usually in this order) is enumerated among the basic grammatical properties of the language, also as a topic of separate compendia (Bańko 2012). It may be considered standard in the description of morphological properties to refer to such terms as *grammatical word forms*, defined strictly as “basic language objects liable to syntactic rules” and “revealing inflecting relations with other grammatical word forms as inflected forms of inflecting lexemes” (Laskowski 1999: 35), or *lexeme* “an abstract dictionary unit” represented by a “strictly determined class of grammatical word forms” (Laskowski ibid.: 42 ff.). It is common to separate the phenomena belonging to inflection and derivation

(Laskowski *ibid.*: 79 ff.), with a clear distinction between morphological and morphonological features (Kowalik 1999).

Describing the several patterns (paradigms) of Polish nominal word forms is a complex task. They are differentiated in the first place between the subclasses of nominal elements: nouns (Orzechowska 1999), pronouns (Laskowski 1999a), numerals (Laskowski 1999b) and adjectives (Laskowski 1999c). Further division is made by gender, by classification as animate/inanimate, and by the stem ending (Orzechowska *ibid.*).

Complex (much more complex than the five patterns of Latin) declensional paradigms are a representative feature of Polish. There are also uninflected Polish nominal elements. Some of them have defective paradigms (such as *plurale tantum*). This does not seem to influence the significance of inflection in descriptions of Polish. It is confirmed by the following passage citing the Russian linguist, Shakhmatov, who had claimed that morphological features may not be the sole basis for the classification of parts of speech:

“as a rule, nouns are inflected, but a deviation from this general rule is the lack of inflection of certain nouns mentioned by Shakhmatov (we also have [in Polish]: *alibi, harakiri, menu* or *jury*).” (Jodłowski 1971: 32)

Certain untypical features of Polish declension do not constitute an obstacle to describing the Polish nominal elements as inflected. Irregularities and alternates do not constitute arguments against declension as such:

“Due to the diversity of inflectional forms of nouns, their irregularity and the existence of alternate sequences in the inflected lexemes, the Polish noun may cause many problems to students of the language.” (Mędak 2011: 7)

Also the non-canonical semantic and syntactic features of Polish cases do not raise doubts as to the very notion of morphological case. See the following passage on the instrumental case:

“Of other, secondary syntactic functions of the instrumental case, the function of nominal predicate in such collocations as *ojciec jest urzędnikiem* ‘father is a clerk’ comes to the fore.

As was already mentioned, it is not a usual predicative use of a concrete case, but an instance of the instrumental case in the function of the nominative case used predicatively, that is, as a direct modifier.” (Heinz 1988: 414)

Untypical instances of declension are described by a group of sources, along with a detailed classification (Dyszak 2007, Krzyżanowski 2013). The general attitude of Polish grammarians towards the declension of nominal elements may in some instances be attributed to the European tradition of grammatical description. Regardless of the inevitable bias in the interpretation of native phenomena with the application of foreign methodology and of diachronic changes, it generally seems to be well suited to the morphological characteristics of the language and indispensable for its effective description (Czelakowska 2010), regardless of the unambiguously lay character of some historical approaches (Dąbrowska 2013). Competence in the actual usage of Polish nominal units is directly linked to the competence of mapping the lexemes onto the declensional paradigms, and *vice versa*, the actual word forms onto the lexeme to which they belong. There is no conceivable approach to Polish grammar without the application of the concept of morphological case. The set of all inflecting and derivational categories may also be recognized as “a powerful tool for the automatic analysis of text” (Rabiega-Wiśniewska 2008).

It goes without saying that users of Polish, quite independently of their specialist linguistic competence, can and do use the declensional patterns of nominal elements. In other words, Polish language speakers “speak nominal cases”. It is a phenomenon not necessarily immediately related to expertise in specific case terms or in the detailed functions of cases. It is virtually unthinkable not to use the proper nominal cases in syntactic contexts. To make such an error accidentally does not go unnoticed and may lead to being corrected. To do so habitually may result in being laughed at or perhaps in some instances even ostracized by others. This is the reason why an utterly casual slip of the tongue made by the author, who once at a store uttered *Proszę kartę*. ‘Please [give me] a [credit] card.’ (with the accusative case *kartę* of the feminine inanimate noun *karta* ‘a card’) was met with a smile from the clerk. Despite surely not being a linguist, she responded to this act of open

violation of the declensional rules in a witty manner: “Sorry, sir, I cannot give you any. I only have at my disposal the loyalty cards of our network.” The intended and expected proper form of the utterance was *Proszę kartę*. ‘[I want to pay] **with a card**, please.’ (with the employment of the instrumental case form *kartą*).

Another interesting example of how cases may work is the clear differentiation between two phrases containing the partly lexicalized gerund *jazda* ‘ride; drive; trip’ of the verb *jechać* ‘to ride; to drive; to go [with the use of a vehicle etc.]’. The use of different case forms results in a change in meaning that can only be rendered by completely different English counterparts. With the verbal modifier in the instrumental case of the noun *samochód* ‘car’: *jazda samochodem*, the meaning is: ‘driving a car [as an activity of a driver – an external agent]’. With the modifier in the genitive case: *jazda samochodu*, it is: ‘the movement of a car [as a certain stage opposed to the stop, not necessarily related to an external agent]’.

As can be seen from the relatively simple examples given above, not only do the nominal cases exist and find active use in communication in Polish, but they also show frequent instances of solitary usage, without the presence of virtually any other elements making it possible to determine the meaning of a whole utterance. These are classified by some sources as uncontrolled case, and are described briefly also for Japanese below in 4.3.a. Some instances of usage, related mainly to anthroponyms and toponyms or to nouns of foreign origin, may be disputable or reveal discrepancies, but these constitute peripheral and fractional phenomena rather than evidence of the deterioration of the Polish declension rules. Competence in this aspect of grammar is acquired not only by memorization, but also by the trial-and-error implementation of rules, valid primarily on the morphological level.

According to the linguistic competence of native users of Polish, the declensional rules may be represented by the relatively simple shape of Table 1.5.1 and the morphological pattern of declension of the nouns: *chłopiec* ‘boy’ (masculine, animate) and *ławka* ‘bench’ (feminine, inanimate). The original table has been supplemented in its first column with the full names of the Polish cases (in square brackets, with glosses) and the case questions usually listed with them in the sources on school grammar (declensional forms of the interrogatory pronouns *kto?* ‘who?’ and *co?* ‘what?’, in italics). The hyphens in the

nominal word forms divide the stems (more precisely: declensional themes) and case endings.

	Singular	Plural
M [mianownik NOM] <i>kto? co?</i>	<i>chłopiec, ław-a</i>	<i>chłopc-y, ław-y</i>
D [dopełniacz GEN] <i>kogo? czego?</i>	<i>chłopc-a, ław-y</i>	<i>chłopc-ów, ław</i>
C [celownik DAT] <i>komu? czemu?</i>	<i>chłopc-u, ławi-e</i>	<i>chłopc-om, ław-om</i>
B [biernik ACC] <i>kogo? co?</i>	<i>chłopc-a, ław-ę</i>	<i>chłopc-ów, ław-y</i>
N [narzędnik INS] <i>[z] kim? [z] czym?</i>	<i>chłopc-em, ław-ą</i>	<i>chłopc-ami, ław-ami</i>
Ms [miejscownik LOC] <i>[o] kim? [o] czym?</i>	<i>chłopc-u, ławi-e</i>	<i>chłopc-ach, ław-ach</i>
W [wołacz VOC] <i>o, ...!</i>	<i>chłopc-z-e, ław-o</i>	<i>chłopc-y, ław-y</i>

Table 1.5.1. Example declensional paradigms of Polish (Bańko 2012: 28, with modifications)

As mentioned above, Table 1.5.1, similarly to Table 1.3.1 for Latin, includes information on but two declension patterns, out of more than a dozen existing in Polish. Due to the fusional properties of Polish, singular and plural forms take endings that combine the case and number values, with no separate marker for singular or plural. For this reason, 14 cases, instead of the existing 7, could be postulated. One of the (semantic, not morphological) arguments against such a solution might be that both singular and plural forms answer the same general questions. Furthermore, not all cases of the pattern are marked unambiguously. Neutralization of morphological marking of the masculine animate pattern of the noun *chłopiec* may be observed C and Ms singular, D and B singular and plural as well as in M and W plural. Another solution might be to describe some cases as syncretic and to reduce the overall number of morphological cases. An argument against this is the validity of the questionable oppositions in other patterns (in the feminine inanimate declension pattern the noun *ława* is *ławy* in D singular and *ławę* in B singular, although it has the same C and Ms forms in the singular and M

and W forms in the plural). Close analysis of the forms reveals various morphological versions of the stems (declensional themes, with three variants: *chłopiec*, *chłopc-*, *chłopc-*; or with two: *law-*, *lawi-*). Such phenomena do not influence the default recognition of declensional properties of nominal elements among users of Polish.

It is also most typical in Polish to explain the usage of nominal forms in terms of cases, as in the following fragment of a normative source designed for younger readers:

“Many people find it a gross language mistake to use the form *tą* [of the feminine demonstrative pronoun *ta* ‘this’] instead of *tę* in accusative singular (*Weź tą książkę* ‘Take this book’, *Zabij tą muchę* ‘Kill this fly’ etc.). It is indeed a non-traditional form, but in contemporary Polish language it is extraordinary in a way. No other feminine pronoun or adjective in this case has the ending *-ę*, all have *-ą* (*tamtą* ‘that’, *ową* ‘that’, *inną* ‘another’, *wysoką* ‘tall’ etc.). This is why one may allow this form in speech (*tą książkę* ‘this book’, *tą panią* ‘this lady’), although in written Polish the only acceptable form is still *tę*.” (Cegiela, Markowski 1982: 180)

The intuitive Polish attitude to native nominal inflection may also be shown in ludic examples. Picture 1.5.1 is an illustration of a joke almost untranslatable to a user of a language with scarce inflectional properties. The English meaning of the verb *odmienić* is both ‘to change’ and ‘to inflect’, linking the slogan *Odmień swoje życie!* ‘Change your life!’ with the declensional table according to which both the form of the possessive pronoun *swój* ‘one’s own’ and the noun *życie* ‘life’ can inflect, as in their respective morphological paradigms, with the help of the set of interrogatory pronoun forms presented in Table 1.5.1.

Another significant feature of the morphological description of Polish is the native case terms. Unlike many other declensional terms, borrowed (German, Czech, Finnish) or directly translated (Russian) from Latin, Polish case terms, especially those for D, C and B, contain certain elements coined creatively for that purpose with the employment of native morphemes, suited to the representative properties of the respective cases.



M. kto? co? SWOJE ŻYCIE
 D. kogo? czego?
 C. komu? czemu?
 B. kogo? co?
 N. z kim? z czym?
 Msc. o kim? o czym?
 W. o!

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Picture 1.5.1. *Change/Inflect Your Life*. Polish case terms in ludic use (RYSUNKI 2020)

The nominative case *mianownik* (lit. ‘appointer; nominator’) is intuitively described as the case marking sentence subject in most sentences, such as affirmative existential sentences (*Chłopiec/Ława jest tu*. ‘**The boy/bench** is here.’) Similarly as nominative cases in other languages, it is also used independently, on labels or in captions and dictionary entries.

The genitive case *dopełniacz* (lit. ‘filler; complements’) exhibits both adnominal (attributive: *brat chłopca* ‘boy’s brother’) and adverbial use. In the latter, the most intuitive interpretation links it to the function of the subject of the negative form of the existential verb *być* ‘to be’: *nie ma* ‘[there] is no’ (*Chłopca/Ławy tu nie ma*. ‘**The boy/bench** is not here.’). It may mark partitive reference (*kilku chłopców* ‘some boys’). It regularly marks direct object (substituting for the accusative case, typical in affirmative sentences) with the negative form of verbs (*Nie kupilem ławy*. ‘I did not buy **a bench**.’). These examples confirm that its functional load is much greater than that of its English counterpart, the Saxon genitive.

The dative case *celownik* (lit. ‘pointer’) is typically linked to its usage as indirect object of the verb *dać* ‘to give’, similarly to the origin of the Latin term (*Dalem chłopcu*. ‘I gave [it] to the boy.’). The Polish term alludes also to its less typical use as indirect object, such as with the verb *ufać* ‘to trust’ (*Ufam chłopcu*. ‘I trust the boy.’) The Polish dative case is also active as the marker of the agent (the affected?) in constructions related to emotions and sensations (*Chłopcu podobało się*. ‘The boy liked it.’).

The accusative case *biernik* (lit. ‘taker; passive’) is most typically used as the direct object of transitive verbs in their affirmative form (*Kupiłem ławę*. ‘I bought a bench.’). The Polish term clearly alludes to the passive role of the designatum.

The instrumental case *narzędnik* (lit. ‘deviser; instrumental’), beside its use often regarded as a concrete case with the meaning of a tool or means (as in the example above about paying with a card), also used idiomatically (*Ruszyli ławą*. ‘They advanced en masse.’), is the typical case of the nominal predicate in Polish (*Jest chłopcem*. ‘He is a boy’.) It is also used in some prepositional constructions (*z chłopcem* ‘with the boy’).

The locative case *miejsownik* (lit. ‘placer; locative’) is used in its basic function of marking place only in prepositional constructions (*na ławie* ‘on the bench’). It is also active in some non-locative functions, with prepositions (*o chłopcu* ‘about the boy’).

The vocative case *wołacz* (lit. ‘caller; vocative’) exhibits exclamatory use, formally not constituting an argument of a verbal element of a sentence.

As Picture 1.5.2 shows, the etymology of case terms may also be explained in a joyful manner, closely related to their intuitive character.

The morphological case terms serve as labels, useful to identify the cases and to order them within the paradigm. Cases may also exhibit usages not necessarily viewed as representative, additionally varying across languages, even within the same language family.

One of the significant exceptions is seen in the probably most representative transitive Polish verb from a semantic (lexical) point of view, *używać* ‘to use’, which takes the direct object in the genitive, not in the accusative case. This may often be a cause of mistakes in proper case form selection, even among native users of Polish. On the other hand,



Picture 1.5.2. *A Lesson of Polish*. Polish case terms in ludic use (JEJA 2020)

the adnominal use of the genitive case may also be confirmed by the regular genitive form of the direct objects of verbal gerunds, the latter combining their initial verbal and secondary nominal properties in collocations such as *używanie ławy* ‘the use of [a] bench’. This may further be neutralized by marking with an element in the genitive the (semantic) subject (agent) of the original verbal elements, as in *zachowanie chłopca* ‘the boy’s behavior’.

The untypical usage of the instrumental case – not with a meaning of an instrument or tool, despite its classical classification as a “concrete case” – goes beyond its typical use in the nominal predicate mentioned above (Heinz 1988: 414). Common doubts may be associated with its use as a modifier of manner (*mówić półgłosem* ‘to speak in hushed tones’), or as another verbal complement (*cieszyć się książką* ‘to enjoy a book’) (Polański 1995: 228), occasionally also as a temporal modifier (*przysiąc nocą* ‘to come at night’) or with detailed semantic extensions related more or less remotely to manner (*powrócić innym człowiekiem* ‘to come back as another man’).

At least one of the synthetic Polish forms presented in the pattern in Table 1.5.1 above, the locative case, is used solely with prepositions. This calls into question its status as a synthetic case.

Another adnominal marker of Polish, *-o-*, is used solely in derivational synthetic forms and hence is usually not included in the set of declensional oppositions. Its uniform phonological form in all inflectional patterns of the noun (*spychotechnika* ‘passing the buck’, originating from *spych* ‘bulldozer’ or *spychać* ‘to push off’ and *technika* ‘technique’) but also of the adjective (*równonoc* ‘equinox’, originating from *równy* ‘equal’ and *noc* ‘night’) may also justify its description as a systemic marker in a rigid approach to the inflectional properties of Polish nominal elements.

Another representative example is the usage of an element in the vocative as a syntactically independent element, for this reason often classified as a non-case. In the primary morphological approach, the vocative case is one of the easily verifiable and active case forms. It is not possible to use Polish effectively without competence in its usage. As such, syntactic independence may be viewed as its peculiar feature, differentiating it from the other cases traditionally considered oblique and contrasted with the nominative case.

Morphological, paradigmatic distinction of case forms on the phonological level, having least entropy and being close to the distinction of minimal pairs, is viewed as more representative than the specific functions of cases. As one of the classic sources points out, “there is [probably] no case form that would have one and only function” (Kuryłowicz 1987: 134-135). On the level of semantics and syntax, the functions of cases may effectively be reduced to the case requirement in a given context, in terms of verb government or agreement with other elements.

1.6. Alternative Approaches?

The mere proportion of the lengths of the preceding two sections 1.4 and 1.5 illustrates the significance of morphological properties in various languages.

This is not to say that a purely morphological, synthetic approach to the English nominals is not feasible. It is, at the price of efficacy.

Two synthetic, morphological cases of contemporary English (NOM/NON-GEN and GEN) could roughly be compared on the basis of the opposition between the nominative and the genitive case. The main difference is between the former (not marked) and the latter (marked), with the dominant usage of the former in adpositional constructions. A simple set of English vs. Polish oppositions (mostly of analytic vs. synthetic character) is given in Table 1.6.1. Exact recognition and differentiation of the detailed case functions solely on the basis of the morphological oppositions between the forms of two languages, with the bare two morphological cases of English, is not effective. Analytic, not synthetic phenomena should hence be taken into account in the first place in the effective description of English nominal elements. This also includes syntactic phenomena, such as word order, as well as semantic phenomena. It is the source of opportunities, for example, to form in English puns like: – *Call me **an ambulance*** [NOM/NON-GEN]. – *You are **an ambulance*** [NOM/NON-GEN]. – often not possible to render in an exact manner in languages with rich morphological properties and with relatively clear morphological differentiation of the nominal predicate main element and the direct object by cases, as in Polish (cf. – *Wezwij mi **karetkę*** [ACC]. vs. – *Jesteś **karetką*** [INS].).

At the same time, while the Polish synthetic cases in Table 1.6.1 may, in a justified simplification, be considered a complete set of morphological synthetic oppositions, their (mostly) analytic English counterparts do not represent the full range of possible adpositional constructions, only a small fraction of it. To enumerate all possible adpositional analytic constructions of English does not seem to be effective in terms of the description of the nominal element's (analytic) declension paradigm. Also the extension of the model with the (analytic) indefinite and definite articles as declensional markers does not change its overall efficacy significantly. It is probably for this reason that the notion of the morphological declension paradigm is not normally implemented in the contemporary grammatical description of English nouns. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of treating the respective analytical English constructions provided as equivalents as cases. There are, however, few inflectional oppositions of English nominal word forms, and the morphological case oppositions that do exist bear a rather light

functional load. Finally, English adjectives, being nominal elements similarly to Polish adjectives, exhibit systemic morphological oppositions only in their synthetic forms of grade.

English cases and analytic constructions	Polish synthetic cases
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>It's a boy!</i>	[NOM] <i>To chłopiec!</i>
[GEN] <i>Boy's pride./Portrait of the boy.</i>	[GEN] <i>Duma chłopca./Portret chłopca.</i>
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>I told it to the boy.</i>	[DAT] <i>Powiedziałem to chłopcu.</i>
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>She met a boy.</i>	[ACC] <i>Poznała chłopca.</i>
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>I am a boy.</i>	[INS] <i>Jestem chłopcem.</i>
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>A story about a boy.</i>	[LOC] <i>Opowieść o chłopcu.</i>
[NOM/NON-GEN] <i>Boy! Be ambitious!</i>	[VOC] <i>Chłopcze! Bądź ambitny!</i>

Table 1.6.1. English and Polish analytic vs. synthetic nominal oppositions

Conversely, an inverted analytic approach to the Polish morphological cases is also not impossible. In a hypothetical new grammar of Polish, the marker of the (former) synthetic, morphological genitive case *-a* in the model of declension presented for the masculine animate noun *chłopiec* ‘boy’ in Table 1.5.1 might be described as a free morpheme, constituting a dictionary entry in a new revolutionary dictionary of Polish, with numerous semantic (lexical) meanings related to its attributive function towards the preceding element of a phrase. Here is a tentative and, inevitably, incomplete list of such “meanings”:

1. possession (*podręcznik chłopca* ‘boy’s handbook’);
2. body part (*mózg chłopca* ‘boy’s brain’);
3. tangible property (*wzrost chłopca* ‘boy’s height’);
4. intangible property (*nastawienie chłopca* ‘boy’s attitude’);
5. visible feature (*fryzura chłopca* ‘boy’s hairstyle’);
6. invisible feature (*dylemat chłopca* ‘boy’s dilemma’);
7. affiliation (*szkoła chłopca* ‘boy’s school’);
8. ori-

gin (*rodzina chłopca* ‘boy’s family’); 9. kinship (*brat chłopca* ‘boy’s brother’); 10. achievement (*ocena chłopca* ‘boy’s grade’) (Jabłoński 2013a: 81-82, with minor changes).

There are no obstacles in adding more “meanings”. The list could be easily extended to more than a hundred elements. While such an approach would probably foster a sudden proliferation of new, numerous definitions of (former) Polish synthetic cases, it is hard to consider the growth in number equivalent to an increase in the efficacy of explanation.

A coherent, balanced description of the nominal properties of a language may utilize the morphological advantages of the fusional and agglutinative character of languages with rich inflectional properties. They are described at the most basic level of linguistic units and reveal possibly the least ambiguity. It is (to a justified approximation) always clear whether and why the form of the Polish nominal element is *chłopiec* (nominative singular) or *chłopca* (genitive singular). This does not exclude the possibility of enriching the description with analysis of the analytic properties of more complex constructions with the element, quite naturally to be explained in a less exact and regular manner. In languages with scarce or nonexistent inflectional properties, the description inevitably relies on non-morphological features of the elements.

As a tentative conclusion of this chapter, written with the purpose of clarifying the basic concepts and the reasoning to follow, morphological features of languages, with special focus on inflection, are crucial on the basic level of description. There are no grounds to undermine the primary role of the analytic and isolating (non-morphological) methodology when applied to the phenomena of languages with scarce or non-existent inflecting features. The same analytic and isolating methods are ineffective when applied to phenomena of non-analytic and non-isolating character. The analytic (isolating) and the synthetic (agglutinative/fusional) phenomena being qualitatively different, there is no reason to claim that either of the two is more representative for the effective description of the universal phenomena of “all languages of the world.”

Chapter 2 contains a selection of non-morphological approaches to Japanese nominal phenomena.

2. Non-Morphological Properties of Japanese Nominals

“The [Japanese] noun is an uninflected word
that occurs before the copula [...]”

(Bloch 1970: 56, Miller 1967: 335)

The morphological approach, effective and intuitive in relation to the phenomena of languages with rich inflectional properties, reveals certain flaws. They will be summarized in the first part of this chapter, being regarded as inevitably present in the background of grammatical descriptions based on solely morphological grounds. As will be shown in the following parts of this chapter, the non-morphological, isolating and analytic approach clearly dominates in most contemporary and historical descriptions of Japanese. The specific features of some Japanese elements, such as the verbal character and explicitly conjugational patterns of the inflected adjectives *keiyōshi* 形容詞, are of secondary importance here. The non-conjugable adjectives *keiyōdōshi* 形容動詞, recognized as copular nouns, adjectival nouns, noun adjectives, non-inflected adjectives or non-predicative adjectives in English terminology, reveal a certain proximity to nominal elements, only some of them showing a limited pattern of inflection. Representative descriptions of Japanese nominal elements are presented against the background of issues relating to the morphological approach. Account should also be taken of the properties of Japanese graphemics, adopted from the analytic and positional Chinese languages, and the relatively recent influence of English language grammatical thought.

2.1. Morphological Doubts

Doubts raised regarding the (traditional) morphological approach to grammar are proof of the necessary critical attitude of linguists towards the *status quo* of linguistic description. Better is the enemy of good. From a pragmatic perspective, should there be chances to improve the

quality of the approach taken, they should be utilized, at the expense of existing methods.

Certain reservations may also arise towards phenomena that are foreign to the researchers, not valid in their native language. Due to the current domination of English (a language with rather scarce inflecting and synthetic properties of nominal elements) in linguistic discourse, instances of methodological interference may be observed in the description of the inflecting phenomena of other languages. In a universal approach to all languages of the world, the morphological methodology may be treated with considerable caution.

“Construction of the morphological grammar of a language is not possible unless we have at our prior disposal its semantic and syntactic grammar (Bańcerowski 1997: 15). This epistemological posteriority of morphology to semantics and syntax is undermined by many scholars in a variety of ways. The morphological forms, being in fact the result of the semantic and syntactic analysis, are presented as the real independent point of departure for the semantic and syntactic analysis of a language.” (Bielecki 2015: 77)

Quite apart from the classic dilemma – the chicken or the egg – the mere listing of morphological forms does indeed not result in the construction of grammar. Semantic and syntactic extensions of morphological rules are indispensable for a satisfactory description. On the other hand, not as a critique, but rather as a supplement to the above statement, it should be noted that neither solely morphological factors, nor semantic and syntactic ones provide sufficient data for a complete description. Morphological phenomena are, first of all, instantly accessible (to humans – and to artificial intelligence agents), making it possible (not only for researchers) to verify with high accuracy the very existence of certain oppositions. They make it possible to code and decode certain values unambiguously. A relatively small number of oppositions may be effectively described within a distinct paradigm. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the validity of morphological factors in a code may be linked to its typology. In languages with rich inflecting properties, the mere listing of morphological word forms of a lexeme may serve as an effective first step towards their analysis on

more complex levels of abstraction. It may not be so in languages with scarce inflections.

A systemic and reasonable critique of the solely morphological approach, based on the distinction of grammar case levels 1 and 2, may be concluded with the following:

“Grammar of case level 3

- a) A grammar of case gives an account of the syntax of the relations that are typically expressed by case inflections or adpositions or position.
- b) Among these relations semantic relations have primacy.”
(Anderson 2006: 36)

Focus on meaning (and on analytic/isolating/semantic/syntactic phenomena) seems to be typical of approaches to case grammar. Having replaced the *or* in the above quotation with *and/or*, to which its original author would probably not object in the context of “all languages of the world”, some other remarks may be added. Syntactic relations listed by Anderson on the subsequent levels include case inflections (synthetic, morphological), adpositions (analytic, syntactic/semantic) and word order (isolating, syntactic). Their significance differs according to the morphological typology of a language as well as the number and functional load of synthetic and morphological oppositions.

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, there are few examples of case inflections in contemporary English. This fact is probably not without influence on the above statement. Accordingly, the notion of case based on the description of adpositional constructions and on word order may at best be considered secondary for the effective description of some nominal phenomena. In Polish, in addition to what was mentioned in 1.5, also the adpositional (prepositional) elements reveal nominal case government. They can connect only to nouns in specific morphological cases. In instances when more than one case of the nominal element is acceptable, the case differentiates the meaning of the construction.

In a more specific perspective, detailed remarks on the inconsistencies of the purely morphological approach may be found in various sources. See Table 2.1.1, with the six morphological cases of Russian for the masculine noun *sojuz* ‘union’ and feminine *lapa* ‘paw’ (the script is romanized, as in the original).

Nominative	<i>sojuz</i>	<i>lap-a</i>
Accusative	<i>sojuz</i>	<i>lap-u</i>
Genitive	<i>sojuz-a</i>	<i>lap-y</i>
Dative	<i>sojuz-u</i>	<i>lap-e</i>
Instrumental	<i>sojuz-om</i>	<i>lap-oj</i>
Prepositional	<i>sojuz-e</i>	<i>lap-e</i>

Table 2.1.1. An example declensional paradigm of Russian (Comrie 1986: 89-90)

Table 2.1.1, very similar to Table 1.5.1, with the Polish declensional paradigm, is presented with the following comment:

“Taking a particular inflection will characterize, in traditional terms, distinct sets of cases for each of these two nouns. Thus *-a* defines genitive for *sojuz*, but nominative for *lapa*; *-u* defines dative for *sojuz*, but accusative for *lapa*; *-e* defines prepositional for *sojuz*, but both dative and prepositional for *lapa*; *-oj* identifies instrumental for *lapa*, but nothing for *sojuz*.” (Comrie 1986: *ibid.*)

Comrie differentiates the formal and the functional approach to the above oppositions. While his comments are instructive, they may not be intuitive for actual speakers of Russian, who rely primarily on the morphological properties of a case.

Although Comrie does not seem to undermine the morphological approach as a whole, such an attitude may not be standard in more recent monographs on case. An interesting example is the book on theories of case by Butt (2006). It is surely intriguing to find in the introduction the quotation from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, alluding more or less explicitly to the conclusion that case is “the right way of speaking to a mouse”, as Alice “remembered having seen in her brother’s Latin Grammar, ‘A mouse – of a mouse – to a mouse – a mouse – O mouse!’” (cf. 1.3 above for the contents of the respective tables and quotations) (Butt 2006: 1). At least some fragments of the otherwise instructive and interesting monograph seem to imply that the author may quite seriously support this general, though rather unsystemic, idea.

In her answer to the primordial question *What is case?* Butt forms the following statement:

“we do not have a well-defined notion of case.” (Butt 2006: 2)

Then she presents the original, though clearly Anglo-centric, view that:

“Going beyond the linguist community, most people who have gone to school and learned a foreign language will have encountered the notion of case in terms of a paradigm which they had to memorize.” (Butt *ibid.*)

Table 2.1.2, presented as the “classic example”, follows:

<i>porta</i> ‘door’		
Case name	Singular	Plural
Nominative	<i>porta</i>	<i>portae</i>
Genitive	<i>portae</i>	<i>portārum</i>
Dative	<i>portae</i>	<i>portīs</i>
Accusative	<i>portam</i>	<i>portās</i>
Ablative	<i>portā</i>	<i>portīs</i>
Vocative	<i>porta</i>	<i>portae</i>

Table 2.1.2. A “classic example” from Latin declension (Butt 2006: 2)

Table 2.1.2, not very different from Table 1.3.1, is presented with the comment:

“If you know anything about Latin, you will also know that other types of nouns (e.g., masculine nouns ending with *-us*) have a different set of endings than the ones shown above. You will also know that Latin adjectives have to agree in number, gender and case with the noun they modify. This makes quite a complex system and for quite a bit of memorization that generations of schoolchildren have endured in the Western world. Note also that some of the forms in the cells of the table are [...] the same. This is a sign of an incipient collapse of the case system: the

modern descendants of Latin, e.g., French, Spanish or Italian, have not maintained the distinctions Latin made.” (Butt *ibid.*)

There is no explanation of why the “memorization” of case paradigms is mentioned only as a distinctive feature of Latin, a dead language. They function also in contemporary languages. As mentioned above, even the users of an inflectional language themselves rarely experience a paradigm in its full form, this being an obvious reason why a paradigm, especially one of a foreign language, may indeed be viewed as a challenge for a student.

It is unclear why Butt apparently links the “collapse of the case system” with the fact that it was “a quite complex system”, with “a bit of memorization that generations of children have endured in the Western world”. In fact, there are much more complex contemporary systems of declension (like the Polish system, presented only partially in 1.5). Finally, should it be taken for granted that the same children who endured the memorization of Latin declension patterns have acquired their native (non-inflectional, as may be guessed) languages without memorization and effort based on the practice of trial and error? Is this why their languages did not become extinct? Should one assume that the phenomena of case syncretism in the declensional systems temporarily in use are also “a sign” of their “incipient collapse”? Such a conclusion would probably be premature.

The above fragment by no means entitles one to question the value of the monograph as a whole. At the same time, it is a representative example of how an inflection-proof, biased opinion on the alleged facts may be formed with only partial reference to the language facts. Although it does not mention Japanese, it reveals at least three trends representative of the available descriptions of that language’s nominal phenomena: 1) adherence to the non-inflecting (usually: Anglo- or Sino-centric) tradition of grammatical description; 2) a preference for valuing partial, fragmentary instances of usage, superficially embedded in language facts, over regular, systemic rules; 3) a lack of interest in morphological properties. It is an example of a linguistic *jamais vu* (interpretation of obvious and known facts as complicated and unknown, opposite to *déjà vu*) towards the phenomena of language morphology, otherwise unanimously accepted as valid in many languages.

Another universal English source on case mentions Japanese as a language revealing “analytic case markers” (Blake 2001: 9), with the following comment:

“In most languages adpositions (prepositions and postpositions) play at least some part in marking the relations of dependent nouns to their heads. In Japanese, for instance, postpositions perform this function to the exclusion of case affixes [...] Adpositions can be considered to be analytic case markers as opposed to synthetic case markers like the suffixes of Turkish or Latin. The main difference in case marking between a language like Japanese and a language like Latin is that in the former there are no case suffixes, just the postpositions, whereas in the latter there are case suffixes as well as adpositions.” (Blake *ibid.*)

It is good to gain a deeper insight into the way of reasoning presented immediately above. The method of circular description, clearly preferred by Blake (“the main difference between [...] Japanese [...] and [...] Latin is [...] no case suffixes [...] against [...] suffixes as well as adpositions”), unfortunately does not make this task easier. While the agglutinative grammatical markers may indeed be extracted from the word forms in a much easier and clearer manner than in languages with dominating fusional properties – and, as such, be considered of less synthetic character than the latter – there is no reason to classify them as analytic. Also the example sentence of Japanese presented in the source, analyzed in detail below in 2.4.5.5, does not convince one of Blake’s high competence in the language. It may be guessed that the author had had little opportunity to come into contact with the actual phenomena of Japanese morphology, having obtained the information from elsewhere.

The practice of scientific investigation requires constant checking against hypotheses, with nothing to be considered obvious or confirmed *a priori*. Still, it is one thing to criticize the established, not necessarily well-suited, methods of linguistic approach, and another to reduce the overall study of linguistic phenomena in all natural languages to one simple rule. There is a major difference between the two attitudes.

“At the same time, I learned that nouns, adjectives and pronouns also had sets of word-endings, called *cases*, each representing a grammatical relationship. *Case* comes from *casus* in Latin, which had a wide range of meanings, such as ‘fall’ and ‘accident’; so in using this word to describe nouns, grammarians seem to have thought of the different forms of a noun as ‘falling away’ from the basic form. As with verbs, the noun inflections were organized into tables, and these too had to be painstakingly learned. I remember calling these noun tables *conjugations*, and being told off because they were *declensions*. It’s an interesting usage: the original sense of *decline* was ‘turn aside’ or ‘deviate’ from a norm of some kind – as when we talk of someone’s health declining. In grammar, the different cases were evidently thought of as departures from the basic form.” (Crystal 2017: 34-35)

The above fragment, as the reader may easily recall, is a story of Latin declension written in reverse, as compared with its version described in 1.3 and presented in Tables 1.3.1 through 1.3.3. Here, declension is no more a useful tool of linguistic investigation, but rather, similarly as in the eyes of Butt, a means of oppression. There being no need to explain it in detail, the above comment is ironic in character, being formulated in a context of more complex reasoning. This is not the case with the following remark, made by the same author in a publication of more general application.

“**declension** (*n.*) In GRAMMAR, a traditional term for a CLASS of NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, or PRONOUNS in an INFLECTING language, which occur with the same range of FORMS. [...] The term is not usually found in modern LINGUISTIC analysis (which talks in terms of ‘word-classes’), but will be encountered in studies of LINGUISTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY.” (Crystal 2008: 130)

It is of course a fact, as may be concluded with a grain of humor, that in modern, especially English-dominated linguistic analysis, largely emancipated of the allegedly obsolete notion of morphological paradigms, it is probably already possible to analyze solely the data of non-inflecting languages, or even the data of all conceivable languages, without the use of the morphological methodology, or perhaps even without knowledge of Latin and its troublesome declensional patterns.

This, however, does not make it easier to deal with the phenomena of the inflecting languages or to recognize whether a morphological paradigm may be applied to the rules of a given language, be it different from the dominant uninflected code (=English). It seems to be, among others, in this theoretical context and on such methodological premises that non-morphological descriptions of the properties of the Japanese nominal elements have traditionally been and are temporarily attempted.

2.2. Graphemic Properties

It has been assumed in modern linguistic studies at least from the time of de Saussure that writing is secondary to speech.

“Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purposes of representing the first.”
(Saussure 1959: 23)

As Künstler (1970: 7-18) points out, giving the number notation as the simplest example, the idea of an alphabetic script, based generally on rendering the sounds of a language, may not be the only possible foundation of a system of writing. Usually, the main opposition is sketched as one between ideographic and phonetic scripts. As de Saussure puts it:

“There are only two systems of writing:

- 1) In an ideographic system each word is represented by a single sign that is unrelated to the sounds of the word itself. Each written sign stands for a whole word and, consequently, for the idea expressed by the word. The classic example of an ideographic system of writing is Chinese.
- 2) The system commonly known as ‘phonetic’ tries to reproduce the succession of sounds that make up a word.

[...] To a Chinese, an ideogram and a spoken word are both symbols of an idea; to him writing is a second language, and if two words that have the same sound are used in conversation, he may resort to writing in order to express his thought.” (Saussure 1959: 25-26)

From the expert perspective it is obvious that the above opposition is not so clear and binary. In fact, writing systems may reveal more or less ideographic or phonetic features (DeFrancis 1989). It is also not true that each Chinese sign stands for a whole [different] word. More important for the overview of Japanese nominal elements seems to be the fact that ideographic units have a potential to reveal one [nominal, lexical] meaning. As one may put it:

“The system of writing which the Japanese borrowed from China was original with the Chinese people and indigenous to their culture. [...] It can be best described as a writing system based on morphemic rather than on phonemic or phonetic principles.”
(Miller 1967: 92)

This section does not develop further the concepts quoted in various contexts, by more or less inquisitive Japanese and non-Japanese linguists, leading also to overstatements, such as the commonly repeated suggestion that communication in Japanese is “comparing the ideograms existing in the heads” (Takashima 2001: 241-242). The Japanese writing system may still be viewed as an instance of inter-cultural untranslatability (Jabłoński 2013: 87-130).

There is actually more to it. In contemporary Japanese script *kanji-kanamajiribun* 漢字仮名交じり文 ‘[the hybrid of] Chinese ideograms and syllabaries’, the immediate relation between the Chinese elements of script and the nominal vocabulary, most of the latter being written with the former, may be viewed as natural and intuitive, as in 2.2.a-2.2.c.

2.2.a. *Sora-ga* *akaru-i.*
 sky-NTOP bright-NPST
空が明るい。‘The sky is bright.’

2.2.b. *Nihon-wa* *shimaguni* *de-s-u.*
 Japan-TOP island.country(NUL) be(COP)-POL-NPST
日本は島国です。‘Japan is an island country.’

2.2.c. *Oniichan-no* *hō-ga* *se-ga* *taka-i.*
 elder.brother(HON)-GEN part-NTOP height-NTOP tall-NPST
お兄ちゃんの方が背が高い。‘The elder brother is taller.’

Even a reader with no competence in Japanese may be able to distinguish instantly between the ideographic and the syllabic elements of the script. The native Japanese noun *sora* ‘sky’ in 2.2.a is written with the ideogram 空, its grammatical non-topic modifier *-ga* being written in syllabary as が. The native noun *Nihon* ‘Japan’ in 2.2.b is written with two ideograms 日本, similarly as *shimaguni* 島国 ‘island country’. The topic modifier *-wa* is rendered by the syllabic element は. The element *shimaguni*, lacking an overt grammatical modifier (glossed as NUL), precedes the copula *desu* です in the analytic construction of the nominal predicate. As can be verified, the ideograms (sinograms) or their compounds render with high accuracy the lexical stems of the nominal elements. The elements of compounds containing two or more ideograms may also exhibit standalone usage, sometimes with different readings (*hi* 日 ‘sun’, *moto* 本 ‘origin’, *shima* 島 ‘island’, *kuni* 国 ‘country’).

In 2.2.c most of the ideographic elements stand for the nominal stems: *ani* 兄 ‘elder brother’ (the kinship term *oniichan* お兄ちゃん is written with the ideogram 兄 and syllabic elements, such as the partially lexicalized honorific prefix *o-* お and the diminutive suffix *-chan* ちゃん), *hō* 方 ‘side; part’ and *se* 背 ‘height’. The only exception is the stem of the inflected adjective *takai* 高い ‘high’, *taka-* 高, in other instances also exhibiting limited nominal usage. As can often be seen, the grammatical function of the element *hō*, as an indicator of a marked element in the construction of comparison, is hidden, in favor of its original lexical meaning represented by the ideogram. This may be considered a rather convincing illustration of de Saussure’s remark that: “writing obscures language; it is not a guise for a language but a disguise” (Saussure 1959: 30).

The relation between ideograms and verbal elements is more complex. For a general view of nominal elements it is enough to state that their graphic, uniform content often coincides with their stem, regardless of their actual readings. There are (a minority of) nouns written solely with syllabic elements. There are also contexts in which primarily syllabic script is preferred for writing nominal elements, as in the expert usage of biological terms for the names of plants or animals. In most instances, the ideographic representation of the nominal lexical stem may intuitively be identified with the nominal word unit.

It is technically possible to render 2.2.a solely with syllabic elements, as *そらがあかるい。* and 2.2.b as *にほんはしまぐにです。* This is usually avoided, since, due to the above-mentioned self-evident properties of ideograms, they exclude the usage of spaces in writing, which might make it much easier to parse the word units of sentences in syllabic script. The “ideograms behind the syllabic script” are usually considered the most essential elements of script. “Natural” boundaries between the ideographic elements are perceived as intuitive.

One may encounter spaces in texts created for Japanese pupils in the early stage of primary school or for Japanese language students at beginner’s level, with the above sentences rendered, respectively, as *Soraga akarui.* *そらが あかるい。* and *Nihonwa shimagunidesu.* *にほんは しまぐにです。* Such a manner of writing might lead to the brief conclusion that both the non-topic marker *-ga が* and the topic marker *-wa は* could be described as the grammatical markers of synthetic words *soraga そらが* and *Nihonwa 日本は*. At the same time, the copula in instances like 2.2.b is also often written jointly with the preceding nominal element, as in *shimagunidesu しまぐにです*, although it is a constituent of the analytic nominal predicate, not of a synthetic nominal word form. In Japanese writing, the integrity of nominal stems, identified with ideograms in script, is usually recognized as a more representative feature of basic linguistic units than the integrity of stems and their grammatical markers in the structure of synthetic forms. This is also visible in the romanization of Japanese, usually done by strictly rendering the boundaries between the ideographic and the non-ideographic elements (as in *sora-ga* or *sora ga* and *Nihon-wa* or *Nihon wa*) rather than concentrating on synthetic features of word forms (*soraga*, *Nihonwa*).

It is good to note that the syllabograms, while typically classified as a phonetic type of script, do not render the sounds or phonemes, but the syllabic or, more precisely, the moraic units of the language. On the level of sounds or phonemes, there is no correspondence to or between the syllabograms. For example, the syllabic element *あ*, rendering the sound romanized as *a*, is not a constituent of the syllabogram for *sa さ*.

Ideographic script favors rigid differentiation of basic lexical nominal morphemes. This rule holds also for the compound units of Sino-Japanese vocabulary, borrowed from Chinese or coined in Japan according to

the rules of the Sino-Japanese grammatical sub-system, different from the superior, native grammatical system of Japanese, but dominating within the boundaries of Sino-Japanese units. They may be recognized as relatively independent word-sentences: “slogans, maxims, sayings or various ‘words of wisdom’” (Huszczka 2000: 47). There are, for example, Sino-Japanese tetrads, such as *gyūinbashoku* 牛飲馬食 ‘drink like a fish and eat like a wolf’, lit. ‘drink like a cow and eat like a horse’, with four clearly distinguishable ideograms for ‘cow’, ‘drinking’, ‘horse’ and ‘eating’. Shorter units of the Sino-Japanese layer of vocabulary like *kashin* 過信 ‘too much confidence’, with two ideograms for ‘overdoing’ and ‘trust’, also reveal the rules of the Sino-Japanese subsystem. The same rules are valid in newly formed toponyms (with certain unavoidable exceptions related to semantic irregularities) or technical terms, as *Kokugikan* 国技館 ‘Kokugikan [Tokyo sumo arena]’, with three ideograms having different readings in their independent usage, for *kuni* 国 ‘country’, *waza* 技 ‘skill; technique’, *yakata* 館 ‘mansion; palace’ or *haien* 肺炎 ‘pneumonia’, or with two ideograms with potential different readings, for *fukufukushi* 肺 ‘lungs [ancient term]’ and *honō/homura* 炎 ‘fire; flame; heat; inflammation’. In their *ad hoc* translations, the nominal English elements were chosen as counterparts of the ideographic elements. In fact, the properties of Chinese script in the purely Sino-Japanese usage reveal more nominal than verbal features, connecting in an analytic and isolating manner, without the use of grammatical markers. Their conversion into native Japanese elements is not utterly impossible, with necessary changes of element order and the obligatory addition of grammatical markers. Within the boundaries of Sino-Japanese word units they are not bound by the native rules of the Japanese system, not requiring for example the genitive marker *-no* (unlike native Japanese elements, like *oniichan-no hō-ga* お兄ちゃんの方が in 2.2.c). Native Japanese variants with respective genitive forms of the attributives, as **kuni-no waza-no yakata* *国の技の館 or **fukufukushi-no homura* *肺の炎, often do not exist.

Ideographic script does not favor the differentiation of lexical and grammatical morphemes within the structure of word forms, fundamental for morphological investigation. Lexical and grammatical morphemes are instead described as separate word units, on syntactic grounds. This may explain why one of the founders of the so-called Japanese school

grammar, Hashimoto, revealed a rather skeptical attitude towards morphology and its role in the grammatical description of the language. Hashimoto distinguished the properties of the lexicon based on [lexical] semantics (*gogi* 語義), morphology (*gokei* 語形) and syntax (lit. ‘functional ability’) (*shokunō* 職能). He aptly admitted that the first provided no objective, systemic criteria of classification. Then the second, quite surprisingly, were described as occurring in ‘infinite variety’ (the Sino-Japanese term *sensabanbetsu* 千差万別 was used). Hashimoto, for reasons related mainly to the script, found the morphological features applicable mainly to the order of the elements in dictionaries. He admitted that they might be useful in the description of ‘inflection’ (*gokeihenka* 語形変化), but then failed to identify which corresponding factors were solely related to the change of word forms and which were also connected to their meanings, to be described as semantic. The absence of the very notion of morphological paradigm is obvious in this kind of reasoning. Finally, it is the syntactic functions of lexicon which appear to have the most predictable features (Hashimoto 1948: 50-51). The nominal elements *taigen* 体言 (further divided into nouns *meishi* 名詞, pronouns *daimeishi* 代名詞 and numerals *sūshi* 数詞) are defined in primarily syntactic terms, in a manner rather paradoxical but fixed in the tradition of contemporary Japanese grammar, as “not conjugated” and “constituting the subject of a sentence” (Hashimoto *ibid.*: 61, 65).

Conjugation is perceived as the only inflectional pattern of Japanese. This, from a point of view based on the script alone, may be considered an intuitive solution, since verbal elements (mainly verbs) exhibit various stem forms. This feature is reflected by the description of the numerous ‘conjugational forms’ *katsuyōkei* 活用形. They are, with their traditional though not always representative English translations: *mizenkei* 未然形 ‘negative form’ (lit. ‘imperfect form’), *ren yōkei* ‘conjunctive form’ (lit. ‘adverbial form’), *shūshikei* 終止形 ‘final form’, *rentaieki* 連体形 ‘attributive form’ (lit. ‘adnominal form’, contemporarily uniform with final form), *izenkei* 已然形 ‘perfect form’ (contemporarily *kateikei* 假定形 ‘conditional form’) and *meireikei* 命令形 ‘imperative form’.

The (rather obvious) fact that nominal elements do not conjugate seems to terminate the discussion on their morphology, effectively impeding both the recognition of synthetic word forms and the description of their paradigmatic features. In descriptions of [lexical]

stem+[grammatical] marker constructions (defined as analytic and postpositional, in syntactic, not morphological terms, apparently due to the heterogeneity of the ideographic lexical units and syllabic grammatical units) the lexical element of [*nominal*] *stem* is often omitted, focus being placed instead on the properties of the grammatical element of *marker*, viewed as independent in many aspects.

2.3. Grammatical Elements? The Status of Non-Lexical Units

In the description by Hashimoto, the lexical elements *shi* 詞 and (what should be considered) the grammatical elements *ji* 辭 are recognized as different categories. Nominal units are viewed as represented by their syntactic and ideographic properties. This is further supported by the allusion to the notion of *kunten* 訓点 ‘schematic strokes’ – added to the ideographic elements to render the grammatical elements, which are omitted in the traditional technique of *kanbun* 漢文 script, with its exclusive use of ideograms [sinograms] *kanji* 漢字 – in the introduction to another work by Hashimoto. The book is devoted solely to the description of the grammatical elements, as separate from the lexical elements (Hashimoto 1969: 4).

In the tradition of general linguistics, the difference between two kinds of semantic features described in terms of the lexical and grammatical (or semic) properties of word units may be related to the fact that:

“the latter are marked in a language in a systemic way, that is, they reveal appropriate formal markers, while the former do not have such markers.” (Bańczerowski et al. 1982: 195-196)

The distinction is not always strict, and should be subject to more elaborate discussion. Accordingly, extreme difficulties arise if the distinction is not made at all or is applied at random. While this is not a feature of language phenomena of isolating character, in languages with agglutinative and fusional features the lack of the *lexical* vs. *grammatical* opposition significantly impedes the appropriate description of word units, word forms and inflectional paradigms. It is of course true that the (surface) morphological paradigms of word forms may

not immediately reveal all relevant (deep) oppositions. Still, as the contemporary grammatical descriptions of Japanese prove, the lack of intuitive morphological tools and the neglect shown towards morphological phenomena may impede effective inquiry into the language facts.

2.3.1. Markers and Script

Grammatical markers of Japanese nominal elements are contemporarily described as the uninflected elements *joshi* 助詞. The term is usually translated into English as ‘particles’ or ‘postpositions’, literally ‘auxiliary [lexical] elements’. It is opposed to the term for the conjugated grammatical markers of verbal elements *jodōshi* 助動詞, literally ‘auxiliary [lexical] verbs’, both traditionally defined as separate categories of Japanese vocabulary. The intuitive recognition of their features, different from those of the lexical elements, dates back to the Kamakura (1185-1333) and Muromachi (1333-1573) periods (Hashimoto 1969: 3), as is also confirmed by the encyclopedic sources and the aphorism 2.3.a – originating from a medieval text attributed to Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241). The at least partly ambiguous reading of the first element is another reflection of the non-phonetic properties of sinograms.

2.3.a.	<i>Shi-wa/Kotoba-wa</i>	<i>jisha-no</i>	<i>goto-ku,</i>	<i>teniha-wa</i>
	lexical.element-	temple-GEN	similar-	grammatical.
	TOP		CON	element-TOP

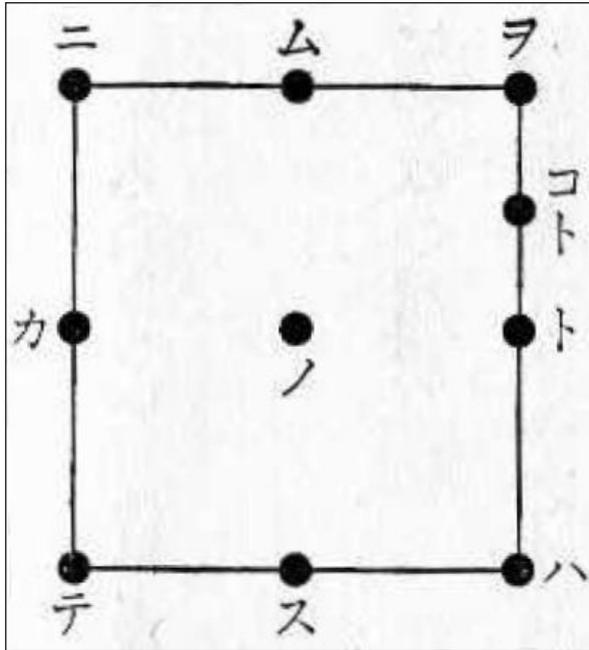
sōgen *goto-shi.*

ornament(NUL) similar-NPST

詞は寺社の如く、手爾葉は莊嚴如し。‘The lexical words are like a temple and the grammatical elements like [its] ornaments.’

The above implication seems to be further supported by the basic opposition with the Japanese *go* 語, which, as a more thorough analysis reveals, are not equal to *shi/kotoba*, but include all meaningful units (the pleremes, units belonging to the content plane), being further divided into the ‘independent elements’ *jiritsugo* 自立語 and ‘dependent units’ lit. ‘attached units’ *fuzokugo* 付属語 (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 170-171).

The terms themselves may imply that the distinction between the lexical (largely non-systemic) and grammatical (revealing certain systemic features) elements of Japanese is made on the same grounds as in other languages. It is not so. Probably the only commonly recognized systemic features of the grammatical elements of Japanese are related to the script, not to their paradigmatic functions.



Picture 2.3.1. The schematic location of the *okototen* markers within the frame of an ideogram (Hashimoto 1969: 4)

Kotoba and *teniha* mentioned in 2.3.a above are not neutral alternative terms for the opposition of *shi* and *ji* mentioned in the last part of the following section. They reveal an ideographic (sinographic) bias, similarly as other alternatives for *ji*: *tenioha* テニヲハ or *okototen* ヲコト点・乎古止点. They are not strictly grammatical terms, alluding rather

to the practice of *kundoku* 訓読 ‘deciphering of the *kanbun* 漢文 texts, written originally with ideograms only’ in Japanese. The ideograms in the texts written in this manner were annotated with the schematic strokes *kunten* mentioned above, with their (syntactic) functions corresponding to the positions of a dot within the (schematically: square) frame of the ideogram, as indicated in Picture 2.3.1, replicated in many native grammatical descriptions of the Japanese grammatical markers. The term *tenioha* originates from the readings of spots on four angles of the frame: *te* テ, *ni* ニ, *o* オ and *ha* ハ. The remaining elements are *ka* カ, *mu* ム, *koto* コト, *to* ト, *su* ス and *no* ノ. They correspond to the grammatical markers (sometimes requiring further modification) and do not perform lexical functions, being written typically with the syllabary (beside the phonetic use of the ideograms *ateji* 当て字).

The enumeration of *ji/tenioha/teniha/okototen* may undoubtedly be the first step towards the effective description of nominal markers. In fact, not all of the elements in Picture 2.3.1 are declensional markers, which is not most important at this level of analysis. All of them, however, may be described as performing functions auxiliary to those of the main (ideographic) elements. However, this is where the similarities between the opposition of the lexical and grammatical elements in general linguistics and their recognition by Japanese linguists end. *Tenioha* are opposed to the ideographic elements solely at the level of script. The functions of the former are described in total seclusion from the latter, with no definition of word forms or of their functional paradigm for the nominal elements of Japanese.

The ambiguity in the distinction between lexical and grammatical elements is reflected also by the rare (incidentally used) alternative terms for *joshi* and *jodōshi*: *joji* 助辞 lit. ‘auxiliary [grammatical] elements’ and *jodōji* 助動辞 lit. ‘auxiliary [grammatical] verbs’. They both contain redundant marking of their auxiliary/grammatical function, provided both by the prefix *jo-* 助 and by the suffix *-ji* 辞. The two groups, probably due to various sources of inspiration and motivation, are usually not recognized as synthetic declensional and conjugational endings, this being further obscured by the fact that at least *joshi* reveal many analytic usages. The fact that they might easily and coherently be linked to their synthetic functions is not usually taken into account in grammatical descriptions of Japanese. Furthermore, in the traditional Japanese approach, the analytic auxiliary

verbal elements *hojodōshi* 補助動詞 ‘auxiliary verbs’ are also recognized, although usually less frequently than other auxiliary elements, such as *hojomeishi* 補助名詞 ‘auxiliary nouns’. The clear distinction of the lexical and grammatical elements, along with their synthetic and analytic usage, is further impeded by the fact that, despite the use of spaces in writing materials at beginner level as mentioned above, there are in practice no spaces used between the word forms in writing. The term for the technique of *wakachigaki* 分かち書き ‘spaces [between words]; separation [of words] in writing’ is in fact used solely in relation to scripts other than Japanese.

2.3.2. Markers and Word Forms

An example of the attitude mentioned above may be found in the definition of *bunsetsu* 文節, often collated with the meaning of the European term ‘word’, with the grammatical elements recognized as particles accompanying it in a sentence. Unfortunately, this way of reasoning does not prove correct. As Hashimoto assures the reader, sentences (*bun* 文) consist of *bunsetsu*. *Shi* can form *bunsetsu* independently. The author mentions explicitly that *bunsetsu* are the minimal unbreakable units of speech (which is their intuitive, phonotactic feature, not analyzed in detail below), distinguished (parsed) as in the first and second line of the original example 2.3.b (Hashimoto 1948: 53-54). A similar definition is provided also in a contemporary Japanese dictionary of linguistic terms, with the example sentence 2.3.c.

2.3.b. *Watashiwa* | *kinō* | *tomodachito* | *Maruzen'e* | *hon'o* | *kaini* | *ikimashita*.

私は | 昨日 | 友達と | 丸善へ | 本を | 買いに | 行きました。

<i>Watashi-wa</i>	<i>kinō</i>	<i>tomodachi-</i> <i>to</i>	<i>Maruzen-e</i>	<i>hon-o</i>
I-TOP	yesterday (NUL)	friend- COM	Maruzen(PN)- ALL	book- ACC

<i>kai-ni</i>	<i>iki-mashi-ta</i> .
buying(GER)- LOC	go-POL-PST

私は昨日友達と丸善へ本を買いに行きました。‘Yesterday I went with a friend to Maruzen to buy a book.’ (Hashimoto 1948: 55)

2.3.c. *Asa* | *kawade* | *kao'o* | *aratte* | *iruto* | *yōyaku* | *higa* | *nobotta*.
 朝 | 川で | 顔を | 洗って | いると | ようやく | 日が | 昇った。

<i>Asa</i>	<i>kawa-de</i>	<i>kao-o</i>	<i>arat-te</i>	<i>i-ru</i>	<i>to</i>
morning	river-INS	face-	wash-	PRG(AV)-	when(SC)
(NUL)		ACC	CON	NPST	

yōyaku *hi-ga* *nobot-ta*.

finally(ADV) sun-NTOP rise-PST

朝川で顔を洗っているとようやく日が昇った。‘In the morning, when I was washing my face in the river, the sun finally rose.’ (Tanaka et al. 1988: 71)

The analysis of 2.3.b and 2.3.c may lead to the immediate conclusion that the nominal form boundaries (nominal stems with particles – including the morphological zero NUL) are defined in Japanese grammatical terms similarly as the boundaries of the (inflectional) word forms in general linguistics. Hence the translation of *bunsetsu* as a ‘word’ would probably be appropriate. Anyone familiar with the approaches to Japanese grammar is aware, however, that the lexical and the grammatical contents of such units are usually separated in the analysis. This is where the general methodology and the Japanese approach to the language facts split. Never are the nominal *bunsetsu* analyzed as inflectional forms, due to the alleged non-inflecting nature of the nominal elements, erroneously identified with the nominal stems (non-inflected as such, but constituting only parts of nominal word forms, as declensional themes).

There is no tendency in the mainstream of Japanese grammar to define *bunsetsu* in terms of paradigmatic forms of a nominal dictionary unit. They are not opposed to the canonical (dictionary) form or to one another within finite word form paradigms or treated as morphological cases. Quite the contrary, on the level of *bunsetsu* the morphological rules of their construction are usually not analyzed; instead, focus is placed on syntactic rules, such as the linear precedence of the nominal stem with respect to the grammatical marker, the latter not being described as a grammatical ending, but rather as a separate unit of vocabulary, with a dictionary entry.

In other words, the nominal elements of 2.3.b and 2.3.c like *kinō*, *tomodachito*, *Maruzen'e*, *hon'o*, *kawade*, *kao'o*, *higa* are sometimes

(rarely) described as the allegedly superficial counterparts of cases in other languages. They are not analyzed as nominal inflectional forms in most of the existing grammars and educational compendia of Japanese. Moreover, superficial allusions to cases are made only in relation to the group of forms with functions relatively closely resembling the cases of other languages. Elements like *watashiwa*, *kinō*, *kaini*, *asa* (with usage perceived as not compatible with other inflectional languages) are almost never analyzed as nominal inflectional forms. This makes it justified to regard the concept of *bunsetsu* not as a ‘word unit’, but rather as a ‘phrase’ or even a ‘phrase word’, with all consequences of this fact – by which the grammarians of Japanese, certainly including Hashimoto himself, did not and do not seem to be bothered at all.

The absence of the very idea of nominal inflectional forms in the grammars of Japanese is striking, especially in comparison with the description of verbal elements. Verbal element forms (like *ikimashita*, *aratte iru*, *nobotta* in 2.3.a and 2.3.b), adjectival forms (like *akarui* or *takai* in 2.2.a and 2.2.c) or the nominal predicate constructions with copula (like *desu* in 2.2.b) are typically analyzed, with varying methods and different degrees of adequacy, as inflectional forms, within the pattern of conjugation *katsuyō* 活用.

The above situation, paradoxical but true, is another example of the precedence of the ideographic, Sino-centric approach over the morphological methodology of description of word forms that could instead be rooted in the actual typological properties of the Japanese language. In grammars of Japanese, one does not usually encounter morphological paradigms of nominal inflection resembling those presented in Table 1.3.1 for Latin or in Table 1.5.1 for Polish, however schematic they may be by their very definition.

2.3.3. “Sounds of the Heart”

Hashimoto was not alone in his ambiguous definition and application of the concept of *bunsetsu*. Another description of grammatical phenomena, as inherently Japanese and virtually inexplicable, was proposed by Tokieda. This scholar quotes some very intuitive and instructive, though lacking a strictly scientific foundation, remarks

of Suzuki, a 19th century Kyoto grammarian, on the nature of what is usually recognized today as the lexical and grammatical elements. Suzuki defined in his short text four classes of Japanese lexicon, the last of them being *tenioha* (an alternate term for *ji*). He made a fairly successful attempt to achieve a clear-cut differentiation between this (rather equivalent to grammatical) and the other three (lexical) classes of lexicon, summarized in Table 2.3.1.

Three kinds of [lexical] elements	Grammatical elements
1. have designata [lit. point at places]	do not have designata [lit. places to point at]
2. are words	are sounds
3. point at things as words	attach to words as “sounds of the heart”
4. words are like beads	are like strings
5. words are like containers	are like hands that use and move them
6. words cannot function with no grammatical elements	have nothing to be attached to with no [lexical] words being given

Table 2.3.1. Intuitive comparison of lexical and grammatical elements (Suzuki 1824: 17, Tokieda 1941: 232-233)

The contents of Table 2.3.1 allude to earlier descriptions of Japanese grammar, as in the metaphor of beads and strings. They provide an original insight into the essentially less systemic character of the lexical elements and the more systemic features of the grammatical markers. This assessment is valid, even though the motivation of Suzuki’s thought, as may be roughly guessed, does not go far beyond the traditionally perceived distinction between literally ‘true names’ conveyed by sino-grams *mana* 真名 in their lexical use, and ‘provisional names’ *kana* 仮名 alluded to also in the regular term used for the ‘syllabaries’, attributed directly to mere sounds, not related to meanings. This is how the “sounds of the heart” must have emerged in the Japanese tradition. Still, there is no obstacle, one could naively conclude, to applying this opposition effectively in the generally unsystemic description of the former and the

systemic classification and description of the latter. This, however, is not the methodological direction taken by most Japanese grammarians.

2.3.4. The Epoch-Making Enlightenment

In Tokieda's work (1941), the following passage precedes the contents of Table 2.3.1. The terms *gainengo* 概念語 and *kannengo* 観念語 do not have established counterparts in English, being opposed through the meanings of their first sinograms, roughly to be rendered as '[conceptual] idea' and '[observed] idea'. Their translations as 'concept words' and 'words of perception' are but tentative propositions (to render the latter as 'sensual words' may perhaps be too simple, but not incompatible with Tokieda's explanation). They were originally devised as apparently departing from the formal, "structure-related", as Tokieda named it, approach to linguistics matters proposed at one time by de Saussure.

“Even the vocabulary that cannot completely be differentiated in the approach concentrated on the structure-related view of the language, as a union of an idea and a sound, may reveal substantial oppositions on the basis of the process-related view of the language. They include:

1. Forms implying the process of conceptualization.
2. Forms not implying the process of conceptualization.

In 1., the matter of the expression undergoes the process of objectivization and conceptualization, to be expressed by sounds, such as in *yama* 山 'mountain', *inu* 犬 'dog' and *hashiru* 走る 'to run' or the like. Also the subjective emotions and feelings may undergo objectivization and, as conceptualized, express [concepts like] *ureshi* 嬉し 'happiness', *kanashi* 悲し 'sorrow', *yorokobu* 喜ぶ 'to be glad' and *okoru* 怒る 'to be angry' and the like. I tentatively name this [group of] vocabulary *gainengo* 概念語 'concept words', but once they used to be named as *shi/kotoba* 詞, of which Akira Suzuki explained that: 'they point at and express the things.' The concept words serve exclusively to express the ideas of the objective domain, the substance of thought. In 2., the perceived substance does not undergo the process of conceptualization and objectivization, being expressed directly.

Units of vocabulary like *hitei* 否定 ‘negation’ and *uchikeshi* 打消^ル ‘denial’ have undergone the process of conceptualization, but such [conjugational suffixes of negation, in a traditional manner described as inflected, conjugated auxiliary words] as *zu* ず and *ji* じ are direct expressions, not ones pointing at the conceptual substance. [...] I have named such elements *kannengo* ‘words of perception’, but once they used to be named as *ji* 辞 and Akira Suzuki explained them as ‘the sounds of the heart.’ They express subjective ideas, in opposition to those of the objective domain. They cover the grammatical particles, auxiliary verbs, exclamations, interjections and the like. [...] Akira defines *tenioha*, namely the grammatical particles and auxiliary verbs, as opposed to the three categories of nouns, verbs and adjectives, according to the following explanation.” (Tokieda 1941: 231-232)

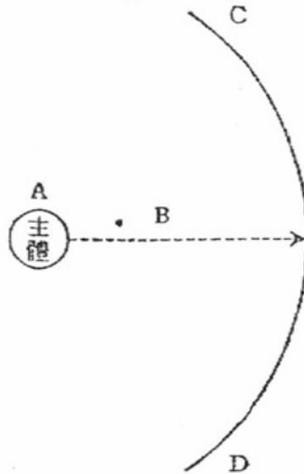
Here follows the opposition between the lexical and grammatical elements (Table 2.1.3). But this is apparently not enough for Tokieda, who continues with the following comments.

“While the points 4., 5. and 6 above [see Table 2.1.3] refer to the functions of *tenioha* on the basis of the vocabulary functions, the points 1., 2. and 3. do not refer to their substance of perception, but to their explanation from the point of view of pure qualities of vocabulary. Designata [places to point at] refer to the conceptualization and objectivization, and the sounds of the heart should be interpreted in terms of their meaning as immediate expressions of the perceived substance. Here, rather than to present my own logical conclusion that Akira’s theory is right, I would like to state that, having investigated the history of the national linguistics and examined his theory, I was amazed by the level of reflection he has achieved, higher than whatever the Occidental linguistic theories had ever been able to reach, and, enlightened by this, I have tried to expand his theory logically above.” (Tokieda *ibid.*: 233)

The expansion of the theory of Suzuki, familiarly titled with his name Akira, should probably be the most convincing way to validate the above enlightenment. It is as given below, accompanied by Picture 2.3.2, with the element *shutai* 主体 (defined earlier by Tokieda as “the speaker” and “the performer of the expressive activity”; *ibid.*: 41), with

the old version of the second sinogram in the center of Picture 2.3.2, translated below as ‘agent [protagonist]’.

“As mentioned in the previous section, since *shi* were formed in the process of conceptualization, they express the [ideas of the] objective domain, opposed to the agent [protagonist] *shutai* 主体, and *ji* constitute the immediate expressions of the agent’s self. It is shown in the following way in the picture. May A be the agent and may B be *ji* expressed directly by the agent’s self and the curve CD – the conceptual expressions of the objective domain opposed to the agent. How may the mutual relations of the two concepts be described? For example, let us take for further consideration the [expression] connecting the *shi* and *ji*, like: *Hana-yo*. 花よ。 ‘Oh, flower!’ The element *yo* よ expressing emotion [impression], as opposed to *hana* 花, expressing the objective domain, may be viewed as linked by the relation between the intended action and the object of intention. [...] Consequently, we may mention the semantic connection of *shi* and *ji*, within which the subject AB wraps the elements of the objective domain CD. *Shi* is a wrapped [object]. *Ji* is a wrapping [agent].”



Picture 2.3.2. Suzuki’s theory as expanded by Tokieda (1941: 237)

In the world of pure semantics, based on the notion of lexicon, from its very definition conceptualized but not necessarily systemic, the scheme works, though not being a major discovery. Issues emerge with the shift from vocabulary (which grammatical markers are not) to formal, systemic models. The formalization of the latter does not immediately result from the informal character of the former. The functions of the finite set of formal, paradigmatic values of grammatical dimensions differ from the infinite meanings of lexical elements. Either both *gainengo* and *kannengo* are treated as categories of vocabulary (literally *-go* 語, which would be absurd), or the latter do not belong to the vocabulary (contrary to Tokieda's proposition). Their selection is not conditioned by free decisions of speaking agents. Internal systemic rules are valid regardless of individual perception and feelings.

In other words, perhaps the function of the grammatical element *-yo*, being the adnominal marker of the vocative case of Japanese (should it be considered a case, it would rather be a peripheral one in the case system, as is the vocative of other languages), can be explained to some extent by alluding to intentional and sensual factors, especially towards a flower. This also confirms an inherently Japanese touch present in this approach, probably not unintentional, judging also by the year of first publication of Tokieda's work (1941, reprinted without considerable changes in 1984). Grammatical elements, however, are not the carriers of emotions or feelings. This conclusion applies also to the grammatical markers of Japanese.

2.3.5. Missing Elements

The adnominal grammatical suffixes of Japanese can be clearly differentiated on the level of phonology, as morphological markers. Their relation to "subjective" values, not to "ideas", can and should be systemized in order to achieve a formal description of the grammatical rules.

There may indeed be some (inherently non-systemic, lexical) traces of feelings or emotions in certain selected grammatical oppositions as to the volitional/non-volitional, hypothetical or presumptive functions of verbal markers, similarly as in other languages. The adnominal markers of Japanese reveal regular, systemic, paradigmatic oppositions, marking

the arguments of phrases and sentences in a manner that should rather be described as distinct from emotions or feelings. This may be illustrated in the sentences 2.3.d-2.3.i.

2.3.d. *Hana* *da.*
 flower(NUL) be(COP, NPST)
 花だ。‘[It] is a flower.’

2.3.e. *Hana-wa* *kirei* *da.*
 flower-TOP pretty(NA) be(COP, NPST)
 花はきれいだ。‘The flower is beautiful./As to the flower, it is beautiful.’

2.3.f. *Hana-ga* *kirei* *da.*
 flower-NTOP pretty(NA) be(COP, NPST)
 花がきれいだ。‘The flower is beautiful./It is the flower that is beautiful.’

2.3.g. *Hana-mo* *kirei* *da.*
 flower-NTOP pretty(NA) be(COP, NPST)
 花もがきれいだ。‘Also the flower is beautiful./Even the flower is beautiful.’

2.3.h. *Hana-no* *iro-wa* *kirei* *da.*
 flower-GEN color-TOP pretty(NA) be(COP, NPST)
 花の色はきれいだ。‘The color of the flower is beautiful./As to the color of the flower, it is beautiful.’

2.3.i. *Ume-no* *hana-wa* *kirei* *da.*
 apricot-GEN flower-TOP pretty(NA) be(COP, NPST)
 梅の花はきれいだ。‘The flower of apricot is beautiful./As to the flower of the apricot, it is beautiful.’

2.3.j. *Hana-o* *kure-ta.*
 flower-ACC give.in(N1)-PST
 花をくれた。‘[Someone] gave me a flower.’

2.3.k. *Hana-wa* *kure-ta.*
 flower-TOP give.in(N1)-PST
 花はくれた。‘As to the flower, [someone] gave it to me.’

2.3.l. *Hana-mo* *kure-ta.*
 flower-NTOP give.in(N1)-PST
 花もくれた。‘[Someone] gave me a flower, too./[Someone] even gave me
 a flower.’

Japanese exhibits topic-prominent grammatical marking (aptly described as co-existing with subject-prominent marking; cf. Li, Thompson 1976). The adnominal markers *-wa* (TOP), *-ga* (NTOP) and *-mo* (NTOP) attached to nominal stems mark the topic (theme, old information) and the rheme (comment, new information), i.e. elements not being sentence arguments in strict terms. Unlike subject and object, these arguments do not connect to the predicate (the head element of a sentence). This marking is additionally rendered with sentence stress. It is related to the requirements of context, not to emotions or feelings. The identical glossing of *-ga* and *-mo* (the latter often not being recognized as a case marker) as NTOP illustrates the inconsistencies in their actual grammatical description. Both may be treated as case markers. *-Ga* is often glossed as NOM due to its simplified reference to the nominal case as the default marker of subject. It is neither the only marker of subject, nor a marker of subject only.

The lexical element *hana* ‘flower’ (in its morphological zero form, usually not recognized as a case and marked by NUL) is unambiguously the nominal predicate in sentence 2.3.d. In its respective synthetic morphological cases (according to the traditional approach: with analytic particles or postpositions), it is the subject/topic – without sentence stress – in 2.3.e, subject/rheme – with sentence stress – or the subject only – without sentence stress – in 2.3.f and – usually with sentence stress – the rheme of 2.3.g. The same element *hana* with the (apparently genitive) marker *-no* serves as an attribute of another nominal element (*iro* ‘color’ with *-wa* in 2.3.h, which may also occur with the markers *-ga* and *-mo*, in functions analogous to those of *hana* in 2.3.f and 2.3.g). In 2.3.i, the element *hana* with the *-wa* marker, in the same function as in 2.3.e, is equipped with the attribute element *ume-no*. In 2.3.j, the lexical stem attaches the (accusative) marker *-o* in its position of direct object. As can be seen in 2.3.k and 2.3.l, due to the prominence of topic vs. rheme marking over subject vs. object

marking, the theme and rheme markers may prevail in the direct object marking over the accusative marker, which additionally requires some semantic cues (*hana* 花 ‘flower’ can hardly be the subject of *kureru* くれる ‘give in’) to decode the sentence meaning properly. All of the simple collocations above, with the use of respective Japanese nominal forms (cases), are replicated in numerous more complex sentences, in a manner completely independent from the expression of emotions or feelings. Since such usages might be systemized and described within the morphological case paradigm, the traditional grammatical investigation based on their lexical, irregular properties, inspired by such traditional sources as Tokieda’s, resembles rather the dilemmas of someone who perceives the pattern of declension as a set of useless rules “to be painstakingly learned”, useful at best in fairytales, as “the right way of speaking to/of a flower” (cf. 2.1).

Getting back to Tokieda’s work, instead of a Copernican revolution, the reader may be disappointed to find in it a circuitous folk narration on Japanese vocabulary, using rather obscure reasoning to equate grammatical markers with exclamations and interjections. Suzuki, unlike Tokieda, did not have at his disposal the rigid apparatus of linguistic methodology. He made an attempt (successful at the time) to summarize the research of various grammarians from the Kyoto school, inevitably relying on the traditional ideographic, Sino-centric approach. His attempt to equate the grammatical markers with interjections is rather a result of methodological helplessness, typical of pre-linguistic thought. At the same time, the phrase crucial to his remarks, *kokoro-no oto* 心の音 ‘sounds of the heart’, may be translated with the emphasis on its systemic reference, as ‘phonetic representations of the intended meanings [of the lexical elements they accompany]’. This leads to an utterly different explication of the functions of *tenioha*, compatible with other meanings of the element *kokoro* 心. Such an interpretation was not chosen by Tokieda.

2.3.6. Unsystemic Premises

Not only are *tenioha* viewed as unsystemic. Their description is typically presented without even slightest attempts at forming paradigms

of inter-related elements, usually by a kind of free enumeration of various categories. The fact that at least a group of *tenioha* is attached by the nominal stems, marking systemic relations, as in 2.3.d-2.3.-1, is not considered significant in most sources. It is the *tenioha*, not the word forms, that are described in the first place, isolated from the lexical stems. The classification by Hashimoto, based on primarily syntactic criteria, groups as *ji* both *joshi* 助詞 ‘particles’, described as “not-inflected” and *jodōshi* 助動詞 ‘auxiliary verbs’, described as “inflected”. *Jodōshi* are divided into two types:

1. attached to ‘verbs’ *dōshi* 動詞; and
2. attached to various units of vocabulary.

Joshi include the following nine types:

3. *fukujoshi* 副助詞 ‘adverbial particles’ (lit. ‘secondary particles’), of non-connecting character, accompanying verbal elements;
4. *juntaijoshi* 準体助詞 ‘secondary-adnominal particles’, not accompanying verbal elements;
5. *setsuzokujoshi* 接続助詞 ‘connecting particles’, used only with verbal elements;
6. *heiritsujoshi* 並立助詞 ‘enumerating particles’, used with various elements;
7. *junpukutaijoshi* or *junfukutaijoshi* 準副体助詞, ‘secondary marginal adnominal particles’, accompanying various elements within the nominal phrases;
8. *kakujoshi* 格助詞 ‘case particles’, accompanying nominal elements in verbal phrases;
9. *kakarijoshi* 係助詞 ‘trigger particles’, accompanying various elements in verbal phrases;
10. *shūjoshi* 終助詞 ‘final particles’, ending sentences; and
11. *kantōjoshi* 間投助詞 ‘interjection particles’, ending phrases (Hashimoto 1948: 78-79).

The above enumeration is subject to further studies and elaborations, with subsequent new terms and dilemmas. The logical paradoxes present in the works of Hashimoto and Tokieda prove that this way of reasoning does not favor the systemic approach.

All proposed terms end with the graphomorpheme *-shi*, not *-ji*, which further obscures the relations of the lexical and the grammatical elements as well as the distinction between synthetic forms and analytic constructions. Both the lexical and the grammatical elements are classified in this elaborate approach as regular parts of speech, with *joshi* not fully deprived of their allegedly lexical properties, functioning on the levels of word, phrase and sentence unit (some of them belonging to several groups in their allegedly different functions), with striking deviation from the basic, clear and systemically explicable opposition between *shi* and *ji*. As a consequence, the description of 8 above as ‘case particles’ usually covers only the elements used in *ad hoc* translations of non-Japanese case terms. This results in the absence of such markers as *-wa* in 2.3.e or *-mo* in 2.3.g from the list of regular nominal case markers. Needless to say, it does not influence the way Japanese native speakers use the language and the respective markers. It should, however, be linked to a generally vague recognition of the functions of these elements in most sources, be they expert or educational. Japanese researchers still seem to experience the same dilemma of distinguishing between lexical and grammatical, inflecting and derivational phenomena, as documented in terms of a difference between “the substantial definition of language units” and “the standards of operations for the purposes of actual segmentation of source material” sketched by Munami (1974: 187-193).

The works by Suzuki (1824), Tokieda (1941) and Hashimoto (1948, 1969) may be regarded as representative of – or an inspiration to compile new works in – the school of *kokugogaku* 国語学 ‘the study of national [Japanese] language’. It is practiced usually by Japanese scholars, with the more or less tacit assumption that both authors and readers “have been raised in the Japanese language” as one of its representatives rightly noted (Ōno 1978: 2). The basic premise that Japanese is different from other languages and exceptional in many aspects, occasionally also being mentioned *expressis verbis*, constitutes the background of this current of thought. As a rule, freedom of investigation should be a fundamental requirement for any expert studies. There is also no danger that native users of Japanese will alter their language habits significantly due to the clear deviations of the *kokugogaku*-based approach from the mainstream of general linguistics. Still, it is in many cases inconceiv-

able for someone not knowing Japanese already and/or departing from the strict grounds of general linguistics to gain anything more than an impression of confusion through contact with these texts. The explanation is simple. The sources are not designed for external use. Foreign students of the language usually access sources from another school, *nihongogaku* 日本語学 ‘the study of Japanese [as foreign language]’. Selected examples of interplay between the two schools are presented in the next section.

2.4. Semantic and Syntactic Descriptions

Numerous descriptions of Japanese grammar and the nominal elements *taigen* 体言 are constructed against the existing Anglo-centric and Sino-centric background, sketched in the previous sections of this chapter. The definition of *taigen* roughly corresponds to the Latin category of *nomen*, described by some grammars of Latin as covering *nomen substantivum* ‘noun’, *nomen adiectivum* ‘adjective’, *pronomem* ‘pronoun’ and *nomen numerale* ‘numeral’, with the term *nomen* as a *genus proximum* for the category (cf. Winniczuk 1984: 17). As mentioned above, Japanese adjectives belong partly to the category of verbal elements *yōgen* 用言 (traditionally including verbs, inflected adjectives and, rather paradoxically, non-inflected quasi-adjectives) and partly to a kind of transitory category between nominal and verbal elements.

2.4.1. General Sources

The division of Japanese nominals into the three categories: *meishi* 名詞 ‘nouns’, *daimeishi* 代名詞 ‘pronouns’ and *sūshi* 数詞 ‘numerals’, proposed in – among others – a relatively modern grammar by Yamada (1908: 179), is usually not challenged, despite the author’s doubts about the boundaries of the general super-category (Yamada *ibid.*: 179 ff.). It is usually accompanied by unambiguous recognition of the uninflected features of *taigen* constituents, connecting with analytic case particles, with the notion of case defined on a clearly syntactic, not morphological, basis (Yamada *ibid.*: 552 ff.). Yamada’s work is especially valuable in

this respect, since it contains overt and fierce criticism of a brief remark on the declensional properties of the Japanese nominal elements made by Ōtsuki (1897: 135-136), which appears as the motto of Chapter 3 below. It must be noted that Yamada did not hesitate to accuse Ōtsuki's proposition, representing not much more than casual remarks on the possibility of applying the synthetic methodology to describe the Japanese nominal forms in terms of cases, of lacking solid grounds, "containing defects" and being "[too] easy". Quite unexpectedly, Yamada's arguments against declension may be reduced to, at most, several not too convincing quotes, among others from the English grammarian Walter Skeat, not related at all to the features of Japanese. This seems to confirm the frustration of Yamada, who clearly opposes against the recognition of inflection in Japanese, but is way off the mark when it comes to the substance of the remarks originally made by Ōtsuki.

The fact that Yamada's description, and many similar ones, can be cited as representative against the background of contemporary grammatical sources is also confirmed by numerous dictionary and lexicon definitions of *taigen*, as opposed to *yōgen*, within the class of nominally lexical (literally 'independent') parts of speech *jiritsugo* 自立語. While they mention, generally correctly and in an intuitive manner, the semantic (naming objects and ideas, not features, states and actions) and syntactic (sentence subject) roles of *taigen*, they usually do not contain overt information on the uninflected character of the Japanese nominal elements, stating instead that *taigen* are non-conjugated. This discovery, not marking any major progress in linguistic investigation, is rather a clear allusion to the recognition of conjugation as the only pattern of inflection in Japanese (cf. 2.2, Hashimoto 1948: 61, 65). Not supported by any substantial reference, it seems to constitute a kind of ground zero for the contemporary Japanese descriptions of nominal elements. Such a view is typical of major lexicographic sources, such as Matsumura (1988: 1437) or Shinmura (1998: 1597), not to mention other leading dictionaries or lexicographic sources of less expert character.

The grammatical lexicons and encyclopedias on Japanese typically repeat statements on the non-conjugability of nominal elements (Satō 1977: 130, Kitahara et al. 1981:146-149, Kindaichi et al. 1988: 171, Tanaka et al. 1988: 669-670, Iwabuchi et al. 1989: 184-185, Hida et al. 2007: 198-199). Some sources do not use the workaround of non-

conjugability, stating that *taigen* are “as a rule, not inflected” (Ogawa, Hayashi et al. 1982: 106) or that “in school grammar, the conjugable verbs, adjectives and nominal adjectives are jointly classified as *yōgen* and nouns as *taigen*” (Iwabuchi et al. 1989). Nitta et al. (2014: 386) describe *taigen* as “not inflected”, explicitly referring to Yamada, Hashimoto and Tokieda to provide more information in entries related to the notion of case. In many sources, the super-categorial properties of *taigen* are mentioned along with their general identification with the category of nouns, although most of the works mentioned in this section and containing entries for *taigen* differentiate them from *meishi*.

Sometimes the peripheral morphological properties of *taigen* happen to be mentioned, usually with reference to Yamada, on the basis of their appearance “in the vocative case” or “as an object of address” (Satō *ibid.*, Hida et al. *ibid.*, Nitta et al. *ibid.*), using the following classic (formed according to the rules of Japanese literary language) examples 2.4.a-2.4.b (with grammatical glossing by A.J.). This fact also does not seem to constitute a sufficient ground to describe the nominal elements of Japanese as inflected.

2.4.a. *Tomo-yo,* *ki-tar-e.*
 friend-VOC come-PER-IMP
 友よ、来れ。‘Come, [my] friend!’

2.4.b. *Hana-yo,* *sak-e.*
 flower-VOC blossom-IMP
 花よ、咲け。‘Blossom, flowers!’

An even more interesting comment may be found in Tanaka et al. (1988: 670): “one may verify whether a unit of vocabulary belongs to the *taigen* or not by attaching to it the case particles *kakujoshi*: *-ga*, *-no*, *-ni*, *-o*.” This also is not enough to acknowledge the inflectional features of *taigen*. At the same time, as can be seen, the very order in which the markers are listed, presumably not by chance, replicates the order of the Latin cases to which they are often, apparently unthinkingly, attributed as their default counterparts: nominative, genitive, dative and accusative.

2.4.2. Older Sources

The above fixed attitude to the analytic recognition of what could be described as synthetic nominal word forms may only partly be attributed to one of the oldest available native Japanese descriptions of grammar. Traditionally, probably mainly due to the properties of the Japanese script mentioned above (cf. 2.2), nominal lexical elements were described as separate from their grammatical markers. This, however, was also the case with verbal elements. In the intuitive four-element “tailor classification” by Fujitani (1778: 27) *na* 名, roughly corresponding to ‘nouns’ rather than to the nominal elements, were accompanied by *yosoi* 装 ‘verbal elements’, lit. ‘clothing’, with the other two categories of lexicon having purely auxiliary functions. The fact that *na* are often described as indeclinable or non-inflected in this classification seems to be emphasized significantly more than the fact that the verbal elements should probably also be recognized as such, since their markers form a separate category too. It is also clear that nouns are mentioned first, as the only non-tailor element, and the most constant parts of speech (probably identified with the ideograms used to write them), as Fujitani himself mentions in the fragment chosen as the motto of Chapter 5 (Fujitani *ibid.*). This, at the same time, seems not to support the hypothesis that since the nouns are understood as the names of entities, both abstract and concrete, only the three remaining elements described by Fujitani should be granted the status of parts of speech (Holđa 2006: 30).

Also in the four-element classification by Suzuki (1824: 5) there is a clear distinction, as mentioned in Table 2.3.1, between the three groups of lexical elements: *tai-no kotoba* 体の詞 ‘nouns’, *arikata-no kotoba* 形状の詞 ‘adjectives’ and *shiwaza-no kotoba* 作用の詞 ‘verbs’ and the grammatical elements *tenioha*, the latter classified as one group regardless of their particular functions. It would be rather rash to define the nouns according to the description provided by Suzuki as non-inflected, in contrast to verbal elements. The original division made by the author between the former as *ugokanu kotoba* 動かぬ詞 ‘static vocabulary’ and the latter as *hataraku kotoba* 働く詞 ‘working (dynamic) vocabulary’, also referred to as *katsuyō-no kotoba* 活用の詞, may be linked, on the basis of their semantic and syntactic functions, both to the meaning of

katsuyō as ‘conjugation’, largely preferred in the linguistic terminology, and to the original meaning of ‘practical application’.

The sources by Fujitani and Suzuki, as may be seen, do not reveal significant instances of cognitive dissonance in the rather intuitive classification of the lexicon. This is not to say that the intuitive approach is the only one to take in linguistic investigation. From this point of view, their description of nominal and verbal elements may be considered balanced in its basic aspects. Both super-categories consist of independent elements (contemporarily: stems), connecting, in a manner not clearly defined as analytic or synthetic, with other elements, some being subject to further inflection, generally applied in the same ambiguous manner. The only visible difference between *taigen* and *yōgen*, *na* and *yosoi*, *tai-no kotoba* or *arikata-no kotoba* and *shiwaza-no kotoba*, may be seen in the properties of their lexical stems, revealing deviations from the basic form in instances of the latter.

The oldest contemporarily available grammars of Japanese by non-Japanese authors, in Portuguese and Latin respectively, compiled for entirely different purposes, concentrate for obvious reasons on comparing the grammatical structure of Japanese and Latin. Thus, it is not surprising that nominal elements are described by comparison to the Latin nominal cases, be it overtly in the form of a declension table (Rodrigues 1604: 11 ff.) or without it (Collado 1632: 6 ff.). Both sources, explicitly asserting the lack of declension of the Latin type in Japanese, describe particles (*particulas* or *particulae*, respectively) in the manner mentioned also below in 3.3.2, in terms of borrowed paradigms. The former lists in a table partly joint nominal forms, with commas used to separate the nominal stems and particles. The latter uses spaces for this purpose. Both sources are examples of translation grammars, which is compatible with their intended use as teaching and reference materials for European missionaries. This results both in the recognition of multiple Portuguese or Latin equivalents of Japanese forms (including, for example, the different values of grammatical person, not marked explicitly in the Japanese elements) and in multiple Japanese forms for the Occidental equivalents. A good example is the list of multiple nominative singular markers, identified *a priori* with the role of sentence subject, marked by five markers (morphological zero, *va* [= *-wa*], *ga*, *no*, *yorī*) by Rodrigues (ibid.) or by a slightly different set of five markers (*wa*, *ga*, *kara*, *no*, *iorī* [= *-yorī*]) by Collado (ibid.).

2.4.3. Newer Sources, Old Dilemmas

The mantra of no inflection, often accompanied by comments on the features of Japanese grammatical markers not known in other languages, including particularly English, is present in its various forms in numerous later works. This is especially visible in the description of the marker *-wa*, recognized as nominative case by Rodrigues and Collado, and also as a nominative case marker in later works, but on the other hand often described as a marker with the function opposite to *-ga*, the latter in many later works being (erroneously) identified as allegedly the only marker of subject. Interestingly, *-wa* is often presented as as a non-case particle, heterogeneous to other adnominal markers, clearly due to the lack of recognition of topic-marking prominence in Japanese (cf. 2.3.5). While this is not the only issue with the analytic, non-inflecting approach to the Japanese nominal elements, it is well known to many foreign students of the Japanese language, who, instead of “painstakingly learned” declension patterns, are offered countless explanations of the *-wa* vs. *-ga* dilemma that apparently cannot be learned at all. Similar flaws are revealed in numerous newer sources, Japanese or non-Japanese.

In the grammar of Brown, nouns are mentioned after verbs, with clear comments on their lack of inflecting properties:

“Japanese nouns are indeclinable. Being without inflections, their relations to other words are indicated either by position or by post-positions such as: *ni, e, no, kara, yori, de & e*, or by what we call constructive particles, as *wa, nga [=ga]* and *wo [=o]*.” (Brown 1863: xxxiii)

The element *-wa* is further described as follows:

“*Wa*, which is a merely an isolative particle, serving to separate a word or clause, from the words that follow it, is not a sign of the nominative, though it frequently stands between the subject and its predicate. [...] The difference between *wa* and *nga* is scarcely translatable, but is to be expressed by the tone of the speaker’s voice, rather than by any corresponding verbs in English. The native ear at once perceives the difference, and a foreigner can acquire the use of these particles, only by practice and much

familiarity with the Japanese usage. The native teachers teach that *wa* is a kind of cordon drawn around a word or words, as if to isolate it or them, as a distinct subject of thought, and, that *nga* is used when one or more objects are singled out, being present, spoken of specifically.” (Brown *ibid.*: xxxiii-xxxiv)

According to the grammar of Japanese written in English by Baba:

“Noun is the name of any person, place, or thing [...] Nouns are either Proper or Common [...] Nouns are varied by number or gender [...] have three genders – the Masculine, Feminine and Neuter.” (Baba 1888: 4)

The information provided in the last sentence above is not supported by language data. The following remarks on *case* may be found further in the source, with *-wa* described as the nominative marker and opposite to *-ga* in some aspects:

“*Of Case*. There are three cases; namely, the Nominative, Possessive and Objective.

The nominative is rendered by placing the sign *wa*, *ga* or *mo* after nouns; as, *otoko ga* or *wa*, *mo*, *ikimasu* ‘man goes’.

The possessive is formed by putting the sign *no* after nouns; as, *otoko no kimono* ‘man’s dress’.

The objective is rendered by the sign *wo* [=o], *ni*, or *ga*. [...] In the potential mood, *ga* is used as a sign of the objective case. [...]

The signs of the nominative, *wa* and *mo* are used in opposition to each other. When two things or persons do the same action, *mo* is used. [...] But when they do some different actions, *wa* is used [...]

Ga is sometimes used in an emphatic sentence [...]

Ni, the sign of objective case, answers to the dative in Latin [...]

As Aston (1888) explains:

“In Japanese nouns have not inflections to distinguish masculine from feminine or neuter, singular from plural, or one case from

another, but they are preceded or followed by particles which serve these and other purposes.” (Aston *ibid.*: 7)

This does not prevent the author from providing an account of a tentative list of Japanese cases, as quoted in 3.3.2 below, with the following comment:

“*Case*. Properly speaking, Japanese nouns have no cases, but a declension can be made out for them by the help of certain particles [...]” (Aston *ibid.*: 8)

The reference to *particles*, not to *cases*, is made consistently in Aston’s work. It is interesting that *-wa* is not included in the list of the declensional markers, with the following description in a separate section:

“*Wa* is a distinctive or separative particle. It has the force of isolating or singling out one object from among a number, of opposing one thing to another, or of limiting a statement strictly to the word which *wa* follows. Thus *kore wa* may mean ‘this one out of a number’, ‘this one not that one’, ‘this one and nothing else’, this one at least.’ *Wa* is often found with the subject of the sentence, but it must not be taken for the sign of the nominative case. It is also found combined with the locative particles *ni* and *de*, and even after *wo* [=o] the sign of accusative case, when it takes the *nigori* and becomes *ba*.” (Aston *ibid.*: 148)

Chamberlain (1898) seems to prefer a storyteller’s mode of explanation, presented in the following remarks on the parts of speech and nouns:

“A word as to the parts of speech in Japanese. Strictly speaking, there are but two: the verb and the noun. The particles or ‘post-positions’ and suffixes, which take the place of our prepositions, conjunctions and conjugal terminations, were themselves originally fragments of nouns and verbs.” (Chamberlain 1898: 10-11)

Still, nouns are mentioned ahead of verbs in Chamberlain’s handbook, with the clear declaration that:

“The noun is indeclinable, distinctions of number and gender being left to be gathered from the context, and case relations, being, as in English, indicated by separate words, which are, however, ‘postpositions’, not prepositions.” (Chamberlain *ibid.*: 27)

Substantial effort is made for the sake of clear explanation of the postpositions’ usage, as in the case of *-wa* and *-ga*:

“*Wa* was originally a noun signifying ‘thing’ [...], but is now used as a separate isolating particle [...]. Europeans often find it hard to decide whether to say *wa* or *ga*. [...] When [...] a speaker has in his mind a predicate and gives it to a subject, he uses *ga*; when the subject is uppermost in his mind and he gives it a predicate, he uses *wa*. [...] To take an example – if you are expecting your Japanese teacher, the servant will probably inform you on his arrival by saying *Sensei wa miemashita*, ‘The teacher has come’. The etymological sense is, ‘As for the teacher, he has come.’ That is to say, the teacher (subject) was in the servant’s thoughts as a daily visitant, and now here he is. But should the same personage arrive in the middle of the night or at some other unusual hour, the servant will say *Sensei ga miemashita*; i.e. ‘The teacher has come,’ – more properly and etymologically, ‘The coming of the teacher.’ In the servant’s mind his coming at such an hour (predicate) is the curious and important thing.” (Chamberlain *ibid.*: 85-90)

A remark is made similar to Aston’s quoted above:

“*wa* is not, as some European writers have erroneously imagined, a sign of the nominative case.” (Chamberlain *ibid.*: 89)

Such explanations, not lacking some didactic value and perhaps even a certain charm, are, needless to say, far removed from the expert and systemic description of nominal cases.

The grammar handbook by Nippon-no-Rômaji-Sya (1916) unifies two missions: the description of Japanese grammar and promotion of the alphabetized script. This brings some elements of playfulness (new in the Japanese script of the time) in the usage of italics and bold fonts, as in the quotation below. Here are some excerpts from the “fundamental

rules” on nouns and pronouns, described as the first parts of speech, and other remarks:

- “8. [...] b) *Nouns and pronouns* – those in vocative excepted, – are **always followed by postpositions**, which express their relations to other words. To this rule subjects and objects form no exceptions, so that we may speak of *subject phrase* or *object phrase*, just as any phrase in English introduced by preposition.” (Nippon-no-Rômaji-Sya 1916: 31)
- “12. In Japanese *there are no articles*. What is expressed by articles in English, is expressed, if necessary, by such adjectives as *kono, sono, aru* [...]
13. *The noun* is **indeclinable**: the same form may be singular or plural, masculine or feminine, and may be employed in different case relations [...]
14. **Case relations** of nouns and pronouns are expressed by postpositions put after them.” (ibid.: 29)

The list of “case relations” is quoted in 3.3.1 below. It does not include an explanation of *-wa* (ibid.: 39)

According to the English work on Japanese conversation by Omoto (1937):

“A noun used as the subject of a sentence generally takes either ‘wa’ or ‘ga’ the subjective suffix.” (Omoto ibid.: 2)

At the same time, the following is said on the subject of declension:

“In Japanese there is no declension of cases for nouns and pronouns. The variation of cases is shown by the variation of suffixes: ‘wa’ or ‘ga’ shows the noun or pronoun to be in the nominative case, ‘no’ is for possessive case.” (Omoto ibid.: 17)

Not much can be found in the same source on the systemic properties of the nominal element markers, apart from some rather marginal remarks like: “‘no’ stands both for ‘s’ and ‘of’” (ibid.: 19), notes in some word lists, like: *koko-e* ‘(to) here’, *koko-ni* ‘(in) here’, *hitori-de*

‘alone’ (ibid.: 58), or other comments, similar to: “The Infinitive denoting a purpose of an action is rendered in Japanese by *ni* or *tameni* – ‘in order to’ added to the verb” (ibid.: 110).

In a grammar in Japanese by Yoshida (1927), the nominal elements are defined unambiguously as *taigen*, “meaning ‘the subject words’ [with the term *shutai* 主体, used differently than in Tokieda (1941), as an ontological rather than grammatical term for ‘sentence subject’] and not conjugated” with the following comment overtly equating the term *taigen* with the feature of non-conjugability:

“They are words and one may say that all non-conjugated words belong to *taigen*.” (Yoshida ibid.: 4-5)

It is additionally mentioned that:

“*Tenioha* are elements with specific, subtle functions in Japanese grammar. A part of Western prepositions may be grouped in this category. (There are also elements with the post-positional functions.)” (ibid.: 5)

Yoshida provides a description of particles *joshi* (with the omission of *-wa*) as specific to the agglutinative languages *tenchakugo* 添着語 (contemporarily *kōchakugo* 膠着語), defined as Japanese and other Ural-Altaic languages, in which the grammatical functions are described by the author as specified by attaching separate word units. They are differentiated from the inflecting languages *kussetsugo* 屈折語, defined as European languages in general, specifying grammatical functions, as the author puts it, by different sounds. The third group is the isolating languages *koritsugo* 孤立語, defined as those of Chinese type, with no inflection (Yoshida 1927: 129). *Joshi* are hence described rather ambiguously, as “not bearing independent meaning” but at the same time “supporting the meaning of the words they attach to” (ibid.), with their recognition as elements originating from *tenioha* and a division based on purely syntactic properties (ibid. ff.). As can be seen in the chapters on the Japanese verbal elements, this does not prevent Yoshida from describing their conjugational forms. The nominal elements are not described as inflected, being uninflected by their very definition.

The instances of different (and generally not effective) approaches among the grammarians of Japanese to various adnominal markers, including or not including *-wa*, may be explained with reference to Yamada (1908), who, apparently in comparison with English and German (rather unlikely, in their contemporary variants, to represent in an effective and convincing manner the idea of nominal *case* among the languages of the world or even among the Indo-European languages), points at the differences between the *case* of English and the *Kasus* of German, suggesting even the use of a different term, and admitting that “he went to great pains” but was finally forced to use in a tentative manner the existing Japanese term *kakujoshi* 格助詞 lit. ‘case particles’. This fact alone, quite apart from being founded on the rather faint premises of English and German phonology and morphology, could perhaps instead lead to the conclusion that there is no need to differentiate between the nature of the “European” cases and the functions of the respective elements of Japanese. It is doubtful that they would be absolutely alike. Instead, Yamada describes the case particles on the following premise, overtly using the terms *ku* 句 ‘phrase’ and *kuseibun* 句成分 ‘phrase components’:

“What is described as cases in the Western languages [whatever is meant by ‘Western’ in this instance] serves to define the relations of an element, with nominal elements as basic, to the other parts of speech. The elements that I describe as cases reveal significance [in marking] the elements forming the phrases.”
(Yamada *ibid.*: 552)

Apparently any reason is good to deny the significance of morphological phenomena in the description of Japanese nominal elements. A group of particles is hence described, in a manner inherited by many later grammarians, including Hashimoto, as case particles (cf. 2.3.6), while others are recognized as functioning on a level different than that of the phrase. Against this background, the functions of *-wa* and other particles are not described as case markers but as *kakarijoshi* 係助詞 ‘trigger particles’ (English term by A.J.), defined as “participating in the [activity] of the predicate components of verbal elements and influencing the overall properties of the sentence meaning” (Yamada

ibid.: 611). They are opposed to the ‘case particles’ *kakujoshi* (Yamada ibid.: 609 ff.) as well as to the ‘secondary particles’, *fukujoshi* 副助詞, described as “related to the functions of verbal elements” and “marking the relations of nominal and verbal elements” (Yamada ibid.: 575-576), also compared to *kakujoshi* (Yamada ibid.: 618 ff.). It is interesting that Yamada does not hesitate to use the misleading term *kakarijoshi*, applied to the markers of rhetoric bracket constructions *kakarimusubi* 係結び in the classic literary language (not existing in contemporary usage). They consisted of the ‘trigger element’ *kakari* 係り and of the verbal ‘binding element’ *musubi* 結, the latter in its appropriate form, governing the choice of the respective *kakari*, marking exclamations and rhetorical questions. The fact that this is not (and probably never has been in the history of Japanese) the function of the *-wa* marker does not seem to cause Yamada great pains.

It would not be an overgeneralization to conclude that Japanese grammarians tend to overlook the instances of morphological marking, as confirmed by Tokieda himself in the following remark on the “units of lower rank than *shi* and *ji*”:

“The [“conceptual”] *shi* separated in this way [from the allegedly “perception-related” *ji*], if treated independently, are the expressions of pure ideas, without subjective regulations. This, however, that the former and the latter may merge within one unit of vocabulary, for example, to a shape resembling cases, in which the subjective regulations cannot often be analyzed, like the ones existing in the Indo-European languages, differs remarkably [from the way the word forms are formed in Japanese].” (Tokieda 1941: 242)

As may be seen, the term *kaku* 格 for ‘case’ is used above only to deny its significance in Japanese, quite apart from its rather misleading definition as a unit non-analyzable in terms of its lexical and grammatical constituents. Tokieda maintains the separate status of the lexical and grammatical units, on the basis of their allegedly subjective and non-subjective properties. This is also visible in his creative explanation of the “nesting boxes” structures in Japanese sentences (ibid.: 366 ff.), in which, to quote Tokieda’s own words: “the subject is included in the predicate” – this also being viewed as contrary to the Indo-European

languages (ibid. 370-371). While Tokieda uses terms for *cases* in his reasoning, it is only with the clear intention to prove that the nominal elements, not to mention their morphological features, viewed rather as obscuring the more general view on semantics and syntax, are not crucial for the grammatical processes characteristic for the Japanese language. This is otherwise confirmed by a later statement in a different source by the same author:

“The division of the nominal and verbal elements [*taigen* and *yōgen*] is based on whether the lexical units in their connection to other units of vocabulary do not inflect – the nominal units, or do inflect – verbal units. Since this method of division follows the ancient terminology and reflects well the properties and nature of Japanese language, its rationality is admitted. Also the terms for the nominal elements as not working [static] and for the verbal elements as working [dynamic] relate to the existence or lack of inflection.” (Tokieda 1950: 66-67)

That the bundle of concepts found in the works of the *kokugogaku* school is not limited in creativity may be further confirmed by a rather marginal work of Sugiyama (1955). It may also explain some of Tokieda’s concepts presented earlier. From the text, in the first place, the reader may acquire the precious – though undocumented – knowledge that:

“[...] for example in Latin, in forms as *rex* [rendered as *ō-ga* king-NTOP], *regis* [*ō-ni* king-LOC], *regem* [*ō-o* king-ACC] and *rege* [*ō-kara* king-ABL] it is not possible to divide the lexical elements from the grammatical ones.” (Sugiyama 1955: 44)

In addition, the author provides a new, unconventional definition of *taigen*, consisting of nouns, pronouns and numerals as, among others “not serving as verbal and other element modifiers”, based solely on syntactic criteria. This is creative, but probably not suitable for general use (Sugiyama ibid.: 52). No less impressive is the division of *joshi* (ibid.: 64), also based solely on syntactic criteria (by the elements they connect to), not by comparison of their functions within a paradigm.

2.4.4. Recent Sources – Not Fewer Dilemmas

In his collection of papers on Japanese, Bloch does not recognize the inflecting properties of the Japanese nominal elements. Only the verbal elements are described in the chapter on inflection (Bloch 1970: 1-24). This is based on the following morphological premises:

“An inflected form, in Japanese as well as in other languages, is a member of a closed group called a PARADIGM. The feature of meaning which is common to all the members of such a set is the LEXICAL MEANING of the paradigm; the features of meaning in which the members of a set differ from one another are the CLASS MEANINGS of the CATEGORIES for which the paradigm is inflected.” (ibid: 2)

The above, no overt reason being given, is applied solely to the verbal elements of Japanese. The nominal elements are instead described in the chapter on syntax (ibid.: 25-87), copying in a relatively exact manner Hashimoto’s notion of *bunsetsu* as a ‘phrase’, reflected also in the definition of a “pause-group” (ibid.: 28). Nominal phrases are described in terms of “noun expressions” and “pseudo-clauses”, without alluding to their morphological properties. This is confirmed in the rather bizarre definition of noun as “an uninflected word that occurs before the copula [...]” (ibid.: 56, used as the motto of this chapter), one that could also be applied – with similarly misleading results – to English nouns (as occurring after the copula). The quasi-fact that “nouns occur before the copula” is replicated with various consequences, which may be seen, among others, in the approaches of Martin (1975) and Tsujimura (1996) presented below. In yet other approaches, the copula is described as attached to the nominal element, which then becomes a predicate, in the same way as elements such as “case particles” or particles with functions termed as themative (Masuoka, Takubo 1992: 33).

Bloch’s writings provide instead quite an elaborate sub-classification of nouns into seven types, based on any but morphological grounds (ibid.: 56-58). The editor of the collection was Miller, who in his own monograph on Japanese (dated earlier, as Miller 1967, but not without notable similarities to Bloch’s work) reproduces both the unfortunate

definition of the noun (Miller *ibid.*: 335) and their sub-classification (Miller *ibid.*: 335-340). It is interesting that the parts of speech are classified into five groups, in the following order: verbs, adjectives, copula, nouns, and the postpositions or grammatical particles (*ibid.*: 308-355). The last group, quite apart from the fact that it seems to be recognized as partly lexical, is presented with an initial brief description of their syntactic functions on merely two pages (*sic!*), with “sentence particles”, “clause particles” and “referent particles, which occur after noun expressions to form relational phrases” and “quotative particles” and “conjunctive particles” (*ibid.*: 343-344), without any attempt to describe their systemic features on a paradigmatic level. As the author himself states:

“The functioning of these syntactic elements may best be observed in summary form by an analysis of the following text, a short newspaper article in the impersonal written style, presented first in transcription and translation.” (*ibid.*: 344)

Such a method of grammatical description is indeed not far from those used by the 17th century missionary grammarians in their translation grammars (cf. 2.4.2). It is worth noting that in the same text Miller criticizes the Japanese grammarians for copying the Dutch terms and concepts despite the existing tradition of linguistic inquiry presented by Fujitani. Also in other works, including especially his essay collections, Miller mentions explicitly the concept of “square pegs” and “round holes” in the context of contemporary grammatical description of Japanese, with critical remarks on Japanese linguistics (Miller 1986: 46-87). Miller’s critique is not always off the mark, as may be seen in his apt remarks on personal pronouns, the illusionary class of nominal modifiers *rentaishi*, the clear definition of the copula and the descriptions of the traditional class of noun adjectives as copular nouns. Still, the idea of systemic description of morphological features is not mentioned in his writings.

As may be seen in a work by Hinds (1988), morphological relations are still not valued in relatively new sources on Japanese grammar. Having provided a rather typical, syntactically based approach to the nominal elements, supplemented on the morphological level only with

remarks on “derivational morphology” (Hinds *ibid.*: 361), Hinds leaves the section overtly entitled “noun inflection” empty (*ibid.*: 187), with the following comments:

“[...] Bound affixes. There are no bound affixes which express syntactic or semantic functions of noun phrases.

[...] Morphonemic alternations. There are no morphonemic alternations which express syntactic or semantic functions of noun phrases.” (*ibid.*: 187)

Immediately below, on the same page, the author makes a significant remark:

“Postpositions are used to express syntactic or semantic functions of noun phrases. Most studies of Japanese syntax [...] have attempted to explain the lack of fit between surface postpositional particles and underlying syntactic and semantic relations. The unexpressed position that these researchers have taken is by and large, syntactic and semantic relationships are expressed through the use of postpositional particles.” (*ibid.*)

As can be seen, despite the fact that also in his earlier work, related to ellipsis, instances of case marker drop in Japanese nominal elements are treated similarly as omissions in phrases or sentences (Hinds 1982), the author seems to be aware, at least on the level of wording, of the difference between what the morphological properties are and what the studies “have attempted to explain”. This does not significantly alter the perspective of the author’s approach, providing a hint that morphological oppositions may not be completely absent from Japanese. Not to mention that “the lack of fit” can probably be observed in any theory based on substantially rigid grounds when applied to actual phenomena – the more rigid the theory, the more visible the exceptions (cf. the explanation by Kuryłowicz 1987 quoted in 1.5). Again, this is not an argument against the paradigmatic approach, but rather one for its supplementation with syntagmatic explanation, in this specific order of steps. No significant paradigmatic approach to the nominal phenomena of Japanese having been adopted, the efficacy of research based on solely syntagmatic grounds may prove limited.

In his extensive grammar of Japanese, Martin (1975) does not rely on the morphological properties of Japanese nominal elements. This conclusion may be drawn on the basis of the definition of Japanese “pure noun” as an element resulting from “plucking” it “from the nuclear ‘nominal sentence’” (Martin *ibid.*: 29). The original Japanese nuclear sentence, rather naively confirming Bloch’s and Miller’s idea that every instance of a nominal element is followed by the copula, is *N da*. ‘It’s N.’ In Martin’s manner of description, purely syntactic and analytical, grammatical modifiers are defined as adjuncts: noun post-positions (“particles”). Nominal word forms are treated as phrases. As the author puts it:

“Some of the build-up phrases can be SPECIFIED by particles that narrow (or sharpen) the grammatical relationship of the phrase to the rest of the sentence. [...] The relational particles have a number of uses and meanings, so that it seems best to start by summing them up in a list which includes disparate uses and meanings that will appear in different points in the grammar.” (Martin *ibid.*: 38)

This leads to detailed descriptions in terms of numerous meanings, more similar to dictionary entries than to systemic functions. Note that the definition of the marker *-ga*, glossed as NTOP in this text, takes more than two pages, with sixteen basic “meanings” and with twenty-six (sic!) sub-meanings (*ibid.*: 38-39). It is necessary to keep in mind that Miller (1967: 343-344) needed a mere two pages to comment briefly on all grammatical markers of Japanese while Tsujimura (1996: 126-127), mentioned below, provided remarks of the same volume regarding all nominal elements of Japanese. Instead of the elaborate explanation of *-ga* by Martin, one may refer to much shorter excerpts (barely half a page) from the description of the marker *-o* (glossed as ACC in this text) (romanization converted to Hepburn):

- “1. direct object = the affected of a verb [...] AFFECTIVE object, CATHETIC object,
2. place traversed, with quasi-transitive (=motion) verbs, both those that imply total traversal (*wataru* ‘crosses over’, *tōru*

- ‘passes by/trough’ etc.) and those that imply partial traversal (*aruku* ‘walks’, *tobu* ‘flies’, etc.) TRAVERSAL object,
3. (=kara) place departed from (with quasi-intransitive verbs of leaving such as *deru* ‘leaves’, *tatsu* ‘departs’, *oriru* ‘descends from’, etc.) ABLATIVE object,
 4. time spent: TEMPORAL object, as in *Tōkyō-de issshō-o kurasu*. ‘live all one’s life in Tokyo’ [...],
 5. ‘orphaned object’ – stranded by ellipsis [...] *Yuki-no naka-o [] dōmo osore irimashita*. ‘Thank you for coming [...] in the midst of the snow.’ [...],
 6. antithesis: [...] *Sore-o, ... ‘despite that...’ (=Sore na no ni).*” (ibid.: 40)

A similar method of enumerating separate “meanings” of grammatical markers is used by other grammarians, with various qualitative and quantitative results (cf. Golovnin 1986: 238-239 and seven proposed different “meanings” of *-o*, including, among others, its two additional spatial sub-meanings). Unfortunately, to list all possible “uses and meanings” does not seem to be methodologically effective. In a purely technical sense, every single instance of usage may reveal a different meaning or meanings. To the above set one might easily add, for example, the usage of *-o* in the meaning of “object of thought or knowledge”, with “verbs of cognition”: COGNITIVE object, such as with *kangaeru* ‘to think’, *shiru* ‘to know’; or in the meaning of “object of oblivion”, with “verbs of oblivion”, such as *wasureru* ‘to forget’ or *okotaru* ‘to neglect’: OBLIVION object. The reason why Martin does not provide these two additional meanings – constituting, to be sure, from the semantic and syntactic point of view another example of the above-mentioned “lack of fit” of the markers to the grammatical relations – is unclear in terms of purely semantic grammar. As indicated above in 1.6, there is probably no limit to the enumeration of possible “meanings”. Furthermore, at least some of the subdefinitions overlap in a rather inconsistent way, as 2 and 5 above, both unambiguously related to a “place traversed” and to the usage of “motion verbs”, regardless of whether ellipsis is applied or not.

Martin devotes several dozen pages to the description of “focus of attention”, which may be attributed to the above-mentioned misunderstanding of foreign authors regarding the functions of the grammatical elements *-wa*, *-ga* and *-mo* (ibid.: 52-90). Martin, however, does not

present a morphological description of the phenomena, regarding them rather as secondary to the functions of other particles. This results in a somewhat hollow discussion on “all possible combinations” of elements (ibid.: 75) or one with the use of graphical aids, as “the view of *wa* and *mo* [...] visualized as a sort of seesaw or teeter-totter” (ibid.: 70).

More or less the same method as Martin’s is used in the explanations of grammatical markers in Japanese dictionaries, with various results, quantitative and qualitative. It is interesting to note that one of the largest Japanese–English dictionaries does not differentiate significantly between particular senses in the description of the element *-o* as a “particle”, with its English “meanings” given as: “at; of; on; by; for; in; with” (Masuda et al. 1974: 1268), occupying a mere eight lines of the two-column page. Just for reference, the same source differentiates no less than twelve meanings of the “particle” *-no*, with some rather incomprehensible explanation of meanings such as *jikan-no kankei* 時間の関係 ‘temporal relation’ at point 8 of the extensive definition, occupying half of a page (ibid.: 1240). It may be questionable whether this level of semantic precision is necessary, even for purely didactic purposes, for the description of the marker glossed in this text as genitive case and used to mark, in the specific instance mentioned in the dictionary, a relation similar to that marked by the English Saxon genitive in the phrase *Tuesday’s lunch*, with temporal (and secondary) connotations emerging rather unambiguously from its (primary) attributive use. To illustrate the quantitative and qualitative discrepancies of an approach based almost solely on (clearly arbitrary) semantic and syntactic grounds, it is good to mention that another source, a Japanese language dictionary, of significantly smaller volume (in fact, of pocket size) provides a definition of *-no* in which the section on the function of the marker as ‘case particle’ *kakujoshi* 格助詞 contains six different meanings (Yamada et al. 2005: 1155), while the respective section on *-o* lists no fewer than five different meanings (ibid.: 1615-1616).

The latest German source on Japanese grammar, written for didactic purposes, mentions the adnominal markers of Japanese in a separate section, as *Funktionspartikeln* ‘function particles’, giving a brief explanation of their syntactic functions and semantic meanings. The former include, among others: *Subjekt* ‘subject’, *Direktes Objekt* ‘direct object’ and *Indirektes Objekt* ‘indirect object’, the latter: *Zurückgelegter Weg*

‘way back/out’, *Ortsangabe* ‘place’, *Zielangabe* ‘direction’, *Mittel* ‘means’, *Mengenbegrenzung* ‘range’, *Grund* ‘cause’ or *Material* ‘material’ (Ebi 2016: 73-95). This approach too is far from systemic, but some traces of systemic description, though again conditioned rather by semantics than by morphology, may be seen in the example use of “particles” with certain verbs (ibid.: 93-95).

Interesting comments on the Japanese nominal elements may be found in at least some of the Russian works on Japanese grammar. This is probably not unrelated to the fact that Russian is a language whose descriptions usually include declension.

The work by Golovnin (1986) applies the traditional Japanese approach in numerous respects, mentioning the substantives *taigen* as not inflected, and relating their usage in various syntactic functions to auxiliary words, of which the author mentions in the first place: *-ga*, *-o*, *-ni*, *-wa*, *-mo*, *-koso*, *-dake*, *-nado* (Golovnin ibid.: 79). This is not necessarily a repertoire of grammatical markers thoughtlessly copied from Japanese sources, in which the last five elements are usually not described as case particles.

Lavrentev (2002), in a section devoted overtly to morphology *keitai-ron* 形態論, does not describe the nominal elements *taigen* as inflected (Lavrentev ibid.: 7), later defining nouns as not inflected but occurring regularly with case markers (ibid.: 8). The latter are unambiguously described further as separate words, but on rather systemic grounds, with the overt remark that “the substantive and the case marker” may be “functionally compared to the function of cases in inflecting languages” and the indication that, according to the author, some other elements may occupy the position between the nominal stem and its respective case marker (ibid. 23). While “other elements” are originally “delimiting particles” (which could also be described as case markers), “modifiers” and even “introductory sentences” (in a rather irregular manner, usually introduced in brackets in writing and not to be confused with the regular nominal word units), this remark is based on certain factual grounds. It is also necessary to note that the author, despite the declared analytic character of his approach, provides the reader with a table of “cases and case markers” (ibid.: 24), described further in 3.3.3 below.

Alpatov et al. (2008) also overtly declare the uninflected nature of Japanese nominal elements. At the same time, as the only exception

from this, the honorific affixes *o-* and *go-* are mentioned, despite their derivational rather than declensional or systemic character (Alpatov et al. *ibid.*: 65). Other grammatical markers are described as particles or postpositions.

Also in Polish sources on Japanese grammar, despite the fact mentioned above that the morphological features of the Polish language play a significant part in its description (cf. 1.5), an analytic approach to the nominal elements of Japanese may be observed. Basic descriptions of nominal elements of Japanese are usually limited to its grammatical markers:

“Particles. In Japanese an important role is played by the group of words called the particles. Most of them resemble Polish prepositions, such as *w* ‘in’, *na* ‘on’, *od* ‘from’ or connectors, as *ponieważ* ‘because’. Particles express relations between words, parts of a sentence or whole sentences. They are always put after the word to which they are attached.” (Okazaki, Piątos 1971: 2)

“Adnominal particles in Japanese constitute a collection of one- and multi-syllable words corresponding to the Polish case suffixes, prepositions, connectors and particles.” (Huszcza 2003: 266)

Needless to say, the above are not the only definitions of the adnominal markers of Japanese in the quoted sources. As such, however, they seem to confirm a rather vague perception of the systemic character of the nominal forms of Japanese nominal elements.

Contemporary general sources on Japanese linguistics assume *a priori* that nominal elements are indeclinable, often mentioning the “noun phrases”, apparently in the likeness and image of corresponding descriptions of phenomena in the English language:

“Nouns and nominal adjectives belong to the non-inflectional category [...] *Nouns* This open class category consists of many free morphemes with several sub-types. They do not inflect for case, but their role in the clause is coded by an array of case particles.” (Iwasaki 2013: 57)

“Noun phrases, when they occur as arguments of adjuncts, are marked by case particles and postpositions that are placed after their host nouns. Because case markers can be set off by a pause, a filler, or even longer parenthetical material, it is clear that they are unlike declensional affixes in inflectional languages like German or Russian. Their exact status, however, is controversial; some researchers regard them as clitics and others as (non-independent) words.” (Shibatani, Kageyama 2017: xx)

“These case particles are phonologically bound to the preceding words, but the fact that other elements may intervene between the case particles and the nouns they mark and that their scope may extend over more than one NP when they are coordinated (as illustrated in (1) [2.4.c below – A.J.]) indicates that the case particles are phrasal clitics rather than nominal declensions.” (Nakamura 2018: 249)

As can be seen, it is overtly assumed in two of the above quotations that the possible (neither obligatory, nor frequent) discontinuity of “noun phrases” is the ultimate argument against the recognition of synthetic nominal word forms in Japanese. This phenomenon, pointed out also by Lavrentev (2002: 23), quoted above, could probably be explained by a somewhat weaker morphological, agglutinative rather than fusional, bond between the uninflected nominal stem and the grammatical marker – not altering the paradigmatic function of the marker or case form. It is, at the same time, rather rare and limited to written usage, which the sources fail to mention. In terms of general logic, it is appropriate to use a predicate with the universal quantifier for instances when the synthetic word unit is not interrupted by “other elements” – and with the existential quantifier when the rare instances of interruption by “other elements” occur. The overall frequency of interruption in the structure of the nominal *bunsetsu*, described by Hashimoto himself as uninterrupted (1948: 53-54), in actual Japanese utterances is low, to say the least. There are probably no reliable corpus data for it, but the author’s rough estimate would be below one percent of utterances, perhaps not significantly exceeding one in a thousand. There may be, in strict terms, a difference of three orders of magnitude, making the phenomenon at best far from representative. Exceptions should not substitute for rules.

Besides, it is interesting what the authors of the second fragment cited above would in fact conclude regarding the “inflectional languages like German or Russian”, in each of which grammatical cases are marked in a different manner.

Furthermore, examine the example sentence provided by the last source cited above in 2.4.c (original notation is added in parentheses under the proposed glossing).

2.4.c.	<i>Tarō-to</i>	<i>Hanako-dake-ga</i>	<i>eki-kara</i>	<i>arui-ta.</i>
	Taro(PN)-COM	Hanako(PN)-NTOP-	train.	walk-PST
	(orig.: Taro-and)	NTOP	station-	
		(orig.: Hanako-only-	ABL	
		NOM)		

太郎と花子だけが駅から歩いた。‘Only Taro and Hanako walked from the station.[It was only Taro and Hanako who walked from the station.]’ (Nakamura *ibid.*: 249)

The sentence 2.4.c may be translated into English with rhematic emphasis of the subject phrase, which the original source fails to mention (the second translation was added by the present author). Quite apart from the question whether the sentence in the exact form of 2.4.c is likely to occur in actual communication in Japanese (which is, as will be seen below in 2.4.5.8, a quite common issue with the example sentences provided by various sources on Japanese grammar, be they written by native authors or not), the typical split notation of the adnominal markers, glossed as lexical elements (*and*, *only*) and grammatical elements (NOM, ABL), may be found in the original. The use of NOM for *-ga* is obviously due to the fact that its English counterpart would probably be glossed as nominative case, which is another interesting instance of translation grammar. It is clear, on the other hand, that the author does not consider the elements *-to* and *-dake* to be grammatical markers, despite their regular occurrence in spoken and written texts in Japanese. It appears that the fact that Japanese “is [...] commonly classified as an *agglutinative language* because units of meaning are ‘glued’ to one after another”, mentioned explicitly in the introduction to the collection containing the chapter by Nakamura quoted above (Hasegawa 2018: 3), apparently without reference to the uni-functionality of grammatical morphemes, does not apply to the

nominal elements of the language. In agglutinative languages, the uni-functional character of the grammatical markers leads to the necessity of “gluing” more of them when more complex grammatical structures are formed, exactly as may be observed in the inflectional (conjugational) forms of Japanese verbal elements. The fact that *-dake* in 2.4.c occupies the position between the nominal stem *Hanako* and the marker *-ga* may simply mean that it constitutes another grammatical marker in the linear construction of the Japanese agglutinative nominal form, which the author (and certainly not that author alone) fails to observe.

It is interesting to see that at least some authors seem to approach very closely to the notion of morphological case. Compare the following quotation from a fairly recent source:

“In point of fact, in Japanese, morphological case marking is the sole reliable means of signaling the grammatical relations of arguments, because the language has no person/number/gender agreement that appears on verbs (except an optional honorific marking that can be treated as a kind of agreement), and word order cannot be used to identify the grammatical relations (mainly due to the presence of a reordering operation often called ‘scrambling’).” (Kishimoto 2017: 447)

Still, the author proceeds instead with the analytical description of (selected) “case particles” and their sub-types after the following sentence:

“Even though the grammatical functions of arguments are coded morphologically by means of postnominal case markers in Japanese, the relationship between the two is not always straightforward.” (Kishimoto *ibid.*)

It is good to repeat at this point that there is nothing wrong in applying the framework of generative grammar or other advanced apparatus in the description of the phenomenon of Japanese case marking. Still, a coherent systemic, paradigmatic proposition of a set of morphological cases, distinguished primarily on the level of morphological/phonological, synthetic word form differentiation, remains unavailable. This seems to confirm the general distrust of Japanese grammarians towards

morphological phenomena. Direct mapping of certain morphological phenomena onto semantic or syntactic categories, as in the instance of the *-ga* marker, often described by default as the marker of the nominative case and glossed as NOM, or as the marker of subject and glossed as SUBJ (cf. 2.4.5.5), does not resolve other specific issues, fostering instead simplifications and overstatements.

Also in numerous contemporary Japanese sources of general use, the practice of describing the native nominal elements as uninflected (=not being subject to conjugation) is common, to quote here only Kokuritsukokugokenkyūjo (2001: 63 ff.) and Aida et al. (2011: 17 ff.). The same non-morphological manner of description is imposed also in educational sources in English (Inamoto 1989, Tanimori 1994 and many others) and in the innumerable handbooks of Japanese, in Japanese and in other languages used as languages of explanation.

Selected sources for foreign use simply list the meanings of the Japanese elements described as grammatical particles. This is often done with no clear differentiation between their functions on the levels of word, phrase and sentence units. Another group of sources consists of the handbooks and dictionaries of “Japanese particles” or “function words” (Chino 1991, Kawashima 1999) as well as slightly more systemic explanations on “postpositions” (Katsuki-Pestemer 2003). Against this methodological background, the overt allusion to the necessity of “making sense of Japanese grammar” in at least one such source (Cipris, Hamano 2002), which provides the reader with solutions like, among others: “You cannot always guess the grammatical category of a Japanese form from the grammatical category of its English counterpart” (Cipris, Hamano *ibid.*: 15 ff.) or: “The particle *-wa* identifies what the sentence is about and urges the listener to pay attention to the part that follows” (*ibid.*: 33 ff.), may draw the reader’s attention.

Sometimes certain spelling and punctuation decisions may give the impression that a synthetic, not analytic, character of nominal elements with grammatical markers is implied at least by some works on Japanese language education. As one of them declares:

“[...] spellings [...] are as per their pronunciation, and words are arranged into groups which best represent how they are said in spoken Japanese.” (Hirose, Shoji 2001: xii)

Indeed, nominal units in the source are romanized without spaces between the nominal stem and grammatical marker. This, however, is not related to the recognition of synthetic forms, but rather to the concept of *bunsetsu* as “unbreakable units of speech” (cf. 2.3.2).

Another example of abandoning the morphological description of nominal elements for the sake of an analytic methodology may be seen in Japanese sources belonging to the genre of *bunkeijiten* 句型辞典 ‘dictionaries of sentence patterns’. It is typical in such works to list the entries with nouns connected by verb government to the predicate by the sole case marker (contrary to the notion of *bunsetsu*, cf. 2.3.2). Only three such sources (otherwise very useful both for foreign students of Japanese and for native teachers of Japanese as a foreign language) are quoted below, with their description of the example “sentence pattern” *-ni tsuite* について, usually translated as ‘about; on; concerning; regarding; with regard to’. The entry for *-ni tsuite* hence appears to the student as if *-ni* was an independent word, in a manner quite unrelated to the function of the marker in the morphological paradigm of Japanese nominal elements (Makino, Tsutsui 1995: 280, Group Jamassy 1998: 445, Tomomatsu et al. 2010: 311).

2.4.5. Nominal Markers and Misunderstandings

The collected material, a rather modest but representative selection of sources on Japanese grammar, provides unambiguous evidence of the great efforts apparently made with the intention of denying, in a variety of ways, the morphological properties of the nominal elements of the language. This section presents some common misunderstandings resulting from this attitude.

2.4.5.1. No Rules

First of all, it may be justified to assume that the conviction of a lack of inflection is so overwhelming that it influences the explication of quite ordinary phenomena, not necessarily related directly to morphology. A good example is one of the versions of the famous book of Mikami, who quotes (with no data on the original source – a practice common in

linguistic works in Japanese) the following conversation of a host (A), an elderly woman, and a younger woman (*kyaku* 客 ‘guest’ K) who visits the host with her small son. As can be seen in the sentences 2.4.d-2.4.h, the age and status difference is shown by the polite verbal forms used by the guest and by their absence in the host’s utterances, which have plain verbal forms, and further by the choice of vocabulary and the manner of speech.

2.4.d.	<i>Bōya-chan,</i>	<i>obāchan</i>	<i>toko-ni</i>	<i>nyanko-ga</i>	<i>i-ru</i>
A	boy-	grandma	place-LOC	kitty-	exist-
	HON(NUL)	(HON, NUL)		NTOP	NPST
	<i>no</i>	<i>yo.</i>	<i>Nyanko</i>	<i>tsure-te</i>	<i>ki-mash-ō</i>
	NMN(NUL)	EMP(SP)	kitty(NUL)	take.with-	RES(AV)-
				CON	POL-HYP
	<i>ka.</i>	<i>Bōya-chan</i>	<i>nyanko</i>	<i>kirai?</i>	
	INT(SP)	boy-	kitty(NUL)	dislike	
		HON(NUL)		(NA, 1)	

A「坊やちゃん、おばあちゃんとここにニャンコがいるのよ。ニャンコ連れてきましょうか。坊やちゃんニャンコきらい？」 ‘Boy, grandma has a kitty. Shall I bring it? You don’t like kitties?’

2.4.e.	<i>Ie</i>	<i>ne.</i>	<i>Uchi-ni-mo</i>	<i>neko-ga</i>	<i>i-ru</i>
K	no(EI)	CNF(SP)	house-LOC-	cat-NTOP	exist-
			NTOP		NPST
	<i>n</i>	<i>de gozai-mas-u</i>	<i>kedo</i>	<i>ne.</i>	<i>Bōya-ga</i>
	NMN(NUL)	be(MOD)-	but(SC)	CNF(SP)	boy-
		POL-NPST			NTOP
	<i>neko-ga</i>	<i>kowa-i</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>de gozai-</i>	<i>no.</i>
	cat-NTOP	afraid(1)-	NMN(NUL)	<i>mas-u</i>	EMP(SP)
		NPST		be(MOD)-	
				POL-	
				NPST	

客「いえね、うちにも猫がいるんでございますけどね。坊やが猫がこわいんでございますの。」 ‘No, we have a cat too. But the boy is afraid of it/*it is afraid of the boy.’

2.4.f. *Mā, sō. Bōya neko-ga kowa-i no?*
 A ah so boy(NUL) cat-NTOP afraid(1)-NPST INT(SP)
 (EI) (EI)

A「まあ、そう。坊や猫がこわいの?」 ‘What? The boy? Of the cat?’

2.4.g. *Ie, bōya-no hō-wa ne, kowa-ku-*
 K no(EI) boy-GEN part-TOP CNF(SP) afraid(1)-
na-i
 CON-NEG-
 NPST

n de gozai- *kedo ne, neko-no*
mas-u
 NMN be(MOD)- but(SC) CNF(SP) cat-GEN
 (NUL) POL-NPST

hō-ga ne, kowa-ku-tte nige-te ik-u
 part- CNF(SP) afraid(1)- run.away- PRO(AV)-
 NTOP CON NPR CON NPST

mon de-gozai- *kara...*
mas-u
 NMN be(MOD)- because(SC)
 (NUL) POL-NPST

客「いえ、坊やの方はね、こわくないんでございますけどね、猫の方がね、
こわくって逃げていくもんでございますから——」 ‘No, he is not afraid.
 But the cat may be afraid and run away...’

2.4.h. *Mā, neko-ga kowa-i no ne.*
 A ah cat- afraid(1)- NMN(NUL) CNF(SP)
 (EI) NTOP NPST

A「まあ、猫がこわいのね。」 ‘Ah, the cat may be afraid, I see.’

As may be seen in the underlined parts of the English translations, a misunderstanding emerges, caused by the ill-formed second sentence of the utterance 2.4.e. This is probably due to a slip of the tongue on the part of the young mother, who, despite her nominally higher rank of guest, bears a lower rank as younger than the host and, additionally, feels obliged to refuse the host’s proposition 2.4.d. Furthermore, she may guess, probably

rightly, that the young boy and the host's cat may not be a good match. In 2.4.e the guest uses the lexically perceptive adjective *kowa-i* (conveying in its bare, not neutralized form, the immediately experienced information glossed as first person, in strict terms to be rendered as: afraid(PR)-NPST). Its choice is rather unfortunate. Additionally, the guest, probably also unintentionally, uses in 2.4.e the inverted order of predicate arguments, with the element *bōya*, which should occur immediately before the element *kowai* when indicating the object of fear, preceding the element *neko*, both in the NTOP case. This fosters the literal interpretation that it is the boy who is afraid of the cat, to which the host reacts immediately with astonishment (2.4.f). The expected version of the respective phrase of the second sentence of 2.4.e might be, for example, one employing the perceptive adjective stem *kowa-* with *-gar-*, the imperceptive suffix. The suffix neutralizes the perceptive meaning, with the verbalization of the original adjective to a transitive verb and with subsequent change of the case of the object of fear, *bōya*, to accusative, marked by the marker *-o* as in 2.4.i, provided below with detailed glossing of the predicate form.

2.4.i. *Neko-ga* *bōya-o* *kowa-gar-u.*
 cat-NTOP boy-ACC afraid(1)-NPR-NPST
 猫が坊やをこわがる。‘The cat is afraid of the boy.’

Similar mistakes emerge in everyday conversation, be it in English or in Japanese. It usually does not take much effort to correct them and to restore the expected flow of the exchange. The above explanation requires slightly more than basic knowledge of Japanese, which is a condition that Mikami certainly fulfilled. Still, the above conversation 2.4.d-2.4.h is followed by a rather surprising comment from the author, who, after stating that the parties of the conversation “cannot understand each other”, claims that:

“Probably the opportunity for an odd conversation like the above would not emerge at all in languages with gender and case marking or with clear opposition of transitive/intransitive verbs.” (Mikami 1984: 190)

This conclusion, with the overtly erroneous assumption that nominal case oppositions and the transitive or intransitive properties of verbs are invalid in Japanese, is not supplemented by any reference

to various propositions and possibilities of grammatical descriptions, either of Japanese or of other languages. As such, it seems to constitute a representative denial of the existence of grammatical rules in Japanese. Clearly, more significance is ascribed to slips of the tongue and misunderstandings than to the regular rules of grammar. Japanese is viewed as a language with no universal, regular rules.

2.4.5.2. Omnipresent Case Drop

In an otherwise valuable book on the history of the Japanese language (Frellesvig 2010), the author clearly concentrates on the description of verbal elements. This is parallel to the way the majority of Japanese linguists recognize the phonological and morphological phenomena of the language. In one of the few fragments devoted to the properties of the nominal elements of Japanese, a clear overstatement seems to have been made on the phenomenon of case drop.

“Finally, the obligatory case marking of all core arguments (subjects and objects) by case particles in written Japanese today is a written language feature which was introduced in the establishment of the new normative standard written language. It was not a feature of written Japanese before the *genbun 'itchi* [言文一致 ‘the unification of speech and writing’ introduced in the Meiji era (1869-1912) – A.J.] reforms, nor was it ever, or is today, a feature of spoken Japanese, where omission of case particles (case drop) has always been frequent. Its introduction into standard written Japanese is usually ascribed to a desire to have a normative, regular grammar for written language, as the European languages did, but it should also be noted that *kun-ten-go* [cf. 2.3], which is one formal genre of written Japanese, generally did not have case drop.” (Frellesvig *ibid.*: 410-411)

The above fragment, appearing (which may also be considered symptomatic) in the last chapter of the book, entitled “The westernization of Japanese: Loanwords and other borrowings”, in its subsection “Influence from European languages in grammar and usage”, is supplemented with the footnote:

“That is the reason a trick question like *pantsukutta koto aru?* (courtesy of Miss Saitō Sachiko) works. It can either be parsed as (i) *pan (o) tsukutta koto aru?* ‘Have you ever made bread?’ or as (ii) *pantsu (o) kutta koto aru?* ‘Have you ever eaten pants?’” (Frellesvig *ibid.*)

An interesting example of reverse argumentation may be observed in this instance. What might have constituted an attempt at systemic explanation of certain phenomena of Japanese is considered, most probably due to presupposed exotic and inexplicable properties of the code, to be an alleged “influence from European languages”.

As has already been shown in the archaic-style sentence 2.3.a, in the respective section of this book and in other examples, case marking (by no means limited to the above-mentioned “core arguments”) was a feature of the archaic written language, of which Frellesvig must be aware. And it remains a feature today. Furthermore, it was probably not unknown in the spoken variants of Japanese, as can be verified with reference to Picture 2.3.1. Otherwise, with no case markers, the two possible versions of the trick question quoted above could not be distinguished. Whether marking (or drop) is obligatory can be disputed on the basis of more representative material from classic or contemporary Japanese. In a broader perspective, the diachronic properties of the code and the descriptions of Japanese nouns should also cover the specific usages of the archaic verbal attributive form *rentaikei* 連体形, revealing gerund functions on the level of words and on the level of phrases and sentences (Jabłoński 2014).

Furthermore, the footnote quoted above reads as if the author is serious about the idea of making a (complete?) explanation of the phenomena of Japanese grammar based solely on the concept of puns. While the latter are extremely popular in Japan, especially among primary school pupils, their role in the explanation of grammar is not more important than that of their English counterparts, such as the tongue twister *How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood*, or the famous Buffalo sentence. Some peripheral features of a language may be more representative in puns – and this is precisely the reason why puns are language games. The possibility of dropping the grammatical marker is surely something that differentiates

the agglutinative Japanese from languages with fusional properties. This fact alone, however, does not prove that Japanese grammatical markers are always dropped – or that the drop is implemented at random, as Frellesvig’s description may suggest. While the phenomenon of case drop in Japanese is not peripheral, it surely cannot be described as obligatory, not to mention that a superficial and partial description of it cannot substitute for an explanation of the systemic properties of Japanese nominals.

2.4.j. *Pan* *tsukut-ta* *koto* *ar-u?*
 bread(NUL) make-PST NMN(NUL) exist-NPST
 パン作ったことある? ‘Have you ever made bread?’

2.4.k. ?*Pantsu* *kut-ta* *koto* *ar-u?*
 pants(NUL) eat-PST NMN(NUL) exist-NPST
 ?パンツ食ったことある? ?‘Have you ever eaten pants?’

2.4.l. *Pan-o* *tsukut-ta* *koto-ga* *ar-u?*
 bread-ACC make-PST NMN-NTOP exist-NPST
 パンを作ったことがある? ‘Have you ever made bread?’

2.4.m. ?*Pantsu-o* *kut-ta* *koto-ga* *ar-u?*
 pants-ACC eat-PST NMN-NTOP exist-NPST
 ?パンツを食ったことがある? ?‘Have you ever eaten pants?’

The two sentences 2.4.j and 2.4.k are the allegedly possible parsings and interpretations of the trick question originally provided by Frellesvig. Needless to say, 2.4.k is absurd at first sight. Such an interpretation does not require expert skills from anyone challenged with the pun. In both 2.4.j and 2.4.k the NUL forms of the direct object may easily be supplemented with the accusative marker *-o* (and appear as *pan-o* or *pantsu-o*, respectively, as in 2.4.l and 2.4.m), due to the unambiguously transitive properties of the verbs (*tsukuru* 作る ‘make’ and *ku’u* 食う ‘eat [in unsophisticated use]’). The same applies to the non-topic marker *-ga* of the nominalizer *koto*, which may be dropped more often, due to frequent grammatical usage of the nominalizer in aspectual verbal constructions closely resembling those of the English *have you ever/I have never* type.

Note that the restoration of the dropped marker(s) causes only the loss of the comic nature of its ambiguous parsing (the pun effect). It does not eliminate the constantly and purposely absurd properties of the resulting sentence in 2.4.m. Still, the application of case drop in 2.4.j and 2.4.k, is far from obligatory, which Frellesvig fails to mention. Moreover, it may occur only when the dropped marker is restorable. Or it may not be used at all, even if the marker is restorable, being a pure option, similarly as the very technique of applying a trick question, rather a secondary method of enriching the non-conventional properties of the message with respect to the primary requirements of communication in Japanese. Case drop is also not implemented in instances when the grammatical marker bears a high informational load, being crucial for the proper interpretation of a message. The rule about not dropping such information is probably not different than in other languages.

2.4.5.3. “Conjugation of Nouns”

While conjugation at least can be viewed as a phenomenon clearly and unambiguously recognized by Japanese grammarians, some existing remarks on it may add confusion to the already complicated matter of nominals. In at least one linguistic encyclopedia, an entry on “conjugation of nouns” may be found (Kindaichi et al. 1988: 177-178). It is explained that “when it comes solely to the inflections by word forms, the nouns also reveal them” (ibid.). What follows may convince the reader that also in the description of conjugation there is no awareness of the notion of paradigm among the grammarians. The examples of nominal stem alternations in some derivational contexts, like: *ame* 雨 ‘rain’ vs. *amagasa* 雨傘 ‘umbrella’, *sake* 酒 ‘alcohol’ vs. *sakadaru* 酒樽 ‘a sake barrel’, *fune* 船 ‘vessel’ vs. *funade* 船出 ‘departure of a ship’ and *kane* 金 ‘iron’ vs. *kanazuchi* 金槌 ‘[iron] hammer’, resemble a very similar list of nominal stem alternations provided one-and-a-half centuries earlier by Suzuki (1824: 6-7). The author of the encyclopedia article is obviously aware, as he notes, that this phenomenon, although rather erroneously termed as *meishi-no gokeihenka* 名詞の語形変化 ‘noun inflection’, “relates [solely] to the internal structure of compound word units”. At the same time, a rather bizarre (and unacceptable on formal grounds) statement

is made that “there are opinions that conjugation may be recognized not only for verbal elements and auxiliary verbs, but also for other elements” (Kindaichi et al. *ibid.*). This confirms that the notion of inflection or non-inflection among Japanese grammarians is not necessarily based on the idea of systemic connection of grammatical markers to lexical stems, but is viewed rather in terms of the alternation of the stem itself, be it for any, even entirely non-systemic, reasons. Such a methodological attitude does not make it easier to achieve a systemic view of the phenomena of the language, not to mention the clearly (perhaps: intentionally) un-professional character of the proposed approach, incompatible with the scientific character of the source.

A similar example of an approach to the Japanese nominal elements may be seen in the English work of Tsujimura (1996). The compendium covers all phenomena related to Japanese nouns and “particles” on a mere two pages (*sic!*) (Tsujimura *ibid.*: 126-127). Of these, half a page is devoted to the description of the analytical marker of “Genitive Case” *no*, apparently treated as if it were a Japanese counterpart of the English Saxon genitive. Tsujimura also proposes a description of what are usually defined as variants of the copula in studies on general linguistics (*kunrei* romanization is changed to Hepburn below, the original hyphens, wrongly suggesting the synthetic status of the collocation *noun copula*, being retained):

“What further separates Japanese nouns from English nouns is that Japanese nouns are associated with a conjugational paradigm, illustrated below with the noun *hon* ‘book’.”

The following Table 2.4.1 follows in the original source by Tsujimura.

a. non-past	<i>hon-da</i>	‘it is a book’
b. non past neg.	<i>hon-ja nai</i>	‘it’s not a book’
c. past	<i>hon-dat-ta</i>	‘it was a book’
d. past neg.	<i>hon-ja na-kat-ta</i>	‘it wasn’t a book’
e. tentative	<i>hon-darō</i>	‘it is probably a book’

Table 2.4.1. The “nouns associated with a conjugational paradigm” by Tsujimura (*ibid.*)

As can be seen, the noun is described as conjugable, the nominal predicates being treated and transcribed as synthetic (sic!) conjugational (sic!) forms of nouns. This is another proof that it is not possible in the opinion of the grammarians of Japanese to use any conceivable means of description towards the exotic and inexplicable Japanese nouns. The reader should further note that, as Tsujimura openly states, the phenomenon in question is allegedly utterly different from the English nominal predicate. In this way, the imaginary nominal conjugation (this time with no change of the nominal stem) is regarded as more representative than the agglutinative declension, with the existing and easy-to-enumerate adnominal markers. No further comment seems to be needed.

2.4.5.4. *Jamais Vu*

Have in mind that Tsujimura needed but two pages to describe the nominal elements. Accordingly, she demonstrates absolute disregard for the distinction between the word, phrase and sentence functions of grammatical units, treated as “words”:

“When a noun appears with the noun conjugation paradigm [...], it is used as a predicate of a clause. Recall that I have stated earlier that the conjunctive word *to* can combine only nouns [quoted as in the original – A.J.]. However, when nouns are used predicatively, appearing with the conjugation pattern depicted in [previous quotation], they cannot be conjoined by *to*. This is shown below.” (Tsujimura *ibid.*: 127)

The sentences 2.4.n-2.4.p (supplemented with their Hepburn romanization and ideographic versions glossed according to the convention used in this volume, with additional indication of the spacing and glossing proposed originally) are provided for the illustration of the above.

2.4.n.	<i>Tarō-wa</i>	<i>nihonjin</i>	<i>da.</i>
		(orig.: <i>nihonjin-da.</i>)	
	Taro(PN)- TOP	Japanese.person(NUL)	be(COP, NPST)
		(orig.: Japanese-is)	

太郎は日本人だ。‘Taro is a Japanese person.’

by Blake (2.4.s), may lead to the conclusion, typical of many English sources, that case has a primarily syntactic role, marking an argument of the sentence head. In this way, a piece of significant systemic information is lost in any instance when allegedly universal categories are forced into a description of phenomena unknown to (or neglected by) the researcher. This could be another argument for the analysis of morphological cases in the first place (provided they are manifested in a language). Such a decision usually reflects in the most unambiguous manner the actual systemic oppositions of a language. Semantic or syntactic properties may be analyzed thoroughly at subsequent stages. Compare the original sentence 2.4.s and the proposed version 2.4.t, with their different glossing and translation.

2.4.s. *Sensei* *ga* *Tasaku* *ni* *hon* *o* *yat-ta.*
 teacher SUBJ Tasaku IO book DO give-PST
 先生がタサクに本をやった。‘The teacher gave Tasaku a book.’ (Blake 2001: 9)

2.4.t. *Sensei-ga* *Tasaku-ni* *hon-o* *yat-ta.*
 teacher-NTOP Tasaku(PN)-LOC book-ACC give.out-PST
 先生がタサクに本をやった。‘The teacher gave Tasaku a book./It was the teacher who gave Tasaku a book.’

2.4.5.6. “Cognitive Change”

Makino, the author of numerous valuable sources on Japanese language teaching, proposes in his paper (2005) the recognition of a “cognitive change” in the usage of the Japanese markers *-ga* and *-o*, described as analytic and opposed regularly as the markers of subject (despite the different functions of *-ga*, partly mentioned above) and direct object. The corpus data he presents are regarded as sufficient evidence for the increasing interchangeability of the two markers. This is a significant claim, which may constitute vivid proof of the deterioration of one of the basic grammatical oppositions related to the case system in Japanese. It is based on the sentences similar in their structure to 2.4.r above, in which the counterpart of the NTOP *kēki-ga* may, Makino claims, be replaced easily by its ACC version: *kēki-o*.

The conclusion seems to be premature. The statistics provided by Makino show well below 10% of utterances to confirm the “change” – and these tend to be of rather erroneous character.

There are documented views ascribing the above-mentioned (alleged) interchangeability of the “particles *-ga* and *-o*” to English language education in Japan (Higashiyama 2007: 79), quite independently of any evidence that the non-morphological cases of English might actually influence the clear-cut and overtly marked morphological cases of Japanese.

The facts, fortunately or unfortunately, seem to be different. The opposition of subject (in fact: subject/theme/rheme) and object marking in Japanese is valid and does not seem to be affected by “cognitive changes”. This can be seen in examples 2.4.u-2.4.ad below.

2.4.u. *Biiru-ga* *suki.*
 beer-NTOP like(NA, 1)
 ビールが好き。‘[I] like beer.’

2.4.v. **Biiru-o* *suki.*
 beer-ACC like(NA, 1)
 ビールを好き。‘[I] like beer.’

2.4.w. *Biiru-o* *nomi-ta-i.*
 beer-ACC drink-VOL(1)-NPST
 ビールを飲みたい。‘[I] want to drink beer.’

2.4.x. *Biiru-ga* *nomi-ta-i.*
 beer-NTOP drink-VOL(1)-NPST
 ビールが飲みたい。‘[I] want to drink beer./It is beer that I want to drink.’

2.4.y. *Biiru-o* *nomi-ta-gar-u.*
 beer-ACC drink-VOL(1)-NPR-NPST
 ビールを飲みたがる。‘[Someone] wants to drink beer.’

2.4.z. **Biiru-ga* *nomi-ta-gar-u.*
 beer-NTOP drink-VOL(1)-NPR-NPST
 ビールが飲みたがる。‘[Someone] wants to drink beer.’

2.4.aa. *Biiru-o* *nom-e-ru.*
 beer-ACC drink-POT-NPST
 ビールを飲める。‘[I] can drink beer.’

2.4.ab. *Biiru-ga* *nom-e-ru.*
 beer-NTOP drink-POT-NPST
 ビールが飲める。‘[I] can drink beer./It is beer that I can drink.’

2.4.ac. *Biiru-o* *nom-u.*
 beer-ACC drink-NPST
 ビールを飲む。‘[I] [will] drink beer.’

2.4.ad. **Biiru-ga* *nom-u.*
 beer-NTOP drink-NPST
 ビールが飲む。‘[I] [will] drink beer.’

In sentences with adjective predicates, like 2.4.u and 2.4.v, the argument in the accusative is not allowed, for the simple reason that adjectives “do not take objects” (Kiyose 1995: 34-35). Still, some speakers’ erroneous decisions, as in 2.4.v, may result from the affective character of the utterance, which might have been intended as 2.4.w or 2.4.x, with the volitional perceptive marker *-ta-*, and then changed *a vista* to 2.4.v. The corpus data do not usually include detailed explanation as to why a slip of the tongue or an erroneous decision may have occurred. Utterances with unambiguously verbal predicates typically take objects in the accusative case, as in 2.4.y, not very different from 2.4.aa or 2.4.ac. Deviations from this general rule may occur in the case of volitional forms or potential forms of transitive verbal predicates taking both subjects in the non-accusative case and direct objects in the accusative case, as in 2.4.w, 2.4.x, 2.4.aa and 2.4.ab (cf. Jabłoński 2019). Such phenomena would probably be easier to explain systemically if a morphological paradigm of Japanese nominal word forms were to be provided.

2.4.5.7. “Double Subjects”

The alleged nominative role of the *-ga* case is also overtly assumed in a paper by Shibatani (2005: 202-203) on “non-canonical construc-

2.4.aj.	* <i>Ken-ni-wa</i>	<i>ōki</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>atama-ga</i>	<i>ar-u.</i>
	Ken(PN)-LOC-TOP	big(NA)	be(COP, ATT)	head-NTOP	exist-NPST

<i>Y</i>	<i>Ken-a</i>	[<i>estʹ</i>]	<i>болыи-ая</i>	<i>голов-а.</i>
<i>U</i>	<i>Ken-a</i>	[<i>estʹ</i>]	<i>bol'sh-aya</i>	<i>golov-a.</i>
at	Ken(PN)-	exist(3,	big-F,	head-F,
(PREP)	GEN	NPST)	SING,	SING,
			NOM	NOM

ケンには大きな頭がある。‘There is a big head at Ken’s.’

The claim of the “incompleteness” of 2.4.af. is not based on any grounds. The relation between the subject and the predicate in similar Japanese sentences may be easily defined in classical terms of valency, as that between an intransitive (adjective) predicate and its first (and only) argument. Such sentence structures are very frequent in Japanese, of which Shibatani himself is surely aware. As can be seen in the proposed English translations of 2.4.af, they may also be rendered as (complete) attributive or gerund clauses. Alternatively, it could be argued, as is done in some works on Japanese linguistics, that the very notion of *subject* is not necessary in the study of Japanese. This, however, would deny the existence of the clear semantic relation involving the subject as the first argument of the predicate, undoubtedly present in Japanese sentences, although not always an exact semantic counterpart of what is recognized as the subject in their English translations. There is nothing untypical in this. Japanese and English are different. Similar meanings may be encoded in each language by different grammatical means. It is the expert’s task to investigate the actual phenomena, not to deny something in one language simply because it is different from another.

The charge of the alleged incompleteness of 2.4.af is apparently leveled in comparison with its non-Japanese counterpart, which (in English) usually requires the argument of the possessor (*Ken*) to be overtly mentioned. In Japanese, 2.4.ae and 2.4.ag are optional extensions of 2.4.af. The concept of “double subject” does not hold. Even more interestingly, the element *Ken-ga* is not the subject in the Japanese sentence 2.4.ae. Its relation to the predicate of the sentence is different, as may be illustrated by the incorrectness of its usage alone with

the predicate. The resulting utterance **Ken-ga nagai*. *ケンが長い。 *‘Ken is long.’ is a non-sentence (*hibun* 非文), with an absurd meaning.

The element *Ken-ga* in the extension 2.4.ae of an otherwise original and complete 2.4.af does not mark the sentence subject, but the rhematic element (rheme) of the utterance. This, similarly as the argument of “the possessor” introduced in 2.4.ag, may be an optional surface requirement. Japanese is a topic/rheme-prominent language, with explicit morphological marking of these arguments. Topic marking, performed by morphological (case), syntactic (word order) and prosodic (sentence stress) means, may also prevail over the subject vs. object marking. Accordingly, the sentence subject is not the first *ga*-case element of 2.4.ae (*Ken-ga*). It is the noun closest in the linear structure of the sentence to its predicate *nagai* (*ashi-ga*). Furthermore, the sentence 2.4.ae is usually an answer to the rheme-centered question *Dare-ga ashi-ga naga-i?* 誰が足が長い? ‘Who has long legs?’. The actual meaning of 2.4.ae is hence rather the rhematically marked one: ‘It is Ken who has long legs.’ than the unmarked one: ‘Ken has long legs.’, with the first nominal element stressed. Apart from such usage, the sentence 2.4.ae may typically appear as a subordinate clause of a longer sentence, with some further semantic nuances, which Shibatani does not mention.

A more typical sentence with topic marking would be 2.4.ah, in which the topic is marked with the *wa*-case. Its first nominal element, *Ken-wa*, is not stressed, marking unambiguously the topic, not the subject. It is not clear why this sentence is not quoted in the first place as 2.4.ae, instead of its rheme-marked counterpart. A malicious, though probably not entirely inaccurate, explanation may be that it is perhaps regarded as “more Japanese” to provide unclear explanations instead of clarifying the interdependencies of theme and rheme, which are obvious, regular and systemic in Japanese. It is contrary to the linguistic facts of Japanese to assume that *-ga* is a nominative case marker. This assumption is confirmed in selected English translations of Japanese units with this element as sentence subject, only partly parallel with its function in Japanese. As stated earlier (cf. 2.3.5), neither is the *-ga* (N_{TOP}) case the marker of sentence subject only, nor is it the only marker of subject – something the grammarians of Japanese tend to forget as soon as they begin explaining native phenomena as viewed through the spectacles of English grammar.

that the English-centered approach to the linguistic facts of Japanese is a representative trend in contemporary linguistic study, despite the troublesome peculiarities of the original Japanese phenomena. Similar examples may be found not only in the sources quoted above, but in dozens, if not hundreds of publications by Japanese and non-Japanese researchers, many of whom were perhaps “raised in the Japanese language”, as Ōno (1978: 2) postulated, but acquired their linguistic views according to the analytic and isolating methodology of English.

2.5. On the Non-Morphology of Japanese Nominals

While the remarks on the lack of inflection of Japanese nominal elements remain rather constant, the reasoning behind them reveals numerous paradoxes and contradictions. Despite their overt rendering even on the level of the hybrid script of Japanese, in contrast to their superficial invisibility in the alphabetic script of the languages in which they are usually differentiated, in many descriptions the lexical elements are not separated in a convincing way from the grammatical markers, even at a terminological level. The very function of the grammatical elements is literally defined as related to (individual and subjective) perception, which does not make it easier to investigate their systemic functions. Sometimes the agglutinative morphological properties of Japanese are erroneously described in terms of lack of inflection, with no reference to the fact that the verbal elements are usually recognized as conjugated. Conjugation is typically the only recognized pattern of inflection. Declension is mostly not mentioned at all. The notion of what is considered to be a word form in opposition to a dictionary word unit in other languages is perceived not in morphological, but rather in semantic or syntactic terms. No effort seems to be made to achieve a systemic, paradigmatic description of the morphological features of the nominal elements – at the level of least entropy, for the sake of description of semantic or syntactic features. As an immediate consequence of this fact, the nominal phenomena are often interpreted as if no grammatical rules on the morphological level existed, ascribed to slips of the tongue, or described with the overt assumption that Japanese is different to any other language.

There are views that a perfect grammar of Japanese is perhaps simply something that can never be achieved. Katō (2014: 166 ff.) claims, mentioning the non-critical aspect of language rules in his description of Japanese school grammar, that while imperfect in many aspects, it reveals certain merits and cannot simply be changed. Its critics, Tokieda and Mikami being overtly mentioned, have passed away, but the school grammar by Hashimoto and others remains valid as a solid foundation of school education. On the other hand, as one may – ironically but aptly – point out, precisely this fact may be the reason why Katō’s book bears the title “The Japanese language that even the Japanese themselves have trouble with”.

As may also be concluded, in the history of Japanese linguistic inquiry, little influence from the concepts of languages with rich inflectional properties is observed. The grammars based on the foundation of Latin accented “the lack of declension of the Latin type” rather than the actual morphological properties of Japanese. This may have been biased by the Japanese informants, who inevitably perceived their own language from a Sino-centric perspective, due to the usage of sinograms. The documented Dutch influence on Japanese linguistic thought was also free of morphological considerations. The same may be said of the German and English sources, which also hold to the traditional analytic approach to the nominal elements. The influence of languages with rich inflecting properties, and the tradition of their morphological description, on Japanese linguists has been scarce, if any.

This is not to condemn every last one of the attempts of Japanese grammarians to describe their own language. At the same time, it is clear that the contemporarily prevailing approach to the nominal elements is far from reaching an effective description of the nominal inflection paradigm. The morphological paradigm does not, as such, solve all conceivable problems. Still, in languages with morphological markers of grammatical values, the precision of morphological marking can be effectively utilized in the description of systemic phenomena. Should this chance be abandoned, much may remain invisible and inexplicable. The freedom of linguistic research and of the choice of methodology being obvious, it is good to present what has been achieved in the (currently not very popular, mostly fragmentary and incoherent) attempts to describe the morphological properties of Japanese nominal elements, presented – using some representative examples – in the next chapter.

3. Morphological Properties of Japanese Nominals

“Our grammatical elements have particularly fixed forms and connect to all nouns in the same way. This [phenomenon], when viewed as inflection by endings [*gobihenka* 語尾変化], is that all nouns inflect [by their endings] like *-ga, -no, -ni, -o, -to, -e, -yori, -made*, according to the same one [general] rule and without exception. By the way, Latin cases connect [markers as] inseparable elements, like [human] legs, while our grammatical markers are rather like shoes and can [also] be taken off.”

(Ōtsuki 1897: 135-136)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the very act of enumeration of the grammatical markers of nominal elements may be regarded as the first step towards establishing a morphological paradigm. The accomplishment of such a step, with necessary additional clarifications, may be the result of a procedure of analysis of morphological oppositions between the grammatical markers and the paradigmatic values conveyed by them. The selected approaches presented below are mostly not examples of perfect execution of such a procedure. They were chosen for three basic reasons: 1) to demonstrate that a morphology-based approach is achievable, despite the dominant non-morphological practice of description, 2) to show various existing approaches to the morphological properties, and 3) to examine what could be improved in the existing approaches in order to reach a coherent description of the actual morphological properties of Japanese nominals. It is especially interesting to observe the more or less conscious aspiration for a description of a systemic pattern of variation of Japanese nominal forms, in the context of the fact that not all of the quoted authors used the term case or alluded to explicit case terms, few of them even slightly alluding to the idea of a declension pattern.

3.1. Morphology and Vocabulary

Ōtsuki, quoted in the motto of this chapter, postulated in fact only a very ambiguous similarity between the grammatical markers and nominal cases of Latin and Japanese. The clear-cut and easily comprehensible remark he made in this regard (criticized harshly though rather groundlessly by Yamada, as described in 2.4.1 above) concerned *senpen 'ichiritsu* 千篇一律 ‘the same one [general] rule’. This main principle, present in the background of the morphological approaches to Japanese nominal elements, is especially valid in its clear contrast to the notion of *sensabanbetsu* 千差万別 ‘infinite variety’ claimed by Hashimoto (1948: 60-61; cf. 2.2). These heterogeneous views on the role of the oppositions existing on the morphological level of the code seem to support the contemporarily unbalanced view taken of the phenomena of *katsuyō* 活用 ‘conjugation’ and *kyōkuyō* 曲用 ‘declension’ in descriptions of Japanese grammar, the latter in fact being mentioned only in relation to the nominal phenomena of other languages. Still, the morphological background of description may be seen in certain approaches to Japanese.

Morphological features may be useful in the description of inflecting phenomena, revealing fewer variants and resulting in a narrower set of classified elements than in a semantic or syntactic approach. The fact that nominal stems do not inflect is not an obstacle, but rather an advantage in such an approach. The clear boundary of the Japanese lexical nominal stems to which the grammatical markers are connected makes agglutinative phenomena even easier to describe than fusional ones, in which the boundary is often unclear. In Japanese, the constant lexical stem (declensional theme) of the nominal elements is also a property facilitating differentiation between the stem (theme) and the grammatical markers. The limited list of nominal word forms achieved through the systemic enumeration of the latter may serve as an easy-to-use and comprehensible reference to recognize in the first place the morphological case of a nominal element, with necessary semantic and syntactic clarification of more specific phenomena. The limited character and the intuitive properties of the fixed set of elements may further be emphasized by labeling its elements with case terms, alluding to their basic syntactic or semantic functions.

Not all elements of Japanese, and not even all of its nominal elements, are inflected. This is especially visible in the simplified but commonly

recognized division of contemporary Japanese vocabulary into the (literally) native layer *wago* 和語, the Sino-Japanese layer *kango* 漢語 and the xeno-Japanese layer of relatively recently borrowed vocabulary *gairaigo* 外来語 (the last category rendered also as ‘foreign words’ by Shibatani 1990: 142 ff.). The differences lie not only in the origin of the respective elements, but also in their systemic properties. This may result in the recognition of poly-systemic features in the contemporary Japanese language (Huszcza 2000). The layer of Sino-Japanese vocabulary reveals sub-systemic rules of different qualities, based not on inflecting but on isolating rules. Sinograms, acting as graphomorphemes, lack multiple morphological variants and form complex units by the process of addition of other sinograms. Such entities may be recognized as idioms or word-sentences, in fact constituting objects to be classified somewhere between the level of the former and the latter. The rules of the Sino-Japanese subsystem, as should be clearly stated, are valid only within the boundaries of such complex units and with respect to the individual morpho-semantic (essentially: ideographic) constituents of the Sino-Japanese idioms, like *senpen’ichiritsu*, *sensabanbetsu*, *katsuyō*, *kyokuyō*, *wago*, *kango* or *gairaigo* above.

By contrast, idiomatic units function in Japanese phrases and sentences as regular, generally indivisible nominal elements of the native Japanese subsystem. They connect to adnominal grammatical elements (markers) in order to mark their semantic and syntactic roles in units of a higher level of complexity. Such properties of Sino-Japanese units propagate further to the xeno-Japanese units. The rules of the native Japanese system remain superior in the usage of the three groups of elements in contemporary Japanese texts. Depending on the speech genre or register, sometimes the Sino-Japanese rules may prevail, but to describe the overall grammatical rules of Japanese solely on the basis of the Sino-Japanese subsystem would be far from adequate (cf. 2.2), just as it would be to impose native Japanese grammatical rules in the description of the internal structure of the Sino- and xeno-Japanese units. Still, the division of the native Japanese layer of nominal elements into lexical units, conveying clear lexical (dictionary) meanings and revealing systemic connections with grammatical elements as regular word forms in the agglutinative manner, is heterogeneous from the practice of recognizing the internal construction rules of other groups of

vocabulary in isolating and analytic terms. The two approaches should not be mixed, as the former should be based rather on paradigmatic properties, and the latter on syntagmatic ones.

3.2. Word, Paradigm, Syntagm

Recognition of the opposition between (abstract) paradigmatic and (concrete) syntagmatic relations is perhaps one of the simplest, though most impressive, achievements of the ancient grammarians. For de Saussure also, the manifestations of inflectional paradigms were intuitive to the extent that the very notion of paradigm had not been defined in detail (Saussure 1959). This fact, of course, is not unrelated to the inflecting properties of ancient Greek (to mention here only the European tradition of grammatical description), where they were discovered, and of Latin, in which they were inherited, developed and popularized. Inflecting properties of language phenomena rely on basic phonemic/morphological properties of the elements. It is for this reason that, as is often seen in contemporary descriptions made from a purely semantic or syntactic point of view, the very idea of inflection, based on the recognition of multi-element paradigms, may not be understood or may simply be neglected by the users of languages in which short or one-element paradigms prevail.

As was seen in 2.1, the main objection to morphological oppositions is that they are hard to learn. This, of course, is not an issue for the native users of languages in which inflecting properties dominate. On the other hand, the phenomena associated with non-inflecting properties also have to be memorized on some level when achieving linguistic competence, a fact which followers of the syntactic primacy maxim often tend to forget.

In the analytic theories of case, including the “deep structure” case definitions, morphological cases may be ignored. This also seems to be due to the internal, non-morphological marking properties of the languages described within such frameworks.

The practical lack of inflection markers is an analytic property of contemporary English. The effective analysis of word and sentence structure inevitably relies on non-morphological (lexical, isolating)

ble), show the clearly different morphological cases of *hon-wa* in 3.2.c and *hon-o* in 3.2.d. The logical conclusion based on this fact is that Japanese nouns are inflected. Their morphological inflecting paradigm contains more (in fact, many more) than one element. Even outside of the specific syntactic context, the elements *hon-wa* and *hon-o* (unless artificially parsed and described as analytic units consisting of two separate word units each) reveal opposite forms. Hence it is morphology, not syntax or semantics, that may be viewed as the primary concern of research and description in such languages as Japanese. A morphological paradigm, one that might be presented (if attempted) as a list of cases – nominal word forms – could constitute a useful and indispensable tool to present the full case pattern of the inflecting elements in such languages. This does not exclude from the scope of grammatical phenomena the case features that are not known as strictly systemic in English, but are present in the Japanese case system. An example is the topical, thematic properties of the case with the *-wa* marker, visible in the two proposed English translations of 3.2.c., with which the *-o* marker of the accusative case in 3.2.d may also be neutralized, with instantly visible semantic consequences, as in 3.2.e below and in its proposed English translations.

3.2.e. *Hon-wa* *kai-mashi-ta.*
 book-TOP buy-POL-PST
 本は買いました。‘[I] bought a book./As to the book, I bought [the book/it].’

Paradigms, viewed in terms of fixed sets of variants, may be limited to simple enumeration of all word forms, with their lexical and grammatical elements opposed and with their description as regular variants of dictionary word units. This, while already being a certain methodological achievement, may or may not lead to the elaboration of different properties of various paradigms, such as those of nominal and verbal elements. On the expert level, there may be described a detailed classification of all lexical elements into inflecting vs. uninflecting, the former divided into declining and conjugating, each class revealing internal paradigmatic patterns of more or less regular type and/or specific sub-classes of peculiar paradigms, as is the case with the five declensional patterns of Latin or the vowel, consonant and irregular patterns of conjugation of Japanese verbal

elements, archaic or contemporary. On the most abstract level of analysis, particular variations of semantic and syntactic functions of paradigmatic elements (word forms) may be analyzed. Paradigmatic properties may also be opposed to derivational properties and markers (morphemes) having a more limited and semantic rather than systemic character.

The isolating and analytic elements of Japanese, including the basic units belonging to the Sino- and xeno-Japanese layers, may have mainly one-element paradigms. The constituents of Sino-Japanese terms, like *katsuyō* 活用 ‘conjugation’ (*katsu* 活 ‘living’ and *yō* 用 ‘use’) or *kyokuyō* 曲用 ‘declension’ (*kyoku* 曲 ‘bend’ and *yō* 用 ‘use’) may include suffixes like *yō* 用, of derivational rather than inflectional character. They, as two-constituent idioms, may also connect to other derivational suffixes, such as *setsu* 説 ‘theory’, resulting in three-constituent units like *katsuyōsetsu* 活用説 ‘the theory of conjugation’ and *kyokuyōsetsu* 曲用説 ‘the theory of declension’. More complex idioms, like the tetrad *senpen* 千篇 ‘thousand variations’ and *ichiritsu* 一律 ‘one rule’, each of them also analyzable into the individual sinograms, but jointly functioning as a phrase (tetrad) with syntactic properties and the descriptive literal meaning ‘one thousand versions and/with/against one rule’. Such are the derivational and syntactic internal properties of the units. Within the structure of sentences in Japanese, they attach to auxiliary, grammatical morphemes and function as regular Japanese nouns with appropriate grammatical markers of case, as in 3.2.f and 3.2.g below.

3.2.f.	<i>Eigo-no</i>	<i>kyokuyō-no</i>	<i>umu-o</i>	<i>kangae-te</i>
	English.	declension-	existence.	think-CON
	language-	GEN	or.nonexistence-	
	GEN		ACC	

英語の曲用の有無を考えて ‘thinking of the existence or lack of declension in English’

3.2.g.	<i>Meishi-ga</i>	<i>katsuyō</i>	<i>shi-na-i</i>	<i>no-wa</i>	<i>tōzen</i>	<i>dar-ō.</i>
	noun-	conjugation	do(AV)-	NMN-	obvious	be(COP)-
	NTOP	(NUL)	NEG-	TOP	(NA)	HYP
			NPST			

名詞が活用しないのは当然だろう。‘It is obvious that the nouns do not conjugate.’

Unfortunately, it appears that the rigid notion of a paradigm, understood as a finite (abstract) set of elements grouped around a canonical element (dictionary word unit), opposed to the central canonical element as well as to one another within the paradigm, as distinct from the (concrete) notion of syntagm, organized by linear and semantic rules, is foreign to many researchers of Japanese. This may be illustrated with the instructive chart provided in the dictionary of linguistics by Tanaka et al. (1988), shown in Table 3.2.1 below. Glossing and translation have been added to the original contents of the chart. For the sake of clarity, the demonstrative pronouns *kono*, *sono* and *ano* ‘this [here]; that; that [one over there]’, contemporarily fossilized in their genitive case forms, are not analyzed in detail in the glossing.

As can be seen, syntagmatic relations (horizontal axis) are recognized as linear inter-dependencies of sentence/phrase elements. They are not marked as parts of the sentence in the original source, but this is not crucial for understanding their properties.

A discrepancy may be seen in the identification of the *ga* element as analytic, despite its common glossing as case particle and its recognition as a dependent element of *bunsetsu* in other sources, while the *-de* in *ie-de* and *gakkō-de*, on the other hand, is clearly identified as synthetic.

Furthermore, for a quite unknown reason, the paradigmatic relations (vertical axis) are not defined between grammatical word forms, but between the lexical elements of the sentence. While the respective triads *kono*, *sono* and *ano* or *otoko*, *onna* and *kodomo* could, for want of anything better, be (very imprecisely) described as lexical paradigms, due to their opposing (lexical) deictic or gender values, respectively, this is not true of the adverbial arguments, differentiated additionally by their morphological case, not to mention the predicate elements. The loose and open collection of exchangeable elements of a sentence is by no means a paradigm. At best, the group of elements recognized by Tanaka as an example of a paradigm could be described as an open (which is a non-paradigmatic feature) collection of elements that can function as (lexical) alternatives in certain syntagmatic roles. As such, the contents of Table 3.2.1 do not explain the opposition between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Instead, they seem to obscure the paradigm vs. syntagm dichotomy.

↑ ↑ ↑ <i>rengōkankei</i> 連合関係 'paradigmatic relations' ↓ ↓ ↓	
	<i>ano</i> あの that.over. there			<i>kyō</i> 今日 today (NUL)	
	<i>sono</i> その that			<i>ie-de</i> 家で house- INS	
	<i>kono</i> この this.here	<i>otoko</i> 男 man (NUL)	<i>ga</i> が N _{TOP}	<i>gakkō-de</i> 学校で school- INS	<i>hatarak-u</i> 働く work-NPST
		<i>onna</i> 女 woman (NUL)			<i>yasum-u</i> 休む rest-NPST
		<i>kodomo</i> 子供 child (NUL)			<i>manab-u</i> 学ぶ study-NPST
	
	← ← <i>tōgōkankei</i> 統合関係 'syntagmatic relations' → → →				

Table 3.2.1. “Paradigmatic” and syntagmatic relations according to a representative Japanese source (Tanaka et al. 1988: 460)

Another source, by Yamada (2004), proposes an intriguing methodological swap in the definitions of syntagmatic properties of Japanese “case particles” *kakujoshi* and the allegedly paradigmatic features of “secondary particles” *fukujoshi*, the latter being described as bearing “functions combinatory with other nouns” (Yamada *ibid.*: 51). As shown in 3.2.h and 3.2.i, any argument, even a methodologically incompatible one, is considered valid except for one recognizing the morphological properties of grammatical elements, which are constantly neglected in descriptions of Japanese.

3.2.h. *Tanaka-san-ga Kobayashi-kun-o ai shi-te i-ru.*
 Tanaka(PN)- Kobayashi(PN)- love do(AV)- PRG(AV)-
 HON-NTOP HON-ACC (NUL) CON NPST
 田中さんが小林君を愛している。‘Ms. Tanaka loves Mr. Kobayashi./It is Ms. Tanaka who loves Mr. Kobayashi.’

3.2.i. *Tanaka-san- koso Kobayashi- ai shi-te i-ru.*
kun-o
 Tanaka(PN)- Kobayashi(PN)- love do(AV)- PRG(AV)-
 HON-NTOP HON-ACC (NUL) CON NPST
 田中さんこそ小林君を愛している。‘It is [exactly] Ms. Tanaka who loves Mr. Kobayashi.’

Yamada, using the same terms as Tanaka et al. above, claims that only the case particles of Japanese (such as *-ga*) have primarily “syntagmatic” functions, connecting the nominal elements to the predicate. As is seen in the translations above, both *-ga* and *-koso* (the latter usually not described as a case particle) have this function. The author further ignores their comparable roles in the morphological paradigm of nominal word forms, proposing instead to recognize the secondary particles as independent words, ascribing further “paradigmatic” properties to the comparison of the element *Tanaka-san* with other (lexical) elements of the context. This applies, in his opinion, to markers like *-koso*, *-wa* or *-dake*, as opposed to case particles. Yamada fails to notice that both the case particles *kakujoshi* and the secondary particles *fukujoshi* are regular morphological markers of the nominal elements of a phrase or sentence, with the ability to function also on a partly semantic level, as rheme markers, this function being further differentiated by sentence stress (as marked in the translation). Yamada’s assumption is clearly based on the same erroneous understanding of the notion of paradigm as demonstrated in Table 3.2.1. This observation, combined with the fact that Yamada overtly mentions the functions of the secondary particles on the “subjective level”, leads straight to the “perceptual” properties of the grammatical elements mentioned by Tokieda (1941: 231-232; cf. 2.3.4). A lexical “paradigm” of this sort, to make it clear, consists of units that speakers, based on their own (unverifiable, one may guess) judgment and on purely semantic facts, might have used instead (as “a range of Mr. Kobayashi’s lovers”), had they had the intention or desire to do so, not much different from the

“right way of speaking to a mouse” mentioned elsewhere (cf. Butt 2006: 1, 2.1) or “expressing emotion” towards a flower (cf. Tokieda 1941: 237, 2.3.4). The relation of the *-ga* marker to the *-koso* marker (sometimes, as mentioned in 4.2 and in the subsection b. of 4.3 below, interchangeable, sometimes opposed, but probably not to such an extent as to be described as markers of separate cases) is thus effectively disguised.

The author declares on the same page of his work that the marker *-no* should be excluded from the set of traditional case particles, since its properties are limited to connecting nominal elements (Yamada *ibid.*). This postulate, not untypical in syntax-based theories of case, may be interpreted as illustrating even further Yamada’s lack of interest in the morphological nominal paradigm, shared with other grammarians of Japanese. This attitude is also confirmed by the use of the syntactically, not ontologically oriented terms *rengōkankei* 連合関係 and *tōgōkankei* 統合関係 for the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations respectively, rooted in the grammatical tradition of Japanese, but with the opposition probably no more intuitive than that one between the *gainengo* 概念語 ‘concept words’ and *kannengo* 観念語 ‘words of perception’ proposed by Tokieda (cf. 2.3.4). The clear-cut opposition of *goretsu* 語列 ‘[concrete] syntagm’ and *gokei* 語形 ‘word form’ as well as *gokeihenkaretsu* 語形変化列 ‘[abstract] inflectional paradigm of word forms’, the latter understood as a “set of words/word forms belonging to a given lexeme, organized according to a certain rule, mostly inflecting categories and their values” (Polański 1995: 382), could be proposed instead. As can be seen, the notion of a morphological paradigm seems usually to be avoided by Japanese grammarians. Even the existing descriptions that take into account (at least partly) the morphological properties of nominal elements may be impeded by the very lack of the notion of paradigm.

3.3. Inflection and Japanese Nominal Elements

The nominal phenomena of Japanese are usually described in terms of connecting quasi-independent particles (of rather unclear grammatical or lexical status). Their number is unknown, the set of syntactic functions and/or semantic “meanings” being practically infinite. They are described as connected regularly (as mentioned in the motto of this chapter) though

analytically to uninflected nominal stems (the latter not being recognized as declensional themes). Apart from the dominant approach, however, there are attempts to adopt an (at least partly) paradigmatic approach to the word forms of the nominal elements, not always founded on the rigid notion of a paradigm, but utilizing certain methodological tools known from the grammatical description of other inflecting languages. Such approaches may be tentatively classified into three groups: mixed, borrowed, and incomplete. Such features, usually not desirable in an expert classification, are found in most of the existing descriptions of the nominal elements of Japanese. They are manifested with different intensity in various models of description.

3.3.1. Mixed Paradigms

A detailed description of cases may reveal not only their morphological properties, but also semantic and syntactic meanings or functions, as indicated in the traditional division of cases into concrete (with semantic connotations) and grammatical (governed by syntactic relations). Mixed paradigms exhibit largely incoherent criteria of description; this may be explained by didactic motivations or simply by a lack of interest in the purely morphological properties of cases.

An English and alphabetic (romanized) grammar of Japanese, revealing certain missionary features (Nippon-no-Rômajji-Sya 1916), contains the following description:

“Postpositions. Case relations of nouns (and pronouns) as well as other relations which are expressed by prepositions in English or German, are expressed by **postpositions** put *after* the noun (or the pronoun). Most important postpositions are –
ga, postposition for **nominative**.
no, -- -- **possessive**.
wo [= *-o*], -- -- **accusative**.
de, [‘with (means), at (place)’].
e, [‘toward, to’].
kara, [‘from (time and place)’].
made, [‘to (time and place), till’].
ni [‘to (indirect object), on, at (time and place), for (purpose)’]
 ([...] **dative**).

3.3.c. *Yuki dake ga shiroi. Sorekara, usagi mo shiroi.*
 snow only NOM white and rabbit too white
Yuki-dake-ga shiro-i. Sorekara, usagi-mo shiro-i.
 snow-NTOP-NTOP white- and(SC) rabbit- white-
 NPST NPST NPST

雪だけが白い。それから、ウサギも白い。‘Only the snow is white. And the rabbit too is white.’ (Shibatani *ibid.*: 271)

In such a description, a division of the grammatical (systemic) and lexical (unsystemic) properties of the message constituents is not possible. The automatic identification of the *-ga* marker’s function with NOM, without the notion of declension, but with case glossing instead, is a clear legacy of the obsolete and non-scientific translation grammars. Also *-mo* and *-dake* are treated as lexical elements, contrary to their functions, but according to criteria of analysis aimed, at best, at the effective translation of the original material into English.

Another approach based on mixed premises may be found in Nitta (1993). The author, using creative terminology – as he also does in his other works – presents the following list of what he calls *kaku-no shurui* 格の種類 ‘case classification’. This, with case terms, their tentative English translations and with the enumeration of case markers proposed by the author, is a summary of a longer fragment of the original text, containing more comments on cases.

1. 主 *nushi* ‘subject? topic? nominative?’: *-wa/-ga*
2. 対象 *taishō* ‘object? accusative?’: *-o*
3. 相方 *aikata* ‘comitative? dative?’: *-ni/-kara/-to*
4. 原因 *gen’in* ‘instrumental?’: *-ni/-de*
5. 出どころ *dedokoro* ‘ablative?’: *-kara*
6. ゆく先 *yukusaki* ‘allative?’: *-ni*
7. ありか *arika* ‘locative?’: *-ni/-to*
8. 経過域 *keikaiki* ‘transitive?’: *-o* (Nitta 1993: 28-37)

While the choice of terms is a free decision, it is not clear why the above set, with no other values taken into account, should be considered representative and how it is supported by the actual facts of Japanese. The terms refer to both lexical and syntactic properties, which further obscures the perspective of the description. It is unclear to whom such

a classification could be useful. It is also obvious, based on analysis of the actual usage of the respective marker diads or triads, as *-wa/-ga*, *-ni/-kara/-to*, *-ni/-de* and *-ni/-to*, that they are not mutually replaceable, not to mention their purely morphological oppositions. There is some reason behind their morphology, of which Nitta, a fluent speaker and an original researcher in Japanese linguistics, is surely aware. Furthermore, the opposition of 2. against 8., with the same marker *-o*, is at least questionable. The only possible conclusion may be that the *a priori* assumption of the non-existence of a morphological paradigm of Japanese nominal elements is dominant in the description methods based on mixed paradigms.

3.3.2. Borrowed Paradigms

Borrowed paradigms, adapted from other languages with well-established descriptions of morphological phenomena, are also not proof of their authors' conviction that the target phenomena of Japanese exhibit any immediate analogies to the phenomena described in the source of the borrowing, or that they are described on primarily morphological grounds. It is quite common in linguistics to adapt the patterns of description known from one code in another. The basic requirement for such an operation, fairly complex and demanding, is to balance the advantages of the existing patterns with the challenges of the new phenomena to be described.

As mentioned earlier (cf. the last fragment of 2.4.1), general allusions to the order of Latin cases: nominative, genitive, dative and accusative, rendered superficially by *-ga*, *-no*, *-ni*, *-o*, may be found in surprisingly many works on Japanese grammar. They include sources that neglect or strongly deny the significance of morphological properties in the description of Japanese nominal elements.

Overt reference to Latin may be found in early grammars by Rodrigues (1604) and Collado (1632). Despite statements of the non-existence of a declension of Latin type in Japanese, they may also be regarded as proposals for borrowed paradigms. A similar technique of description is found in the handbook by Aston (1888) (cf. 2.4.2), in the list of cases resembling the pattern of declension provided in Table 1.3.1

above, despite the explicit statement of the author that the language lacks declension:

“*tori* ‘a bird’

Nominative. *Tori* or *tori ga* ‘a bird’.

Genitive. *Tori no* or *tori ga* ‘of a bird or a bird’s’.

Dative. *Tori ni* or *tori ye* [=e] ‘to a bird’.

Accusative. *Tori* or *tori wo* [=o] ‘a bird’.

Vocative. *Tori* or *tori yo* ‘O bird!’

Ablative. *Tori kara* or *tori yori* ‘from a bird’.

Locative. *Tori ni* ‘at, to or in a bird’.

Instrumental. *Tori de* ‘with or by means of a bird’.” (Aston 1888: 8)

The contents of the list inevitably include multiple markers of cases, resulting from the translation grammar approach. They are presented to facilitate a comparison with the Japanese “cases without declension” rather than with the aim of providing a finite case paradigm.

In turn, an intentional allusion to German cases is made in the pre-First-World-War handbook by Fujisawa (1910). While the author denies the inflection of Japanese nouns, describing instead ‘the case particles or postpositions’ *Kasuspartikeln oder Postpositionen*, of which *-ga* (“or *-wa*”, as the author puts it), *-no*, *-ni* and *-wo* [=o] are enumerated, the noun *Hauptwort* appears on the first pages of the book (Fujisawa *ibid.*: 7-9) with the proposed case pattern as in Table 3.3.1.

	German	Japanese
Nominative	<i>der Berg</i> or <i>die Berge</i>	<i>yama wa</i>
Genitive	<i>des Berges</i> or <i>der Berge</i>	<i>yama no</i>
Dative	<i>dem Berge</i> or <i>der Bergen</i>	<i>yama ni</i>
Accusative	<i>den Berg</i> or <i>die Berge</i>	<i>yama o</i> (=yama wo)

Table 3.3.1. An instance of a Latin+German borrowed paradigm (Fujisawa 1910: 10)

Fujisawa's cases, existing in German but inspired also by the Latin tradition of description, result in the following glossing of the example sentences 3.3.d-3.3.g (standardized glossing and romanization are added below the original).

3.3.d. *Yama wa takai desu.*
 mountain NOM high is
Yama-wa taka-i de-s-u.
 mountain-TOP high-NPST be(COP)-POL-NPST
 山は高いです。‘The mountain is high.’

3.3.e. *Nihon no yama wa kirei desu.*
 Japan GEN mountain NOM beautiful is.
Nihon-no yama-wa kirei de-s-u.
 Japan-GEN mountain-TOP beautiful(NA) be(COP)-
 POL-NPST
 日本の山はきれいです。‘The mountains in Japan are beautiful.’

3.3.f. *Watakushi wa A. san ni aimashita.*
 I NOM A. Mr. DAT met
Watakushi-wa A-san-ni ai-mashi-ta.
 I-TOP A(PN)-HON-LOC meet-POL-PST
 私はAさんに会いました。‘I met Mr. A.’

3.3.g. *Watakushi wa yama o mimasu.*
 I NOM mountain ACC look.at
Watakushi-wa yama-o mi-mas-u.
 I-TOP mountain-ACC look.at-POL-NPST
 私は山を見ます。‘I am looking at the mountains.’ (Fujisawa *ibid.*: 10)

Such a method of description forces elements not described as case markers to be glossed as lexical, as in 3.3.h below, in this specific instance with an element of historical propaganda overtly conveyed in the sentence meaning.

3.3.h.	<i>Niitaka zan wa Nihon de ichiban takai yama desu.</i>
	Niitaka Mt. NOM Japan in most high moun- is. tain
	<i>Niitakazan-wa nihon-de ichiban taka-i yama de-s-u</i>
	Mt. Niitaka-TOP Japan-INS most high- moun- be (ADV) NPST tain (COP)- (NUL) POL- NPST

新高山は日本で一番高い山です。‘Mt. Niitaka is the highest mountain in Japan.’ (Fujisawa *ibid.*: 20)

As can be seen in 3.3.h, the grammatical marker *-de*, glossed tentatively as instrumental case in this text, is glossed by Fujisawa as a lexical preposition, *in*. This is exactly the same treatment as that noted in 3.3.1 above regarding the sentences 3.3.a-3.3.c by Shibatani (*ibid.*: 271). The difference in the quality of the two descriptions is obvious, to the advantage of Fujisawa, who seems to be aware of the simplifications, made in good faith to facilitate the explanation of the grammar to lay readers, not to obscure the actual morphological phenomena of his native language. As may be seen, almost a century of linguistic studies separating the works of Fujisawa and Shibatani have not necessarily brought progress in the techniques of advanced description of the nominal elements of Japanese.

Borrowed paradigms quite naturally reflect the properties of the language of description (target language) rather than those of the language being described (source language). As such, they may not be considered a professional tool for the description of actual language phenomena. As shown above, they can probably facilitate the explanation of some source phenomena at the initial level of study.

3.3.3. Incomplete Paradigms

This section presents various approaches to the nominal elements of Japanese. The sources mentioned below list many morphological oppositions, but due to the fact that some morphological markers are not included, are classified as incomplete. The markers are extracted

from the language data and opposed on the basis of various criteria. This may require a creative approach towards oppositions absent in other codes, even if certain concepts may be borrowed from already existing descriptions. The process is not always transparent and may also reveal instances of mixed or borrowed criteria.

Matsushita (1928) proposes the Japanese nominal paradigm as in Table 3.3.2 below. The proposed cases, referred to by the graphomorpheme *kaku* 格 in the set of their original, Sino-Japanese terms, are described under the concept of the indicative form of a nominal element, not explained here in detail. In the original source, separate lists of markers were given for the spoken and written versions of language, the latter being omitted below.

Cases of the nominal indicative form				
<i>tokureikaku</i> 特例格 ‘special’	<i>ren’yōkaku</i> 連用格 ‘adverbal’	<i>shukaku</i> 主格 ‘subjective’	<i>shukaku</i> 主格 ‘subjective’	- <i>ga</i>
		<i>kyakukaku</i> 客格 ‘objective’	<i>tadōkaku</i> 他動格 ‘transitive’	- <i>o</i>
			<i>ikyokaku</i> 依拠格 ‘basive’	- <i>e</i> , - <i>ni</i>
			<i>shuppatsukaku</i> 出發格 ‘departive’	- <i>kara</i>
			<i>yodōkaku</i> 與同格 ‘comitative’	- <i>to</i>
			<i>hikakukaku</i> 比較格 ‘comparative’	- <i>yori</i>
	<i>rentaikaku</i> 連體格 ‘adnominal’	<i>rentaikaku</i> 連體格 ‘adnominal’	- <i>no</i>	
<i>ippankaku</i> 一般格 ‘standard’		<i>ippankaku</i> 一般格 ‘standard’	<i>o</i>	

Table 3.3.2. The paradigm by Matsushita (1928: 470)

Table 3.3.2 shows a list of cases with case markers apparently treated as analytical units of vocabulary. They are distinguished on the basis of syntactic and semantic criteria, which is especially visible with the “basive” case, with *-e* and *-ni* as its markers, in normal circumstances not fully exchangeable. Despite the creative and independent features of the proposed approach to the Japanese cases, some markers, such as *-wa* and *-mo*, are not included in the list.

Another expert approach to the Japanese cases, by a native user of an inflecting language, may be seen in the work by Feldman published as a grammatical outline supplement to a Japanese–Russian dictionary. It contains an overt mention of *cases* and a detailed list of them. The contents of the original list, provided in the form of a table, probably inspired not so much by the Russian cases as by the Indo-European cases *sensu largo*, are rendered below, with English translations, in Table 3.3.3.

Case name	Form	Case name	Form
Nominative	a) stem	Allative	<i>-e</i>
	b) <i>-ga</i>	Instrumental	<i>-de</i>
Genitive	a) <i>-no</i>	Comitative	<i>-to</i>
	b) <i>-ga</i> (formal)	Ablative	a) <i>-kara</i>
Dative	<i>-ni</i>		b) <i>-yori</i> (formal)
Accusative	a) stem	Ablative-Comparative	<i>-yori</i>
	b) <i>-o</i>	Terminative	<i>-made</i>

Table 3.3.3. The paradigm by Feldman (1953: 840)

Feldman provides detailed comments on the contents of Table 3.3.3, as well as on the functions of other grammatical elements, not present in the table. As may be seen, despite the fact that *-wa* and *-mo* are absent from the set, which is quite common in descriptions of Japanese, substantial additions to the set of Latin cases were made (allative, comitative, ablative, terminative). Vocative case is not included. The proposed list reveals some diachronic bias, visible in the description of the stem as the marker of the nominative case (applicable rather to clas-

sical Japanese, in which often, though not always, no overt marker may be reconstructed) and of the accusative case, where contemporarily the *-o* marker can always be reconstructed. Also the double classification of *-yori* as ablative and ablative-comparative may be questioned. Still, the approach by Feldman may be considered, almost seventy years after its completion, one of the most advanced and coherent descriptions of morphological cases in Japanese.

Another overtly morphological approach to cases, suggested by the very title of the work, is proposed by Suzuki (1972), as in Table 3.3.4 below (with schematic English translations of the original Japanese case terms).

<i>-(zero)</i>	はだか格 <i>hadakakaku</i> 'bare case'	なまえ格(名格) <i>namaekaku (meikaku)</i> lit. 'name case'
<i>-ga</i>	が格 <i>gakaku</i> '-ga case'	ぬし格、し手格(主格) <i>nushikaku, shitekaku (shukaku)</i> lit. 'master; performer (nominative) case'
<i>-o</i>	を格 <i>okaku</i> '-o case'	うけ手格(対格) <i>uketekaku (taikaku)</i> lit. 'receiver (accusative) case'
<i>-ni</i>	に格 <i>nikaku</i> '-ni case'	ありか格、あい手格(与格) <i>arikakaku, aitekaku (yokaku)</i> lit. 'location, partner (dative) case'
<i>-e</i>	へ格 <i>ekaku</i> '-e case'	ゆくさき格(方向格) <i>yukusakikaku (hōkōkaku)</i> lit. 'target (destination) case'
<i>-de</i>	で格 <i>dekaku</i> '-de case'	しどころ格、てだて格(具格、造格) <i>shidokorokaku, tedatakaku (gukaku, zōkaku)</i> lit. 'special place, measure (instrumental) case'
<i>-to</i>	と格 <i>tokaku</i> '-to case'	なかま格(共格) <i>nakamakaku (kyōkaku)</i> lit. 'fellow (comitative) case'
<i>-kara</i>	から格 <i>karakaku</i> '-kara case'	でどころ格(奪格) <i>dedokorokaku (dakkaku)</i> lit. 'source (ablative) case'

-made	まで格 <i>madekaku</i> '-made case'	とどき格 <i>todokikaku</i> lit. 'address case'
-no	の格 <i>nokaku</i> '-no case'	もちぬし格(属格) <i>mochinushikaku (zokukaku)</i> lit. 'owner (genitive) case'
-eno	への格 <i>enokaku</i> '-eno case'	連体ゆくさき格 <i>rentaiyokusakikaku</i> lit. 'adnominal target case'
-deno	での格 <i>denokaku</i> '-deno case'	連体しどころ格 <i>rentaishidokorokaku</i> lit. 'adnominal special place case'
-tono	との格 <i>tonokaku</i> '-tono case'	連体なかま格 <i>rentainakamakaku</i> lit. 'adnominal fellow case'
-karano	からの格 <i>karanokaku</i> '-karano case'	連体でどころ格 <i>rentaidedokorokaku</i> lit. 'adnominal source case'
-madeno	までの格 <i>madenokaku</i> '-madeno case'	連体とどき格 <i>rentaitodokikaku</i> lit. 'adnominal address case'

Table 3.3.4. The paradigm by Suzuki (1972: 206)

The morphological character of the contents of Table 3.3.4 may be seen primarily in the recognition of the morphological zero *hadakakaku* はだか格 'bare case' as a separate case. Takahashi (2004: 27) provides almost the same set of cases as in Table 3.3.4, with several alterations. First, the cases with the markers from *-(zero)* through *-made* are provided with English terms, respectively: nominative, agentive, accusative, dative, allative, locative-instrumental, commitative (with double *m*), ablative and terminative. This list, supplemented with *-madeni* マデニ格 かぎり格, 'limitative case', is classified as *ren'yōkaku* 'adverbial cases'. The remaining six cases, including the marker *-no*, are *rentaikaku* 'adnominal cases'. Takahashi includes also further explanations on other elements, including the theme and rheme markers *-wa* and *-mo*, as potential constituents of the paradigm (ibid.: 28-32), although

they do not seem to be included in the final analysis of the nominal case forms (ibid.: 33-49).

In the schemes of both Suzuki (1972) and Takahashi (2004) one may find the list of ten cases with single markers (*-zero* through *-no*). As the division into adverbial and adnominal cases may indicate, they are distinguished based on syntactic rather than morphological criteria. Also the six cases marked as adnominal, with double case markers (some marker together with the *-no* marker) may serve as evidence that the morphological criterion was not the most important for the enumeration. Single-marked and multiple-marked cases may be misleading when described within the same paradigm model. This also applies to the *-madeni* limitative identified by Takahashi.

Another interesting feature of the two approaches is the use of native Japanese terminology, translated above literally into English. Despite the fact that the resulting case forms may be recognized as creative and intuitive, such a decision, similarly as in the list of cases provided by Nitta (1993) and described earlier in 3.3.1, obscures rather than explains the morphological character of the nominal cases in Japanese. This may also apply to the native versions of case terms ascribed to the proposed list of cases (with additional, intentionally untypical rendering in sinograms and syllabary), usually perceived as less expert, against the corresponding Sino-Japanese terms, which are unfortunately not provided for all proposed cases.

Another original description of Japanese case, although presented apart from the notion of declension, is given by Kiyose (1989). Since it appears also in the work's English translation (Kiyose 1995), all quotations and page numbers below refer to the latter version.

Interestingly enough, this is yet another source attributing the agglutinative properties of Japanese not to the uni-functional character of grammatical morphemes, but to the order of affixes and to their "extremely regular and mechanical character" (Kiyose 1989: 10). The account of case, as described in the statement: "The form taken by a noun-substantive denoting the relation of its dependence to other words in a sentence is indicated by case suffixes" (ibid.: 20), is limited to case markers rather than to nominal word units viewed in terms of synthetic case forms, as the content of Table 3.3.5 may also indicate.

Case suffixes		
Nom. (nominative) <i>-ga, 0</i>	Ins. (instrumental) <i>-de</i>	
Gen. (genitive) <i>-no</i>	All. (allative) <i>-e</i>	
Acc. (accusative) <i>-o, 0</i>	Abl. (ablative) <i>-kara, -yori</i>	
Dat. (dative)	<i>-ni</i>	Term. (terminative) <i>-made</i>
Agt. (agential)		Com. (comitative) <i>-to</i>
Loc. (locative) <i>-ni, -de</i>	Voc. (vocative) <i>-yo, -ya, 0</i>	

Table 3.3.5. The paradigm by Kiyose (1995: 33)

In addition, *-wa* and *-mo* are described as “themative particles”, listed under the “phrase particles” (ibid.: 8-9), calling into question the morphological character of Kiyose’s proposal. Also the bare case is not described as separate, being identified rather as an instance of case drop of the respective markers of other cases (see Nom., Acc., Voc.).

The primarily semantic attitude to cases adopted by Kiyose is further confirmed by the not unambiguous recognition of several case markers as related to multiple cases, namely *-ni* in Dat., Agt. and Loc., and *-de* in Loc. and Ins. The very concept of the dative and agential cases, the latter as marking the agent in passive sentences (ibid.: 26), is questionable. Both may be convincingly described as extensions of the locative case functions, being marked by a single morphological marker in contemporary Japanese. Similar remarks may apply as well to the multiple markers of several cases: Loc., Abl., and Voc. The vocative case marker *-ya* is unambiguously archaic. It is virtually undocumented in its non-lexicalized forms in contemporary Japanese. Such decisions undermine the morphological rule: *one marker=one case*. While rigid application of such a rule is not always possible, there is a difference between the description of systemic allomorphs and the definition of rather unambiguous morphological markers as being of more than one case. The characteristic doubts related to such decisions may be seen in the following passage from the same author, focusing on the issue of what he himself describes as “the use of *-de*” (Hepburn romanization and standard glossing, with some minor changes in their English translations, are used in 3.3.h-3.3.k).

3.3.h. *Kōen-de ason-da.*
 park-INS play-PST
 公園で遊んだ。‘[Someone] played in the park.’

3.3.i. *Toshokan-de benkyō shi-ta.*
 library-INS study(NUL) do(AV)-PST
 図書館で勉強した。‘[Someone] studied in the library.’ (ibid.: 30)

As the author himself puts it:

“Since the *-de* in the above sentences [3.3.h, 3.3.i] also denotes positions or space, it may be said to be a locative case suffix. However, this leads us to the question of whether or not the suffix *-de* above can really be distinguished from such sentences as those given below [3.3.j, 3.3.k]:

3.3.j. *Omocha-de ason-da.*
 toy-INS play-PST
 おもちゃで遊んだ。‘[Someone] played with toys.’

3.3.k. *Jishūsho-de benkyō shi-ta.*
 self-teaching.book-INS study(NUL) do(AV)-PST
 自習書で勉強した。‘[Someone] studied with a self-teaching book.’

The nouns *omocha* ‘toy’ and *jishūsho* ‘self-teaching book’ are instruments utilized, respectively, for ‘playing’ and ‘studying,’ and the suffix *-de* here is the instrumental case suffix [...]” (Kiyose ibid.: 30)

The above dilemma concerns not the internal properties of the marker *-de*, but its usage, unrelated to its morphological form. The actual “meaning” of the marker should not be mixed with the compatibility or incompatibility of the marker label (as a literal term: *instrumental* in this instance). To assume that any usage of the instrumental case should unambiguously mark an *instrument* as its designatum is rather naive. As mentioned above in 1.5, such doubts may arise in expert studies on morphological phenomena. For the sake of a purely morphological approach, resulting instead in an exact rendering of the phonological and

morphological oppositions actually employed in the language, it simply does not seem effective in the first place to concentrate on semantic deviations from the case labels in their strictly lexical, literal interpretation. The approach by Kiyose is thus inspiring for a qualified researcher of Japanese with necessary high-level competence in the language. It would probably be even more helpful were the non-morphological dilemma disregarded in the first place on the level of pure morphology, perceived unambiguously by native and non-native users of the code.

An instructive approach is presented in the work by Lavrentev (2002). The nominal elements are described as uninflected (Lavrentev 2002: 8), but the author provides a list of cases and markers as in Table 3.3.6.

Cases and their markers	
Case name	Case marker
Nominative thematic	<i>-wa</i>
Nominative rhematic	<i>-ga</i>
Nominative ordinary (suffixless or calling)	zero (stem as word form)
Genitive	<i>-no</i>
Dative	<i>-ni</i>
Accusative	<i>-o</i>
Allative	<i>-e</i>
Instrumental	<i>-de</i>
Comitative	<i>-to</i>
Ablative	<i>-kara</i>
Ablative-comparative	<i>-yori</i>
Terminative	<i>-made</i>

Table 3.3.6. The paradigm by Lavrentev (2002: 24)

Lavrentev's list contains twelve markers, with the nominative case being rendered as three sub-cases: thematic, rhematic and ordinary, with both *-wa* and the morphological zero marker described as case markers. This may be a point of departure for an explanation of not only subject marking but also theme and rheme marking in Japanese. Still, not all morphological cases are included; absent are the (rhematic)

marker *-mo* as well as the (exemplificative) marker *-ya*, the (interrogative) marker *-ka* and the (vocative) marker *-yo*.

One of the most contemporary descriptions of Japanese cases may be found in a grammatical lexicon by Nitta (2014). In the entries, references are made to ‘case’ *kaku* 格, ‘case particles’ *kakujoshi* 格助詞 and ‘declension’ *kyokuyō* 曲用. The contents of the main entry for case (ibid.: 98-100), however, seem to imply that only a “rough” – as the authors themselves put it – enumeration of case markers can be presented, in the form of a table (ibid.: 99) rendered by Table 3.3.7 below. In the proposed version, lacking case terms, it is simplified and none too transparent, with the archaic cases of Japanese mixed with the contemporary “standard” and “dialect” cases (Ryukyuan cases are included as “dialect cases”).

Rough correspondence of case forms in ancient and contemporary Japanese (standard and dialects)					
Ancient	Standard (written)	Tōhoku	Kyūshū	Hachijō	Ryūkyū
<i>-0</i> (bare case)	<i>-0</i>	<i>-0</i>	<i>-0</i>	<i>-0</i>	<i>-0</i>
<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ga/-gu</i>	<i>-ga</i>	<i>-ga</i>
<i>-no</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-no/-n</i>	<i>-no</i>	<i>-nu</i>
<i>-o</i>	<i>-o</i>	-	-	<i>-yo</i>	-
<i>-ni</i>	<i>-ni</i>	-	<i>-ni/-i</i>	<i>-ni/-n</i>	<i>-ni</i>
<i>-e</i>	<i>-e</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>-nite</i>	<i>-de</i>	<i>-nde</i>	<i>-ji</i>	<i>-de</i>	-
<i>-to</i>	<i>-to</i>	<i>-do</i>	<i>-to</i>	<i>-to</i>	<i>-tō</i>
<i>(-kara)</i>	<i>-kara</i>	<i>-ngara</i>	<i>-kara</i>	<i>-kara</i>	<i>-kara</i>
<i>(-yori)</i>	<i>-yori</i>	<i>-yokka</i>	<i>(-yori)</i>		<i>-yaka</i>
<i>-made</i>	<i>-made</i>	<i>-made</i>	<i>-maji</i>	<i>-made</i>	-

Table 3.3.7. Rough correspondence of Japanese and circum-Japanese cases (Nitta 2014: 99)

A rather unconventional approach to the case particles *kakujoshi*, motivated also by syntactic criteria, is provided by Harasawa (2012), who describes them as “bolts”, in the following manner:

“By bolts, in the form of case particles, respective constituents are connected to the predicate, and it is by various bolts (case particles) that their relations to the predicate are defined.” (Harasawa *ibid.*: 21)

There is, however, not too much to be found in this work about case terms or a systemic approach, as demonstrated by the following passage:

“There are nine kinds of such bolts (case particles) called: *-ga* case, *-o* case, *-ni* case, *-de* case, *-to* case, *-e* case, *-kara* case, *-yori* case and *-made* case. They point at various values, like *-ga* case is for subject, the *-o* case for object, the *-ni* case for marking place, time and destination, *-de* case for place and means/manner/reason/cause, *-to* case for partner, *-e* case for direction, *-kara* case for the point of origin, *-yori* case for point of origin and comparison, *-made* case for destination. To memorize these nine case markers, one may use the word play: *Oni-made-ga-yoru-kara de-e-to (o/ni/made/ga/yori/kara/de/e/to)*.” (Harasawa *ibid.*)

For the sake of orderliness, 3.3.1 contains the word play provided by Harasawa.

3.3.1. *Oni-made-ga* *yoru-kara* *dēto*.
 devil-TER-NTOP evening-ABL date(NUL)
 鬼までが夜からデート。‘Even the devil has a date starting from the evening.’

Quite apart from what memorizing the lone case markers (with the *-e* marker creatively rendered by the long vowel *ē* in *dēto*/?*deeto* above) could achieve, one may welcome with relief the hint that it would probably not be as painstaking as Butt (2006) or Crystal (2017) noted in the context of the alleged difficulties of the Latin pattern of declension (cf. 2.1). On the other hand, one may observe that Harasawa aptly seems to acknowledge the ludic, at best, and not the allegedly self-explaining role of puns, in contrast to Frellesvig (2010) (cf. 2.4.5.2).

Along with the none too effective quasi-scientific attempts at description of the morphological nominal word form paradigm of Japanese, one

may also encounter particular approaches to some selected nominal word form oppositions. An interesting example may be a monograph on the typological properties of Japanese (Katō 2013). Despite the fact that the notion of case is used throughout the volume, the division of markers seems to be made rather with the focus on *particles*, as in the respective table of markers (ibid.: 39), overtly presented by way of their fragmentary enumeration, with “case markers” separated but not classified according to cases, and with topic and rheme markers described as “secondary particles”. Virtually no attempt seems to be made at a complete description of the nominal morphological word forms. While this does not necessarily undermine the statements made by the author, a consistent, finite base of morphological word forms, to be used as a starting point for the differentiations made at a more compound level of linguistic analysis, remains unavailable to the reader. The reader may instead get the impression that the (inevitably) varied degree of grammaticalization of various morphological case forms is interpreted in terms of the traditional “infinite variety”. An alternative direction of approach, with the morphological word forms treated primarily as being formed according to one “general rule”, despite their further differentiations, describable at another level of analysis, is apparently not taken into account.

To conclude this section, not an expert explanation but rather one that deserves mention as a rather common-sense description of Japanese cases may be quoted from WIKIPEDIA (2020). It is worthy of attention since it mentions “selected cases” of Japanese, probably expressing very well a lay though common attitude to the notion of case. Such an attitude, due to the lack of systemic description of morphological case in the sources on Japanese, may be observed with surprising regularity among both lay users and expert researchers of the Japanese language. This, with incompleteness overtly assumed as an inevitable feature of a case model, may serve as a conclusion to the above-mentioned incomplete paradigms of nominal word forms. The lack of a well-grounded morphological approach to the linguistic material of Japanese may result in attempts at the description of only “the most important case markers”, their functions being loosely related to the cases of other languages or overtly mixed (as Nominative below “for subject” and “for the topic”):

“Cases in Japanese are marked by particles placed after the nouns. A distinctive feature of Japanese is the presence of two cases which are roughly equivalent to the nominative case in other languages: one representing the sentence topic, the other representing the subject. The most important case markers are the following:

Nominative – *ga* for subject, *wa* for the topic.

Genitive – *no*.

Dative – *ni*.

Accusative – *o*.

Allative – *e*, used for destination direction (like in ‘to some place’).

Ablative – *kara*, used for source direction (like in ‘from some place’).

Instrumental – *de*.” (WIKIPEDIA *ibid.*)

3.4. Morphology in the Existing Approaches

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, not all of the presented sources could be strictly considered to aspire to describe nominal case in Japanese or the declension pattern of Japanese nominal elements. For various reasons, the presented descriptions of the phenomena of Japanese do not reveal the full morphological paradigm of the nominal elements. Their classification into mixed, borrowed and incomplete reflects their basic flaws. Such a generalization seems to apply not only to the fraction of sources quoted in this chapter, but also to the majority of the existing grammatical descriptions. Still, the presented markers are mostly described as independent from their lexical functions and related to the grammatical roles of the nominal word forms.

None of the presented approaches, alluding in various ways to the morphological cases of Japanese, provides a full paradigm of Japanese morphological cases. On the basis of the analyzed material, it can be verified with sufficient certainty that a more or less constant group of case markers appears in various sources. Some play considerably less important roles or are not perceived as case markers at all. Others are seldom (almost never) presented as adnominal markers, despite their regular co-occurrence with nominal stems (declensional themes). In

addition, most proposals place the number of cases higher than in the dominant pattern of Latin. At the same time, most sources omitted, or mixed with the nominative case, the theme and rheme markers *-wa* and *-mo*, which are typically described solely on syntactic grounds. This, it should be noted, is in spite of the relatively heavy functional load (cf. 1.2) carried by the oppositions marked by these markers and by other adnominal morphological markers of Japanese. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that all of the grammatical word forms (case variants) mentioned above, whether or not usually described as morphological case markers, seem not to be significantly differentiated with regard to their uninterrupted realization in speech.

The analyzed material provides a set of data essential for the enumeration of potential nominal markers/cases of Japanese on a morphological basis, as will be attempted in Chapter 4.

4. Grammatical Markers of Japanese Nominal Elements

“So we’d better stop and explain what the actual cause of ungrammaticality is, not by mere citation of examples as some [linguists] do, pointing out the ungrammaticality without explaining the cause. But if you don’t grasp the cause, it’s an exercise in futility to cite examples.”

(Dyscolus 1981: 197)

The non-morphological and the morphological descriptions of Japanese nominals having been discussed in two previous chapters, it should now be clear that there is no one and commonly accepted methodology among Japanese and foreign scholars for dealing in a systemic manner with the nominal elements of the language. Quite apart from what may be gained with such an approach (the obvious advantage being simply the availability of a fixed inflectional pattern, with paradigmatic, systemic properties, which may be further elaborated on), an attempt to list and describe the grammatical adnominal markers of Japanese seems to be worthy of consideration.

As stated in the motto of Chapter 3, Japanese nominal stems have constant forms, connecting to various grammatical markers by systemic rules. According to the motto of this chapter, the description of linguistic phenomena – in this instance, the nominal phenomena of Japanese – should be based on systemic grounds. Whether such grounds exist cannot be verified without distinguishing the lexical elements from the grammatical elements, the latter being utilized to mark systemically the fixed values of grammatical dimensions. At the next stage, the regular forms of the *stem+marker(s)* pattern should be distinguished and classified. It should be added that an actual declensional theme – the lexical content of a word form – may in strict terms contain more than one lexical stem. Since it does not appear to be a regular activity of grammarians of Japanese to elaborate on the systemic features of gram-

matical markers, usually described as objects of indeterminate number, with multiple, irregular, allegedly complex functions, literally by “citing examples” (cf. Dyscolus *ibid.*), the first step to take is their enumeration. This is attempted in this chapter. At the same time, this book does not contain a final proposal for a declensional model of Japanese nominal elements. For the sake of clarity, the enumeration of the adnominal markers and the compilation of the declensional paradigm are viewed as two separate tasks, with obvious order and interdependencies, as well as with clear scopes and objectives for each.

In the rigid and formal approach, adjusted to the perspectives of contemporary science and data processing methods, the most reliable way to establish a fixed and intersubjectively verifiable set of all grammatical nominal markers is by thorough analysis of language corpora. This method can surely be utilized to clarify the validity of, and the actual relations between the elements of, a tentative paradigm of nominal forms. For the purposes of this study, the basic set of markers was established on the basis of the existing morphological or quasi-morphological approaches to Japanese nominals. It includes all elements traditionally described as adnominal “particles” or “postpositions”, not only “case particles”, but also elements often recognized as heterogeneous to them, such as those marking the “focus of attention: backgrounding [...] and foregrounding”, “restrictives and quasi-restrictives”, “comparators” and the elements used in the “linkage of adjuncts”, to refer here to the extremely detailed (though clearly unsystemic) terms provided by Martin (1975: 52 ff., 90 ff., 140 ff., 160 ff., respectively). Considerably less attention is devoted to the honorific prefixes and to the markers of number, which are described as derivational.

4.1. Criteria for Enumeration

Memorization has been mentioned several times, in the quotations from other authors above in this text, as one of the frustrating features of the morphology-based approach, as viewed from the perspective of the contemporarily dominant non-morphological descriptions. Surprisingly, however, the truly most frustrating feature of the morphological approach may be quite unrelated to this. In fact, as the end-users and

researchers of language systems with inflections (of agglutinative or of fusional type) may discover, to put it in an extremely simple manner, much of what they have already learned from syntax- and semantics-based theories may in many instances have to be un-learned. The first noun in the sentence order may no longer be its subject and/or may reveal more specific features. Other arguments may be marked overtly on an obligatory basis or, if their function is obvious, their marking may be subject to case drop. Furthermore, some semantic values may be subject to neutralization. Additionally, the verbal elements of the sentence may differ from their English counterparts (adjectives instead of verbs, for example) or reveal diverse patterns of relations with other constituents, despite their actual translations. This is not to say that the analytic and isolating rules are wrong or invalid as such. They may simply not be applicable to the phenomena of the morphological and phonological levels.

The systemic methodology should be used, if possible, in relation to phenomena at the level of least complexity. Bearing in mind that the description of a paradigmatic pattern of the nominal forms of the Japanese language, which overtly shows inflecting and systemic features not only in its verbal elements, but also in the nominal ones, is the ultimate objective of this linguistic study, compatible with systemic goals of linguistic research, it may be argued that this is the appropriate stage at which to identify a tentative set of adnominal grammatical markers of contemporary Japanese.

The good news is that, provided the proper methodology is used, the grammatical markers – by their very definition enumerated on the level of morphology, close to cenemes – come in considerably smaller quantities than the lexical morphemes. Also, their memorization may be viewed as a chance to grasp the system of actual morphological oppositions, rather than as a painful experience. Even a close technical look at the morphological case systems of the European languages reveals that the average number of case paradigm constituents is usually below ten, and is rarely more than fifteen. Systems with more morphological cases it may include less used, though still active, oppositions. This is why identifying a basic set of morphological markers is a task worth attempting, once clear rules for their enumeration are applied. Below, definitions of what the adnominal grammatical markers are – and what they are not – are provided.

4.1.1. What Is a Case Marker

Quite apart from the overt classification of Japanese and its nominal phenomena as agglutinative (with uni-functional grammatical morphemes connected to lexical nominal stems in a synthetic manner, in fixed order), the nominal stems (for the sake of simplicity, identified below with inflectional nominal themes – lexically constant constituents of word forms – which may actually contain more than one nominal stem understood as a basic unit of lexical information) have mostly unchanged structure. Alternations, as in the contracted spoken forms of demonstrative pronouns like *kore* これ ‘this’ with the marker *-wa*, becoming *korya* こりや instead of *kore-wa* これ^は, are rare. The boundary between the lexical stem and the marker is in most instances clear. Contracted case forms are not different cases, but allomorphic variants of one case. Derivational alternations of nominal stem endings, as mentioned in 2.4.5.3, are not of systemic character. The same applies to the (not very numerous) suppletive honorific forms of nominal elements (as *hito* 人 ‘a man; someone’ vs. *kata* 方 ‘a [notable] person’). This makes the differentiation of morphological elements considerably easier, although not absolutely obvious. Some additional postulates for this task are listed below.

1. The basic assumption is that in Japanese, similarly as in other inflecting languages, there is a finite, not too numerous set of markers (cenemic sequences, phoneme strings) with grammatical functions, regularly attached to the lexical stems of nominal elements (nouns, pronouns and numerals) to form synthetic word forms (morphological variants of nominal word units) according to the *stem+marker(s)* pattern.
2. The rigid morphological approach should be based on the general rule: *one marker=one case*. This may require, at the next stage of description, further review and verification of the actual list of cases, based on semantic and syntactic criteria, in terms of case allomorphs, with different phonological forms but with comparable semantic and syntactic functions. In the first stage, only case markers are identified. This illustrates the consciously assumed primacy of morphology over semantics and syntax. Specific semantic properties of cases, as of the instrumental case used in the “meaning” of an instrument/

means or in other functions, as well as their syntactic features (such as their primary adnominal or adverbial functions, as pointed out by many of the sources mentioned in 3.3) are also not analyzed at the initial level of marker/case enumeration.

3. In the act of basic enumeration of case markers, it is single-marker case forms that are considered. This is compatible with the basic structuralistic assumption that complex structures are built from basic, atomic elements. It follows from the fundamental rules of the primarily agglutinative approach to the nominal elements of Japanese, with uni-functional grammatical morphemes attached to nominal stems, each with a systemic, paradigmatic function. The enumeration is hence rooted in basic language facts, with possible extensions to multiple-marker forms.
4. The act of enumeration covers all adnominal markers, based on morphological criteria, not on whether a compatible case is described in other languages. In other words, the direction of the morphological approach is from markers to cases, not the reverse.
5. The initial point of the enumeration is morphological zero (NUL or \emptyset). The $N-\emptyset$ (in strictly morphological glossing: $N(\emptyset)$ word form, identical to the nominal stem, serves most convincingly as the starting point for the analysis of morphological phenomena. The stem exhibits regular semantic and syntactic usage and functions in the instances when no other case marker is to be reconstructed. In such usage, the morphological zero marker (NUL or \emptyset) is a marker of nominal case, not the result of case drop.

The results of an enumeration carried out on the above premises are illustrated in Table 4.2.1. The synthetic character of the word forms is emphasized by listing not the standalone markers, but the markers given as constituents of nominal word forms (containing both lexical and grammatical information), with N for the lexical stem (declensional theme).

4.1.2. What Is Not a Case Marker

Some postpositional elements are not described as case markers. This is due to their non-grammatical character or less salient grammatical features.

1. As mentioned in 4.1.1, as a rule no structures with multiple grammatical marking are analyzed on the first level of enumeration. Only basic, simple word forms, each with one marker performing one systemic function, are listed. As such, multi-marker cases (usually with two or three markers) are described not as if they contained one compound marker, but as containing successive elements of the agglutinative string structure, with their individual functions – also in instances where they are lexicalized or have some detailed functions – to be analyzed at the next stages of description.
2. The identification of word form boundaries, with appropriate changes, applies to constructions recognized as being of analytic structure: *nominal element+nominal element*, often rendered by prepositional constructions in English (*N-no ue* の上 ‘on’, *N-no shita* の下 ‘under’). The same may be concluded with regard to the collocations listed in Japanese dictionaries of sentence patterns (cf. 2.4.4), rather ambiguously, as: *marker+verbal element* (*N-ni yoru* による ‘due to’, *N-to shite* として ‘as’). In such structures, with multiple elements of non-lexical and of only partly lexical character, the auxiliary heterogeneous constituent, a noun (*ue* 上 in *N-no ue* の上 and *shita* 下 in *N-no shita* の下) or a verb (as *yoru* よる in *N-ni yoru* による and *suru* する in its connecting form *shite* して in *N-to shite* として), governs the morphological case of the main lexical nominal element preceding it, traditionally omitted in description. The fact that such usage of the auxiliary elements may allude to some of their lexical features in such analytic constructions is clearly of secondary importance. They are not fully grammaticalized, at least in a synchronic perspective. They can be described rather in terms of complex *nominal+auxiliary nominal* or *nominal+auxiliary verbal* constructions than as case forms. Analytic constructions of these types are not case forms, but they contain main (lexical) nominal elements in their appropriate case forms.
3. Some elements accompany the Japanese nominals in regular analytic collocations, not being fully grammaticalized in contemporary Japanese, and for that reason not to be classified as systemic word forms. The element *nara*, in some usages exchangeable with the themative case marker *-wa* は, is a conditional/provisional conjugational form of the analytic copula, not a synthetic case marker. The element

tte って, exchangeable in informal speech with the themative case marker *-wa* は, with other elements such as the double enumerative/themative case marking *-towa* とは, or with the verbal phrase containing the noun with the enumerative marker *-to iu nowa* というのは, should also be described as an analytic component rather than as a case marker.

4. Lexical or derivational affixes are not case markers either. Such morphemes as *-dōri* 通り ‘as; like’ and *-gatera* がてら ‘while; on the occasion’, are clearly lexical. Some elements attach only to particular subcategories of nominal stems, such as *-zutsu* ずつ ‘by; every’, which attaches only to certain numerals and quantitative adverbs. They may be more convincingly described as derivational elements or as adpositional forms, depending on detailed methodology.
5. Other derivational elements include honorific prefixes *o-*, *go-* お・御, suffixes *-san* さん, *-dono* 殿 and quantitative prefixes of Chinese origin, such as *sho-* 諸 ‘some’ or *kaku-* 各 ‘each’, as well as the native Japanese plural suffixes *-tachi* たち・達 and *-ra* ら・等. They are attached only to selected nominal elements. Number suffixes are used with most nominal units in an optional manner, being obligatory only with personal pronouns. They are not case markers.
6. On the level of case markers of Japanese, a diachronic shift – mixing their historical properties with contemporary usage, the former often obsolete – should be avoided. The element *-shite* して, once active as the instrumental case marker, no longer has such properties. Similarly, the trigger particles of the archaic bracket constructions *kakarimusubi* 係結び described in 2.4.3 are not to be related directly to their contemporary usage in the description of the declensional paradigm. The same rule of clear differentiation of historic and contemporary usage applies in reverse to the description of at least several markers related remotely to the archaic forms of the copula: *-ni* に, *-nite* にて, *-no* の, *-to* と (cf. among others, Frellesvig 2010: 93-94), contemporarily to be recognized solely in their synthetic and paradigmatic function of case markers.

4.2. Tentative List

A maximum possible set of Japanese markers/cases to be described as synthetic, paradigmatic word forms according to the primarily morphological method of description is provided in Table 4.2.1. The 34 grammatical markers (with one alternation of *-kurai/-gurai*) should be described as regularly attached in a synthetic manner to the lexical nominal stems (*N*) in the final description of the nominal case pattern (declension), according to the *stem+marker* pattern. The stem element of the pattern should be more precisely defined as a declensional theme of a word unit. This element may contain more than one stem when viewed solely in semantic terms.

The markers, tentatively described as Primary (basic) and Secondary (variants), are in alphabetical order, starting from zero (NUL), identical with the nominal stem (*N*, glossed as *N-0*), the morphological axis of the paradigm. The proposed full enumeration of markers/cases includes, as specified below the table, markers with varying status.

Form	P/S	Comments
<i>N-0</i> (<i>zero</i>)	P	glossed tentatively as NUL, identical with bare nominal stem, sometimes referred to as <i>hadakakaku</i> ハダカ格 ‘bare case’, with regular usage as a dictionary entry, in labels, captions, headers and in the nominal predicate
<i>N-bakari</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-e</i>	P	glossed tentatively as ALL, substituted by <i>-ni</i> LOC only in the allegedly dative DAT function, referring to direction rather than place
<i>N-dake</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-dano</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case

<i>N-datte</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-mo</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-de</i>	P	glossed tentatively as INS, with instrumental use, also in many usages related to the instrumental use, in collective object marking
<i>N-ga</i>	P	glossed tentatively as NTOP (similarly as <i>N-mo</i>), erroneously identified as NOM by numerous sources, neither a marker of sentence subject only (marking also the rheme with sentence stress, never marking the object), nor the only marker of the sentence subject, opposed most saliently to <i>-wa</i> TOP and <i>-mo</i> NTOP and perhaps also to \emptyset (<i>zero</i>) NUL
<i>N-goro</i>	S	glossed tentatively as LOC, alternative variant of <i>-ni</i> LOC in temporal usage, with more detailed honorific functions, rather not constituting a separate case marker
<i>N-hodo</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-ka</i>	P	marked tentatively as INT (interrogative), used in marking the alternative elements of an enumeration
<i>N-kara</i>	P	glossed tentatively as ABL, with mainly ablative usage, in official contexts substituted by <i>-yori</i> , not marking the element of comparison
<i>N-koso</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-kurai/ N-gurai</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-made</i>	P	glossed tentatively as TER (terminative), in temporal and spatial usages opposed to <i>-kara</i> ABL, in some instances substituted for <i>-mo</i> NTOP in marking the extreme range or the extreme element of comparison
<i>N-mo</i>	P	glossed tentatively as NTOP (similarly as <i>N-ga</i>), marking the rheme, also together with sentence arguments (subject and object), with sentence stress, usually not described as a case marker, due to its allegedly phrasal functions, opposed most saliently to <i>-ga</i> NTOP and <i>-wa</i> TOP and perhaps also to \emptyset (<i>zero</i>) NUL

<i>N-nado</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-nanka</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-nante</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-nari</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-ni</i>	P	glossed tentatively as LOC, with several usages, static and dynamic, related mainly to the place, not the direction of an action, including the usage often rather erroneously recognized solely as dative (DAT), close to <i>-e</i> ALL, probably the result of diachronic case syncretism
<u><i>N-nite</i></u>	S	glossed tentatively as LOC, alternative variant of <i>-ni</i> LOC in spatial usage, with more detailed honorific functions, rather not a separate case marker
<i>N-no</i>	P	glossed tentatively as GEN, of adnominal (attributive) use, mostly in possessive/genitive usage, usually described with semantic variations
<i>N-nomi</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-o</i>	P	glossed tentatively as ACC, marking direct object (never sentence subject), also in collocations not translated as direct objects
<i>N-sae</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-mo</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-shika</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ga</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-sura</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-mo</i> NTOP, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case

<i>N-to</i>	P	glossed tentatively as COM (comitative), used in complete enumerations and in related functions, as opposed mainly to <i>-ya</i> EXE
<i><u>N-wa</u></i>	P	glossed tentatively as TOP, marking the theme (topic), also together with sentence arguments (subject and object), including its contrastive use, usually not described as a case marker, due to its allegedly phrasal functions, opposed most saliently to <i>-ga</i> NTOP and <i>-mo</i> NTOP and to <i>0 (zero)</i> NUL
<i><u>N-ya</u></i>	P	glossed tentatively as EXE (exemplificative), used in incomplete enumerations and in related functions, as opposed mainly to <i>-to</i> COM
<i>N-yara</i>	S	usually not described as a case marker, close to <i>-ya</i> EXE, with some semantic nuances, as its variant, not a marker of a separate case
<i>N-yo</i>	P	glossed tentatively as VOC, rare but still active in written and spoken Japanese, often substituted by <i>0 (zero)</i> NUL
<i>N-yori</i>	S	glossed temporarily as ABL, variant of <i>-kara</i> ABL in official contexts, not as a separate case marker, not replaced by <i>-kara</i> ABL in marking the less marked element of comparison

Table 4.2.1. Japanese morphological markers/cases: **often described** (bold), described less often or not described traditionally (underlined) and not generally described as case markers to date (no marking); P(rietary) or S(econdary).

The set of case markers contains several dozen elements, not too many to verify and classify them into cases and, to say the least, not an inestimable number. They exhibit variety, as could be expected, but certainly not of an infinite kind; it is probably governed by certain general rules, to be thoroughly verified. The set, distinguished according to the general methods described in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, may be further reduced to a smaller number of actual cases, on various grounds – to be specified – on the basis of internal oppositions between case markers, in terms of their paradigmatic saliency, frequency of usage, functional load, and other semantic and/or syntactic limitations.

4.3. Next Steps

No ready solution is provided below as to the final form of the primarily morphological paradigm of Japanese nominals. This is planned as a subsequent research task, some initial, tentative propositions having already been made in a series of papers (Jabłoński 2012, 2013a, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2020). On the basis of the above, further postulates may be formulated for the final model, while preserving carefully the basic morphological distinction of markers/cases.

a. Word/Phrase Units vs. Word Forms

In the first place, a re-definition of the traditional relation between *go* 語 ‘vocabulary’ and *bunsetsu* 文節 ‘word?/phrase?’ (cf. 2.3.2) seems to be necessary. While it is not advisable to hold to the naive view that terms alone change the reality, it is better to use those that best fit the investigated phenomena. The former term *go* should rather not include the grammatical units, but only the *shi/kotoba* 詞 ‘[dictionary] words; word units’ with primarily lexical features. The latter term *bunsetsu*, due both to the semantics of its grapho-morphemic content and to its actual ambiguous usage, reveals a certain genetic predisposition to be ascribed to syntactic (or even script-related) phenomena rather than to morphological ones, obscuring their differentiation. The alternatively proposed term *gokei* 語形 ‘word form’, already present in Japanese grammatical investigation and sometimes attributed also to morphological features in general, may be effectively used as expressing rather clearly the relation between the word unit and word forms, being of paradigmatic, not syntagmatic, nature, related to the already introduced term *gokeihenka* 語形変化 ‘inflection’ and overtly linked to the term *gokeihenkaletsu* 語形変化列 ‘inflectional paradigm of word forms’. Word forms are employed in appropriate syntactic contexts, also with non-rare standalone usages (technically, despite the purely syntactic approach: not constituting an argument of any overt head element of an utterance, cf. the *ungoverned case* of Blake 2001: 9) as in 4.3.a-4.3.f. Such usage, mentioned also for Polish above in 1.5, may be regarded as confirming further the synthetic properties of Japanese word forms. Within the synthetic word structures of Japanese, the same lexical content is systemically modified by the grammatical content, the latter

not carrying any independent meaning or function. Last but not least, such usage is more representative than the rather infrequent, even if not utterly impossible, interruption of the “nominal phrase” by other elements (cf. 2.4.4). The fact that not all case forms exhibit individual usage, similarly as in non-Japanese case paradigms, does not undermine the significance of this phenomenon.

4.3.a. *Shōga*
 ginger(NUL)
生姜 ‘Ginger’ [a label]

4.3.b. *Watashi-no* *de-s-u.*
 I-GEN be(COP)-POL-NPST
私のです。 ‘It’s mine.’

4.3.c. *Dōzo,* *kochira-e.*
 please here-ALL
どうぞこちらへ。 ‘This way, please.’

4.3.d. *Ashita-made.*
 tomorrow-TER
明日まで。 ‘[It’s] until tomorrow.’

4.3.e. *Okane-wa?*
 money-TOP
お金は? ‘And [where is] the money?’

4.3.f. *Watashi-mo!*
 I-NTOP
私も! ‘Me too!’

b. Reduction of Case Number: Primary and Secondary Markers (Allomorphs)

A final set of cases may be formed by reduction of their number. Some premises related to this step may be seen as already emerging in their rough shape from the material presented in Table 4.2.1. Certain pairs, triads or other groups of markers, while distinguished primarily on morphological grounds, with clear oppositions confirmed unam-

biguously on the level of phonology, may reveal substantially different functional load and semantic/syntactic proximity. In other words, despite their clear morphological heterogeneity, some markers may lack a sufficient semantic and syntactic variety of functions to be ascribed to heterogeneous cases. For this reason, the *one marker=one case* rule may have to be reconsidered with regard to the semantic and syntactic features of some groups of markers.

As presented in Table 4.2.1, certain grammatical forms show semantic and syntactic affinity to others. This may be observed, for example, with *N-ga* and *N-koso*, contrasted in the sentence examples 4.3.g and 4.3.h below. Of these two, the former, *N-ga*, probably has higher frequency and fewer limitations of usage. Consequently, the latter, *N-koso*, may be recognized as its case allomorph. The same may apply to all markers/forms having functions similar enough to recognize their affinity, while lacking oppositions salient enough to justify their description as markers/forms of two different cases. In this way, semantics and syntax may contribute to an effective reduction of the initial set of markers. This may result in a final set of cases where some have single markers, while others have primary and secondary markers (distinguished, again tentatively, in Table 4.2.1). Whether the allomorphs are to be glossed similarly as the primary markers (as NTOP for both *-ga* and *-koso* in 4.3.g and 4.3.h below) or differentiated in glossing (as NTOP for the primary marker *-ga* and NTOP1, NTOP2 etc. for subsequent secondary markers) is a decision of a purely technical nature.

4.3.g. *Kore-ga* *i-i* *aidea* *da.*
 this-NTOP good-NPST idea(NUL) be(COP, NPST)
 これがいいアイデアだ。‘This is a good idea.’

4.3.h. *Kore-koso* *i-i* *aidea* *da.*
 this-NTOP good-NPST idea(NUL) be(COP, NPST)
 これこそいいアイデアだ。‘This [exactly] is a good idea.’

c. Case Syncretism and Ockham’s Razor

Morphological/phonological features, such as use of the same marker, are a basic requirement for the identification of markers/cases having similar functional load and no or little proximity to other

markers/cases. When contemporarily a single marker is used, multiple cases may not be identified, even if they are recognized as different in translation into other languages or reveal diachronic variety. Instances of case syncretism, supported at least partly by etymological data, could perhaps be described and explained effectively by more thorough case studies of individual instances of usage, regarding especially such forms as *N-ni* and *N-de*.

The form *N-ni*, glossed as LOC, exhibits both static locative usage and dynamic directional usage, the latter with allative/dative and ablative variants. This seems to argue against the recognition of the dative allative function of the *N-ni* case as solely representative for its contemporary features. It is rather the static locative usage that reveals the place-marking features, common to all contemporary usages of the *N-ni* case, be they static or dynamic. It also includes the so-called agential usage mentioned by Kiyose (cf. 3.3.3), marking the agent of the predicate in passive voice. This may perhaps be convincingly linked to the ablative usage of the case marker.

The form *N-de* is glossed as INS, even in its quasi-locative usage. There are some dilemmas concerning the form *N-de* (or rather: the marker *-de*) noted by Kiyose (1995: 30, 3.3.h-3.3.k), rendered alternatively by distinguishing sub-markers, as *-de₁* and *-de₂* in Huszcza (2003: 319-324), as applied also to other case markers in the latter source. The marker has collective-marking rather than place-marking properties. These facts can be described on a systemic basis, according to the *one marker=one case* rule, with necessary further elaboration of (one-)case functions.

d. “New” Markers, New Cases

Care should be taken in distinguishing the markers/cases not yet described, or neglected, despite the morphological facts of Japanese. This statement is in the first place applicable to the thorough description of subject/theme/rheme marking with the use of *N-wa*, *N-ga* and *N-mo* case forms. It perhaps also applies to the rhemative character of the *N-o* case form in its usage in labels, as in 4.3.a above and in the nominal predicate. As has been pointed out several times, the simplified glossing or overt recognition of *N-ga* as NOM provides virtually no systemic advantages and obscures significantly the description of the

actual subject/theme/rheme marking. The tentative opposition of TOP vs. NTOP should thus also be subject to extension and specification, also as related to the *N-0* case, which from a purely morphological point of view exhibits most features of the nominative case. Similar relations could perhaps be described between the *N-to*, *N-ya* and *N-ka* markers/cases, according to the source of information marking in the enumeration of objects.

Purely semantic properties may be useful in the detailed description of the relation between the *N-ni* case and other markers/cases related to temporal and spatial parameters, like *N-e*, *N-kara* and *N-made*. Furthermore, similar relations as between the *N-ga* and *N-koso* markers/cases in 4.3.g and 4.3.h, could be identified for the pair of *N-kara* and *N-yori*, the latter being exchangeable with the former in the formal context, while being specialized in comparative usage, where *N-kara* is not found. In such an approach, the morphological and paradigmatic properties of the grammatical elements and of word forms containing them should be given precedence over their syntagmatic properties, the two often being mixed up, as mentioned in 3.2 above (using the examples of sentences 3.2.h and 3.2.i from Yamada 2004).

e. Paradigm Order

At some point of the case identification process, an order of cases within the paradigm should be proposed. Due to the morphological character of the description, the *N-0* NUL (in strictly morphological glossing: *N(0)/N(NUL)* case), identical with the nominal stem, may be assigned the role of the paradigm axis, as the nominative case NOM, with its main function of marking the solely lexical content of the nominal stem, also with the rhemative function (as in labels and nominal predicates). The order of the other cases may be decided on the basis of their common features and internal oppositions within the paradigm. The theme/rheme/subject markers (related to topic-prominent and subject-prominent properties of Japanese mentioned above in 2.3) may emerge as one group of rather clearly separate cases (*N-0/N(0)*, *N-wa*, *N-ga*, *N-mo*), connected in some respects to NOM. Another group may include the cases related to marking of the source of information, as in the complete, incomplete or alternative character of enumerations (*N-to*, *N-ya*, *N-ka*), also connected to NOM. *N-no*, *N-o* and *N-de* could probably be defined

as standalone cases opposed to NOM, most convincingly comparable with GEN, ACC and INS in other languages with well-described case systems. The same applies to *N-ni*, as LOC, which, as the main case of the group, may connect the cases related semantically to the marking of location in space and time (*N-e*, *N-kara*, *N-made*).

The postulates concerning the paradigm order should not and do not make it impossible to gain a deeper insight into the case interdependencies in Japanese. For example, due to the topic-prominent characteristics of the Japanese, *N(0)/N-0*, *N-wa*, *N-ga* and *N-mo* may be neutralized, in various circumstances, with other forms, such as the *N-o* case, as mentioned above in 3.2.d and 3.2.e. Such phenomena can also probably be dealt with convincingly with the implementation of the systemic approach proposed in this work.

f. Nominal Case and Case Drop

It is not always possible to render clearly the functions of bare nominal stems as the *N-0/N(0)* forms on purely morphological grounds. This is despite the systemic usage of the morphological zero: NUL/NOM case, usually not described in a coherent manner in existing sources. Still, there is a clear distinction between the instances when the bare nominal stem is used as a case, with no reconstruction of a dropped marker possible (as in 4.3.a. above), and when the bare stem is the result of omission (case drop), the latter obligatorily with the clear reconstruction of the dropped marker (as in 4.3.i with when opposed to 4.3.j).

Instances like 4.3.j, with obligatory reconstruction of a case marker marked by an arrow in glossing, may not support the general definition of NUL case as the result of marker omission, which it is not. The dropped accusative marker in 4.3.j may easily be reconstructed on semantic and syntactic premises. In other words, the element *shōga* 生姜 ‘ginger’ may not be the first argument=subject of the verb *kau* 買う ‘to buy’.

4.3.i. *Shōga-o* *kat-te* *ki-ta.*
 ginger-ACC buy-CON RES(AV)-PST
 生姜を買ってきた。‘I bought ginger.’

4.3.j. *Shōga* *kat-te* *ki-ta.*
 ginger(NUL) [→ACC] buy-CON RES(AV)-PST
 生姜買ってきた。‘I bought ginger.’

Such phenomena are mostly neglected by the grammarians. This is usually with the tacit assumption that native users of the language know the relevant rules of case drop and marker reconstruction, or that something being subject to drop is not significant enough to be taken into account. Explanations for foreign students of Japanese also usually avoid the topic, often being based on the written version of language, in which the phenomenon of case drop is significantly less frequent. Furthermore, there is almost no mention of the fact that case drop is an optional phenomenon, with both 4.3.i and 4.3j occurring in actual usage, despite the overt remark that “all core arguments” are subject to case drop (cf. Frellesvig 2010: 410-411, 2.4.5.2). The various, internally differentiated, phenomena of case drop can and should be described on the basis of systemic premises, requiring more thorough insight.

g. Case Terms

A coherent description of case pattern, arranged and fixed within the morphological paradigm, can be supported by a coherent proposition of case terms. They may include both those already used in Japanese terminology (mainly in relation to non-Japanese cases) as well as new units, devised for this purpose, preferably with the use of Sino-Japanese elements.

The internal structure of terms can be based on the *genus proximum* vs. *differentia specifica* opposition. The terms may hence be constructed as two-element units, all containing the second sinogram *kaku* 格 ‘case’. Their first ideogram may be chosen to represent the most salient properties and functions of a case. In an analogous manner, the element *shu* 主 in the traditional term *shukaku* 主格 ‘nominative case’ emphasizes the central role of the case in the paradigm – not necessarily its role as sentence subject, which is not relevant in Japanese.

Additionally, homophonic terms should be avoided. This will facilitate instant recognition of terms and their intuitive application.

h. Romanization

Synthetic Japanese nominal cases may further be marked by a combined notation, with no hyphen in romanization (*NO*, *Nga*, *Nwa*, *Nmo*, etc.). This technique of romanization, while probably objected to by some scholars and language users, reflects most effectively the non-

analytic properties of the inflectional forms of Japanese. It emphasizes that the nominal word units of Japanese function as synthetic entities, with their lexical component being the nominal stem and the grammatical, systemic component being the grammatical marker.

The potential voices of objection against the combined notation of nominal word forms of Japanese do not seem to be justified on methodological grounds, being based rather on the obvious fact that most users of Japanese romanization are accustomed to the contemporarily dominant technique of split notation. While such a solution may indeed be useful in glossed examples, as presented throughout this book, its efficacy in texts romanized for non-didactic reasons may be questioned. Moreover, the technique of combined notation is already used in the tacitly accepted alphabetical notation of verbal forms – usually of much more complex internal structure. That practice does not seem to foster objections.

The single-marker set of cases serves as a basis for the description of case forms with multiple markers. They can also be parsed as continuous, synthetic word forms, with no internal boundaries between the lexical stem and the non-single grammatical case markers, as described in k. below.

i. Nominal Predicate

A coherent description of nominal predicates in Japanese, with the nominal element mainly – though not exclusively – in the *N-O* form, might be significantly facilitated by the application of the morphological case paradigm. Examples of non-conventional methodology, regarding the copula as a conjugating suffix of nominal elements, do not offer much of added value.

The analytic construction of nominal predicates reveals many features similar to the function of the copula in other languages. Not only nominals, but also non-inflecting adjectives, a transitory category between nominal and verbal elements, are accompanied by the copula in their regular usage. A coherent description of nominal predicate constructions within the declensional framework of the nominal elements of Japanese may contribute to better understanding of this phenomenon.

j. Nominal Elements and Subclassifications

Nominal elements may be subclassified into regular nouns, being subject to full inflection by cases, and other nouns that, for various

reasons, lack a full set of declensional forms. The latter group would include, for example, numerous Sino-Japanese elements functioning mainly as lexical constituents of compound nominal units, like *tai* 体 and *gen* 言 in *taigen* 体言 ‘nominal elements’. Another subgroup would be the not too numerous native and Sino-Japanese elements with a limited paradigm of declension, lacking some case forms due to certain syntactic limitations, for example in their usage as temporal modifiers of the sentence, as with *kyō* 今日 ‘today’, where they are described by some grammarians as adverbs. They reveal a full paradigm of word forms in other usages. There are also nominal units with adverbial properties and usage, such as *fudan* 普段 ‘usual [state of things]; usually’, usually limited in their actual word forms, often occurring obligatorily in the nominal predicate construction, with the phenomenon of reconstructable copula drop in informal speech to be described further.

Without a primarily morphological pattern of description of nominal forms with full inflection paradigm, no partial models of declension can be the subject of subclassification, due to the lack of coherent systemic criteria. As mentioned above, the fact that some nominal elements of Japanese do not reveal a full paradigm of inflection is not evidence against declension, but rather the exception confirming the general rule that nominal elements show a morphological variety of word forms.

k. Multiple Case Marking

Double- and triple-marked nominal word forms show some variation, being generally formed according to agglutinative rules. In the first place, theme and rheme markers may be connected to other markers in the final position of the word structure. A similar rule applies to the GEN marker *-no*, in forms with other case markers connecting to it in adnominal usage, which may also be recognized as a technical requirement of syntactic character.

Despite the existing lexicalized instances of multiple marking, multiple cases should be described as *stem+marker1+marker2+...* optional variants rather than as new cases, contrary to the proposals of Suzuki (1972) and Takahashi (2004) (cf. 3.3.3). Case drop may also occur partially, and probably in some instances fully, in multiple case marking, with the complete omission of reconstructable markers in double and triple case marking.

I. Non-Synthetic Functions of Markers

A synthetic description of nominal markers/cases should be supplemented with an account of their analytic functions, on the phrase and sentence levels, in collocations with non-nominal elements. Such functions, rather than evidencing the paradoxical and non-declensional character of the markers/cases, may confirm the primary role of nominal elements in the lexicon, and link to the primary and secondary uses of markers and cases.

Quite apart from the question whether some naive analogies made in this regard might in fact contribute to research on general linguistics, the synthetic nominal case markers of Japanese and their analytic usage are in many respects related. At the same time, there is a clear distinction between the synthetic use of the adnominal grammatical markers in the declensional paradigm, with nominal stems, and the instances of their analytic usage with non-nominal (usually verbal) elements. It is possible to describe both on systemic grounds.

m. Case Interchangeability

A systemic description of the Japanese morphological cases may also be useful to explain in a regular manner the phenomena related to what is quite frequently referred to in the existing sources as case interchangeability. There are numerous remarks on this phenomenon, referred to also in terms of conversion, as in “nominative-genitive conversion” (cf. Kishimoto 2017: 268-269). Also the concept of “cognitive change” (cf. 2.4.5.6 above) may be related to the assumed optionality or ambiguity of case marking in Japanese, at least when it comes to certain cases or their sets.

On a certain level of abstraction, the morphological set of nominal cases, provided it is differentiated in accordance with the rather unambiguous collection of rules sketched above, may serve as proof *per se* that the oppositions conveyed by differences in the morphological/phonological structures of respective word units are valid in the effective marking of the actual values defined within certain grammatical dimensions. This does not exclude the possibility of some case forms occurring in similar (or rather: seemingly similar) syntactic or semantic contexts. This is not unusual in the case systems of many languages. Such a phenomenon is neither proof of the optionality of case marking

in Japanese, nor confirmation that some case oppositions are illusionary. An explanation of the specific phenomena of so-called case interchangeability is probably feasible on systemic grounds. This, again, may be largely impeded by the unavailability of a coherent morphological model of the case paradigm.

n. Flat Paradigm

Steps taken towards a final model of the paradigm can probably result in a fairly simple set of cases. Mutual relations between cases and markers can be further illustrated by case order (cf. e. above), by selection of the primary and secondary markers (cf. b. above) and by the interdependencies between the main and related cases (cf. e. above). This is not expected to change the rather flat nature of the model, which is much less complicated than the model of Japanese conjugation, enabling quick and easy examination and clear differentiation of cases.

There is no obstacle to the elaboration of a more detailed classification of cases or their detailed functions. Simplicity remains the main requirement for the basic set of cases. The basic case paradigm, rather than to be memorized, should be proposed in order to present the most salient oppositions between the case forms of Japanese.

o. Corpus Analysis

Further clarification by means of case studies and corpus data analysis (including the implementation of natural language processing techniques) is also one of the projected steps of the proposed approach. This may be useful both for verifying the tentative conclusions, and for analyzing more complex corpora of data with regard to the role and application of phenomena related to the morphological case of Japanese nominal elements.

p. Focus on Paradigm

Finally, one fundamental postulate should be repeated. The compilation of the final version of the paradigm model is intended to achieve a manageable series of nominal word forms. They are stipulated and described for all – or at least for the majority – of the nominal elements of Japanese. They reveal systemic oppositions, which does not exclude exceptions or irregularities, found in many models of declension. They can be relatively clearly distinguished from derivational phenomena.

While the complexity of the derivational nominal forms of Japanese cannot be questioned, the usage of the derivational elements is either limited to certain groups of nominal word units or cannot be regarded as systemic, being based on lexical rather than grammatical oppositions. For many reasons, the distinction between grammatical and derivational properties may be fluid, but the derivational elements as a rule do not form paradigms. As such, they depart from the basic function of grammatical markers, that is, marking the systemic oppositions between the word forms within fixed paradigms. The paradigm elements are grouped and ordered as finite sets of values belonging to certain grammatical dimensions.

A simple, concise set of adnominal markers is a systemic advantage and a point of departure for an effective grammatical description of Japanese. As indicated above in the series of proposed further steps, it may pave the way for more elaborate investigation of its numerous aspects, resulting in a simple paradigm of nominal cases of Japanese. The next chapter summarizes the contents of this volume, setting out the basic formal premises for the construction of a morphological paradigm.

5. Conclusions and Further Research Perspectives

“By nouns one may easily get to know [the nature of] objects. It is like thinking of a way to the past and drawing a picture of people belonging to an invisible world.”

(Fujitani 1778: 27)

The consensus that brings about the repetition of a range of inexplicable and paradoxical arguments in various descriptions of Japanese nominal elements may be considered remarkable. Rather than to claim a conspiracy theory of neglect towards the morphological properties of Japanese nominals, it seems appropriate and rational to seek the reasons for the astonishingly uniform attitude taken to these elements of vocabulary in existing grammatical descriptions.

The nominal elements of Japanese are usually described as non-inflected *a priori*. This property is often, rather paradoxically, explained by their lack of conjugational patterns. Also their agglutinative features are quite frequently, though irrelevantly, linked to the alleged lack of inflection. Accordingly, vague differentiation is made between a word unit and word form, nominal lexical stems regularly – though ineffectively from a systemic perspective of description – being identified with the latter. Often no coherent recognition of paradigmatic relations, as opposed to syntagmatic relations, is introduced. Also, attempts at a morphological approach to Japanese nominal phenomena frequently reveal semantic or syntactic bias, with some markers being traditionally omitted from the description. These are only the most common issues concerning the description of the nominal elements of Japanese. In addition, new bizarre hypotheses, such as the internally incongruous concept of the “nominal conjugation”, the imaginary feature of “occurring before the copula” described as allegedly peculiar to the Japanese nominal elements, or the remarks on the phenomenon of case drop as supposedly omnipresent in Japanese, arise in a virtually unrestricted manner. The proliferation of quasi-facts, significantly more noticeable than attempts to provide a systemic foundation for a new approach to the

Japanese nominals, seems to confirm that the effort to determine the true status of Japanese nominal elements has been neglected or abandoned.

5.1. The Status Quo and Its Consequences

Due to geographical and historical circumstances, Japan was for long under the overwhelming cultural influence of China. This situation resulted in certain cultural and intellectual artifacts. Of these, the Chinese script, inculcated with the analytic and isolating properties of the Chinese languages from which it originated, was probably the one to foster the initial neglect towards the phonological properties of Japanese, which is typologically different. This is not mentioned as a critique, but rather as a statement of facts. There were not many places in the world where an original philosophical and pre-linguistic tradition of language research emerged. There is nothing wrong in the fact that Fujitani, as well as Suzuki, did their work “in isolation from the grammatical traditions of both India and Western Europe”, as Miller points out (1967: 309). The quality and originality of their works are vivid proof of active contact with the Chinese tradition of thought, based on the (uninflected) sinograms, viewed as representing the (uninflected) nominal stems, at the same time rather hard to identify with the (inflected) verbal stems of Japanese. Their dilemmas were probably not substantially different, with necessary simplifications, from those of the early English grammarians, who inevitably had contact with the grammatical tradition of ancient Greek and Latin, which was not always immediately applicable to the language facts of English, for instance in view of the long process of abandonment of its morphological nominal cases.

What seems to be radically different in the history of linguistic thought in Japan is the relatively sudden switch from one isolating and analytic tradition of description to another in the course of country’s modernization in the second half of the 19th century. Or rather the fact that it happened virtually without any effective contact with the tradition of inflecting and synthetic description. The early foreign grammarians of Japanese used Latin, but, due to their missionary rather than expert attitude and linguistic background, they could hardly achieve more than the intuitive recognition of nominal word forms as “different from Latin inflection”.

They were hence forced to introduce such terms as *particles* or *postpositions*, not substantially different from the isolating and analytic approach. Intellectual contacts with representatives of other inflecting languages, such as Russian, were scarce, if any, despite the geographical proximity of Russia. Had the official school grammar originated in dialectic contact and polemic with the concept of inflecting and synthetic patterns of description – not necessarily with the actual sets of Greek or Latin cases, but rather with the intuitive tradition of morphological description lying behind them – its contribution to an adequate interpretation of the oppositions between the dictionary word units and paradigmatic word forms might have been different. This might have resulted in grammatical descriptions much more compatible with the typological properties of Japanese – at the expense of the emphasis on the (Chinese) script.

There is an opposing claim that “we do not have a well-defined notion of case” (Butt 2006: 2). This may be true only when referring to all possible manifestations of cases in all languages. In one code, with a clear morphological typology, the relevant oppositions can be distinguished in their basic forms, in a series of simple and intuitive steps. When incompatible methods are applied, one ends up with vague concepts like *bunsetsu*, unifying in a mysterious and paradoxical manner the properties of words and phrases (Hashimoto 1948: 53-54) or with the opposition, rather inexplicable in the actual approach to linguistic facts, between the concept words *gainengo* and the alleged words of perception *kannengo* (Tokieda 1941: 231-232). Both propositions deviate considerably from the notion of paradigm. Even on the assumption that *case* is not a well-defined notion, it is hard to grasp what the concepts of *bunsetsu*, *gainengo* and *kannengo*, not to mention the application of such terms as *postpositions* or *particles*, actually explain. They are all overtly opposed to the idea of systemic description, rather erroneously perceived as “Western”. Instead, they are immersed in the script-based approach, to the extent that they remain virtually incomprehensible to anyone familiar with a description based on morphological grounds. Were there any researchers or students of the language who had actually benefited from the aforementioned elaborate though internally contradictory elucidations, their basic concepts could have been proven as intersubjectively valid. In fact, this does not appear to be the case. It seems reasonable to conclude that this is mainly due to their inherently unsystemic character.

The problem of a missing link between morphological descriptions of language phenomena and the script-based traditional approach cannot be solved by workarounds, however sophisticated they may be. The visible lack of stability in grammatical descriptions of Japanese, with nouns separated from their grammatical markers, is not balanced by effective approaches of researchers who “have been raised in the Japanese language” (Ōno 1978: 2) – a condition no doubt fulfilled by Hashimoto or Tokieda. The gap is only partly filled by the no less numerous English-centered approaches, represented by scholars such as Bloch and Miller, who disregard the inflectional properties of Japanese nouns in their very definition of nouns as “occurring before the copula” (Bloch 1970: 56, Miller 1967: 335). Some prefer to describe the virtually innumerable “meanings” of “postpositions” (Martin 1975). Other prominent approaches use borrowed paradigms, glossing the undefined cases (as Shibatani 1990), referring to the rather illusionary “conjugational” properties of nouns (as Tsujimura 1996: 126-127), or claiming that the nominal grammatical oppositions are simply not marked (Mikami 1984: 190, Frellesvig 2010: 410-411). The quantitatively rich set of new sources, every year enlarged by new works based on basically the same isolating, analytic and unparadigmatic methodology, with the agglutinative phenomena themselves defined in analytic terms, does not substantially change the fact that a coherent morphological description of Japanese nominals seems to be unavailable. They are indeed the abandoned parts of speech, in contrast to the widely recognized inflecting properties of verbal elements. The allegedly unknown number of adnominal modifiers, with overt statements on the unclear nature of cases and their mutual relations, lead to the practice of description of individual grammatical markers by their “meanings”. This is based on the default identification of (non-inflected) sinograms with the lack of inflection of nominal elements. Morphological approaches not being implemented, the non-morphological ones do not apply. There seems to be no point of departure for an adequate description of nominal elements in Japanese. In Table 5.1.1 below, a revised version of the initial Table 1.2.1, with morphological and non-morphological models of description, is supplemented with a column on the dominant approaches to the Japanese nominal elements, clearly constituting a new category.

Approach type	Morphological	Non-morphological	Japanese
coverage	inflecting languages (agglutinative or fusional)	nominally: all languages	one language with neglected agglutinative nominal paradigm
primary properties	morphological, with semantic or syntactic extensions	semantic or syntactic	script-related, with semantic or syntactic extensions
phenomena	superficial, abstract	complex, individual	possibly complex
main focus	synthetic forms	analytic forms	markers
basic units	word forms (lexical and grammatical information)	words, meanings and constructions	“phrase words” (concept words and “sounds of the heart”)
basic notions	case, government, agreement	phrase, head, argument, adjunct	sinogram, syllabary, meaning
lexical/grammatical units	rather clearly differentiated	not always differentiated	vague differentiation
grammatical dimensions	determined by word forms	determined by syntax and semantics	largely differentiated
grammatical values	finite, systemic (word forms)	infinite (lexical and syntactic)	variable, unsettled
paradigm	fixed (based on a relatively small number of phonological variants)	virtually unlimited (a large number of primarily syntagmatic constructions)	mixed, borrowed, incomplete or arbitrary (unparadigmatic approach)
number of cases	self-evident	unclear	infinite (“meanings”)
case terms	semantic labels	syntactic labels	none/various

adpositions, word order	often neglected	main focus	instance- by-instance approach
potential merits	immediate, intuitive applicability to inflecting languages	applicability beyond morphology, also to isolating phenomena	rules reportedly shared by all speakers of Japanese “raised in the Japanese language”
potential flaws	ambiguity towards non- inflecting phenomena	less systemic coverage of inflecting phenomena	unintelligibility in at least some aspects

Table 5.1.1. Morphological, non-morphological and Japanese approaches to nominal phenomena – a tentative comparison

The heterogeneous and ill-fitting methodology becomes an excuse for the abandonment of study on the actual properties of the code. This seems to be due to the attitude of researchers, who neglect the possible alternative approaches. Without a primarily morphological description of inflecting phenomena, its details being subject to future discussion, re-definition, improvement and extension, it is close to impossible to research the actual properties of Japanese nominals.

As may be verified, a significant though undocumented feature of the unparadigmatic approach is that virtually no methodological debate is allowed on the tacitly assumed facts. The unspoken assumption seems to be: *Do not ask and do not tell* about the morphological facts. It may be, of course, simply that the proposal to focus on the morphological properties of Japanese nominal elements is not sufficiently supported by the actual facts of Japanese or is biased. Still, when a debate starts with the dictatorial *quod erat demonstrandum*, the chances that it will bring clarification of the facts assumed beforehand are scant. Should it be taken for granted that there is nothing to discuss, no discussion can follow.

Let us repeat that native users of Japanese probably do not suffer due to the lack of a morphological case pattern. The above *status quo*

results instead in a scarcity of perspectives for effective comparative studies of Japanese and non-Japanese inflecting phenomena. Essentially, it is difficult and unintuitive to compare cases, however abstract and inexact notions they may be, with a random collection of markers of unestablished number and unidentified paradigmatic functions. The virtual inexplicability of many phenomena in the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language, paradoxically demonstrated also by the large and growing number of various sources and explanations presented as “making sense of Japanese grammar”, is another obvious consequence.

5.2. A New Approach – Basic Premises

A non-biased view of the actual nominal phenomena of Japanese is based on the lowest level of entropy, close to the expression plane, being in practice focused on the level of phonological minimal pairs. The nominal word form paradigm enables a coherent description of Japanese nouns, with a panoramic view of the nominal and circum-nominal phenomena of Japanese. Case-centered definitions, with single-case and multiple-case forms, including also possible extensions and corrections, constitute a starting point for further study. Synchronic description should be unambiguously separated from diachronic phenomena. The classification of nominal phenomena should be suited to the typological properties of Japanese. Perspectives for comparative studies of Japanese vs. non-Japanese cases, as well as for more systemic explanations of phenomena in Japanese linguistics and in the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language, are additional advantages of the approach thus outlined.

Japanese nominal elements (nouns, pronouns and numerals) exhibit mostly agglutinative properties. These are to be recognized as a sub-type of inflecting properties, along with fusional properties in other inflecting languages. Accordingly, case in Japanese may be defined as:

1. A value of a grammatical dimension: signifying the semantic and syntactic functions of nominal elements (word units) by their morphological word forms (primarily synthetic).
2. A technique of marking (not being) the systemic internal (within – abstract – case form paradigm) and external (within – abstract or concrete – phrase or sentence) relations of nominal elements.

3. Most efficiently: defined on the lowest level of entropy (the highest level of clarity).
4. Most convincingly: an entity (value, concept) within a paradigm (a finite, fixed set of homogeneous entities opposed to one central, canonical element).

The proposed model of declension, planned to be developed on the basis of the tentative list of markers/cases proposed in 4.2 above, is intended as a coherent tool of description, not as a declaration of faith. The precision of the tool in verifying the actual morphological properties of Japanese cases is based on the following scientific criteria of a primarily morphological, paradigmatic approach:

“Description of nominal inflection is presented with the purpose to show the patterns of inflection (creation of the inflected forms) assuring the reliable possibility of constructing the inflection paradigm of any nominal lexeme. The procedure implemented in order to achieve this objective is to distinguish the groups of lexemes: 1. homogeneous as to the classifying category of their grammatical gender, 2. characterized by identical morphological markers of case and number.” (Orzechowska 1999: 270)

For the nominal elements of Japanese, there is no need to distinguish the classifying category of grammatical gender or number. It is enough to group the nominal word forms (provided that they are recognized as synthetic word forms, not as analytic phrases) according to the value of grammatical case, mentioned in 2. above, with the following stipulations:

“[...] the inflecting paradigm of a lexeme is described as a set of its inflecting forms (flectemes), including the textual forms being their representations; the set of a lexeme’s flectemes as such constitutes the functional paradigm of a lexeme, and the set of textual forms – its formal paradigm.

The functional paradigm of a lexeme may be: a) a complete paradigm, if it is defined by all possible values of all inflecting categories, b) a non-complete paradigm – reduced by a given inflecting category (ie. number).

In turn, the formal paradigm may be: a) a non-defective, full paradigm, b) a defective paradigm, be it deprived of formal markers of some inflecting category.

The core of the nominal inflection, its center, is formed by the non-defective paradigms of differentiated inflecting forms created by attaching the suffix morphemes (inflection endings) characteristic for a noun.” (ibid.)

The above stipulations may be reduced in the context of Japanese to groups of lexemes or to individual lexemes not having peculiar case forms. The reasons for this may be defined on a semantic and syntactic rather than a morphological basis (for example, numerals will less typically attach to markers of subject/theme/rheme or appear in the position of sentence subject). There is only one paradigm of Japanese inflecting nominal forms. Accordingly, the core of the nominal inflection of Japanese will be formed by a non-defective paradigm of differentiated inflecting forms created by attaching the suffix morphemes (inflection endings). This results in a finite set of what could traditionally be considered Hashimoto’s nominal *bunsetsu*, recognized also, due to their description as “minimal unbreakable units of speech”, as equal to the repertoire of word forms *gokei* of the nominal element in question. The possibility of connecting more than one marker in a declensional form of a Japanese nominal element, related directly to the agglutinative properties of Japanese inflection, results in the core pattern of nominal inflection being best defined as starting with one-marker forms and continuing with multiple-marker forms.

The final result may be expected to be, in the first place, a concise and comprehensible model paradigm, including all morphological case markers, case terms and their basic functions. Such a device is currently unavailable for the purposes of the description of Japanese nominal elements.

5.3. Infinite Variety or General Rule?

This short monograph is but the first step towards the planned morphological description of Japanese nominal elements. At this stage, as

far as the range of sources on Japanese grammar known to the author is concerned, despite the widely declared agglutinative character of Japanese, a description of a full paradigm of Japanese morphological cases to illustrate the actual status of the nominal elements most probably does not exist. This *status quo* is, as has already been mentioned, different from that of the verbal elements of the language, conventionally described as inflected according to the conjugational paradigm. As explained above, the paradigm is a point of departure for a detailed account of all possible usages of all conceivable *stem+marker(s)* (more precisely: *declensional theme+marker(s)*) collocations.

The quest for universal rules, valid in all known languages, is an activity significantly different from the description of phenomena observed in one language or in a group of languages. The latter does not exclude the former, but may not necessarily have symmetrical links to it. Various grammatical dimensions may be marked differently across heterogeneous languages. Competence in one code may not necessarily reveal the universals. Different attitudes may lead to the description of the same morphological data in terms of both Hashimoto's "infinite variety" and Ōtsuki's "general rule". Moreover, the latter kind of approach does not exclude detailed exceptions or extensions. On the other hand, a bundle of exceptions resulting from the former probably does not lead to any general rule.

Coherent description should be based on a sufficient quantity and quality of sources. This is valid for all empirical studies. Also, such relatively new tools as data corpora and computational analysis may not always be effective based on the sole assumption of their primarily quantitative character. The actual language data and usage also include non-typical or incorrect instances. The author himself might have overlooked in his selection some sources featuring a methodology different from that presented as dominant in descriptions of the non-morphological and morphological features of the nominal elements of Japanese. Having in mind the purely technical possibility that some of the significant data and phenomena might have been overlooked in the process of analysis, the proposal of a non-analytic approach to the nominal elements of Japanese may be viewed as representative based also on the following statement, belonging only superficially to another field of investigation:

“In such a study one quickly reaches the point where the testimony of great numbers of additional informants provides no further validation. Who bows to whom and when, for instance, needs no statistical study of all Japan; the approved and customary circumstances can be reported by almost any one and after a few confirmations it is not necessary to get the same information from a million Japanese.” (Benedict 1954: 16-17)

In what has gone before, the author has sought to express his astonishment at the regular neglect of the morphological features that could otherwise be effectively used in a systemic description of Japanese nominal elements. This is not to be mistaken for a naive declaration of strong faith in declension. Declension is rather viewed as one of the abandoned tools that could perhaps be effectively implemented, tested, verified and used to address the phenomena of the non-isolating language that Japanese surely is. In order to distinguish clearly between the general methodological prolegomena and the details of the actual model of approach, the presentation of the author’s own proposal for a paradigm of declension in Japanese is planned as a future research task. Readers already familiar with the inflectional patterns of other languages (including their obvious flaws) may also find in this book some hints towards a coherent description of Japanese nominal phenomena as declensional.

As a matter of course, the author is aware that this proposal, regardless of its clearly morphological grounds – or perhaps precisely because of its morphological character – may prove far from popular among grammarians of Japanese. Quite apart from the possible reasons for distrust towards the morphological type of approach to the nominal elements of Japanese as mentioned in the course of this text, the real answer to the question of why a coherent description of Japanese nominals in purely morphological, generic terms is, to say the least, hard to obtain, is not clear. The author harbors absolutely no illusion that the adherents of the unparadigmatic descriptions of Japanese nominals in terms of their innumerable “meanings” will welcome this publication with enthusiasm. Despite the idealistic and universal premises, grammatical descriptions do seem to bear a citizenship, confirmed by tacit

though strong convictions inherited from the properties of one's native tongue. Still, in spite of their repetitive application in numerous works, the purely non-inflectional description techniques imposed on inflecting (fusional or agglutinative) languages do not seem to offer more than a refined art of "fitting square pegs into round holes" (Miller 1986: 46-87) and "citation of examples" (Dyscolus 1981: 197). The quantity and the level of elaboration of hypotheses related only partly – or not related at all – to the real properties of a language do not evolve into a better understanding of the facts. This book does not reveal anything new about this. Still, there is another method, simple, systemic (paradigmatic) and compatible with the morphological properties of Japanese. Until it has been cautiously implemented and thoroughly verified, its advantages or flaws remain at best hypothetical. To be continued.

Index of Japanese Terms

Below is provided a selection of Japanese terms, in their romanized and original versions, with English translations as well as comments. Terms are in alphabetical order, according to their romanized version. Most of the terms used throughout the text appear here, with the exception of certain individual, creative, conceptual, generally non-typical terms utilized only in some sources.

Romanized term	Original	English translation and comments
<i>arikata-no kotoba</i>	形状の詞	‘adjectives [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘vocabulary of features’
<i>ateji</i>	当て字	‘ideograms used as phonetic equivalents’
<i>bun</i>	文	‘sentence’
<i>bunkeijiten</i>	文型辞典	‘dictionary of sentence patterns’
<i>bunsetsu</i>	文節	‘word forms [or rather: ‘phrases’ or ‘phrase words’ in school grammar]’
<i>daimeshi</i>	代名詞	‘pronouns’
<i>dōshi</i>	動詞	‘verbs’
<i>fukujoshi</i>	副助詞	‘secondary particles’
<i>fuzokugo</i>	付属語	‘grammatical elements [in school grammar]’, lit. ‘dependent/attached units of vocabulary’
<i>gainengo</i>	概念語	‘concept words’
<i>gairaigo</i>	外来語	‘foreign [recently borrowed, xeno-Japanese] vocabulary’
<i>genbun`itchi</i>	言文一致	‘unification of speech and writing’
<i>go</i>	語	‘vocabulary [grammatical morphemes usually being included in this category]’
<i>gogi</i>	語義	‘semantics’ [one of alternative terms], lit. ‘meaning of a vocabulary unit’
<i>gokei</i>	語形	‘word form’, also alternative term for ‘morphology’
<i>gobihenka</i>	語尾変化	‘inflection’ [one of alternative terms], lit. ‘inflection by word endings’

<i>gokeihenka(retsū)</i>	語形変化 (列)	‘inflection ([abstract] inflectional paradigm)’ [one of alternative terms], lit. ‘inflection by word forms’
<i>goretsu</i>	語列	‘[concrete] syntagm [ontological term]’
<i>hadakakaku</i>	ハダカ格	‘bare case [with morphological zero]’
<i>hataraku kotoba</i>	働く詞	‘verbal elements [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘working (dynamic) vocabulary’
<i>heiritsujoshi</i>	並立助詞	‘enumerating particles’
<i>hibun</i>	非文	‘a non-[correct] sentence’
<i>hitei</i>	否定	‘negation’
<i>hojodōshi</i>	補助動詞	‘auxiliary verbs’ [the term traditionally used for the analytic auxiliary verbal units]
<i>hojomeishi</i>	補助名詞	‘auxiliary nouns’
<i>izenkei</i>	已然形	‘[syllabic] perfect form’ [archaic]
<i>ji</i>	辞	‘[what should be considered] grammatical elements’
<i>jikan-no kankei</i>	時間の関係	‘temporal relation’
<i>jiritsugo</i>	自立語	‘lexical elements [in Japanese school grammar]’, lit. ‘independent units of vocabulary’
<i>jodōji</i>	助動辞	‘auxiliary verbs’, lit. ‘auxiliary grammatical verbs’
<i>jodōshi</i>	助動詞	‘auxiliary verbs’, lit. ‘auxiliary [lexical] verbs’ [grammatical elements described traditionally as conjugable]
<i>joji</i>	助辞	‘grammatical particles’, lit. ‘auxiliary grammatical elements’
<i>joshi</i>	助詞	‘grammatical particles’, lit. ‘auxiliary lexical elements’
<i>junfukutaijoshi/ junpukutaijoshi</i>	準副体助詞	‘secondary marginal adnominal particles’
<i>juntaijoshi</i>	準体助詞	‘secondary adnominal particles’
<i>kakari</i>	係り	‘trigger element [of <i>kakarimusubi</i>]’
<i>kakarimusubi</i>	係結び	‘[archaic] bracket constructions’
<i>kakarijoshi</i>	係助詞	‘trigger particles’
<i>kaku</i>	格	lit. ‘case’

<i>kakujoshi</i>	格助詞	lit. ‘case particles’
<i>kaku-no shurui</i>	格の種類	‘case classification’
<i>kana</i>	仮名	‘syllabary’, lit. ‘provisional names’
<i>kanbun</i>	漢文	‘Japanese script with the sole use of <i>kanji</i> ’
<i>kango</i>	漢語	‘Sino-Japanese vocabulary’
<i>kanji</i>	漢字	‘Chinese ideograms; sinograms’
<i>kanjikanamajiribun</i>	漢字仮名交じり文	‘the hybrid script of Japanese’, lit. ‘mix of sinograms and syllabaries’
<i>kannengo</i>	観念語	‘words of perception’
<i>kantōjoshi</i>	間投助詞	‘interjection particles’
<i>kateikei</i>	仮定形	‘[syllabic] conditional form’
<i>katsuyō</i>	活用	‘conjugation’
<i>katsuyōkei</i>	活用形	‘[syllabic] conjugational forms’
<i>katsuyō-no kotoba</i>	活用の詞	‘verbal elements [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘conjugating vocabulary’
<i>keitairon</i>	形態論	‘morphology’
<i>keiyōshi</i>	形容詞	‘inflected adjectives’
<i>keiyōdōshi</i>	形容動詞	‘non-inflected adjectives [also: copular nouns, adjectival nouns, non-inflected adjectives or non-predicative adjectives]’
<i>kokoro-no oto</i>	心の音	‘grammatical elements’, lit. ‘sounds of the heart [morphologically: phonetical representations of actual meanings]’
<i>kokugogaku</i>	国語学	‘study of national [Japanese] language’
<i>koritsugo</i>	孤立語	‘isolating language’
<i>kotoba/shi</i>	詞	‘lexical elements’
<i>kundoku</i>	訓読	‘deciphering <i>kanbun</i> into the classical Japanese text’
<i>kunten</i>	訓点	‘schematic strokes [in <i>kundoku</i>]’
<i>kōchakugo</i>	膠着語	‘agglutinative language’
<i>kyokuyō</i>	曲用	‘declension [as opposed to <i>katsuyō</i>]’
<i>kussetsugo</i>	屈折語	‘fusional [inflecting] languages’
<i>ku(seibun)</i>	句(成分)	‘phrase (components)’
<i>mana</i>	真名	‘the true names [ideograms used in their original lexical function]’
<i>meireikei</i>	命令形	‘[syllabic] imperative form’

<i>meishi</i>	名詞	‘nouns’
<i>mizenkei</i>	未然形	‘[syllabic] negative form’
<i>musubi</i>	結	‘the verbal binding element [of <i>kakarimusubi</i>]’
<i>na</i>	名	‘nouns’, lit. ‘names’
<i>nihongogaku</i>	日本語学	‘study of Japanese language [as a foreign language]’
<i>okototen</i>	フコト点・ 乎古止点	‘grammatical elements [in traditional, script-centered approach]’
<i>rengōkankei</i>	連合関係	‘paradigmatic relation [in syntactic terms]’
<i>rentaikaku</i>	連体格	‘adnominal cases’
<i>rentaiki</i>	連体形	‘[syllabic] attributive form’ [archaic]
<i>ren’yōkaku</i>	連用格	‘adverbial cases’
<i>ren’yōkei</i>	連用形	‘[syllabic] conjunctive form’
<i>senpen’ichiritsu</i>	千篇一律	‘the same [general] rule’
<i>sensabanbetsu</i>	千差万別	‘infinite variety’
<i>setsuzokujoshi</i>	接続助詞	‘connecting particles’
<i>shi/kotoba</i>	詞	‘lexical elements’
<i>shiwaza-no kotoba</i>	作用の詞	‘verbs [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘vocabulary of action’
<i>shokunō</i>	職能	‘syntax’ [one of alternative terms], lit. ‘[syntactic] ability’
<i>shutai</i>	主体	‘subject [protagonist]’
<i>shūjoshi</i>	終助詞	‘final particles’
<i>shūshikei</i>	終止形	‘[syllabic] final form’
<i>sūshi</i>	数詞	‘numerals’
<i>taigen</i>	体言	‘nominal elements’
<i>tai-no kotoba</i>	体の詞	‘nouns [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘concrete vocabulary’
<i>tenchakugo</i>	添着語	‘agglutinative language [traditional term]’
<i>teniha</i>	手爾葉	see: <i>tenioha</i>
<i>tenioha</i>	テニオハ	‘grammatical elements [in traditional, script-centered approach]’
<i>tōgōkankei</i>	統合関係	‘syntagmatic relation [in syntactic terms]’
<i>uchikeshi</i>	打消し	‘denial; negation’

<i>ugokanu kotoba</i>	動かぬ詞	‘nominal elements [in traditional approach]’, lit. ‘static vocabulary’
<i>wago</i>	和語	‘native [Japanese] vocabulary’
<i>wakachigaki</i>	分かち書き	‘spaces between words’ [usually in non-Japanese script]
<i>yōgen</i>	用言	‘verbal elements’
<i>yosoi</i>	装	‘verbal elements [in traditional approach]’ lit. ‘clothing’

Glosses and Abbreviations

ABL	–	ablative case
ACC	–	accusative case
ADV	–	adverb
ALL	–	allative case
ATT	–	attributive
AV	–	auxiliary verb
CNF	–	confirmation
CON	–	connecting
COM	–	comitative case
COP	–	copula
DAT	–	dative case
DO	–	direct object
EI	–	exclamation/interjection
EMP	–	emphatic
ENU	–	enumerative case
F	–	feminine
GEN	–	genitive case
GER	–	gerund
HON	–	honorific
HYP	–	hypothetical
IMP	–	imperative
INS	–	instrumental case
INT	–	interrogative case/particle
IO	–	indirect object
LOC	–	locative case
MOD	–	modestive, humble
N	–	noun; nominal element; nominal lexical stem; declensional theme
NA	–	noun adjective
NEG	–	negative
NGEN	–	rough morphological counterpart of NOM in contemporary English
NMN	–	nominalizer
NOM	–	nominative case (in practice: NGEN in contemporary English)
NPR	–	non-perceptive
NPST	–	non-past
NTOP	–	non-topic (tentative glossing for several markers)
NUL	–	phonological zero (glossed as case marker in Japanese)
N1	–	non-first person
PER	–	perfect form

- PR – perceptive
- PST – past
- PN – proper name
- POL – polite
- PREP – preposition
- PRG – progressive
- PRO – prognostic
- RES – resultative
- SC – sentence connector
- SP – sentence particle (different than SC, also with phrasal functions)
- SING – singular
- SUBJ – subject
- TER – terminative case
- TOP – topic/theme case
- VOC – vocative case
- VOL – volitional
- 1 – first person (including directly experienced information)
- 3 – third person

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JAPANESE NOMINAL ELEMENTS AS ABANDONED PARTS OF SPEECH

Despite the (synthetic, agglutinative) morphological characteristics of the Japanese language, widely recognized among linguists, the non-morphological (analytic, isolating) features of its nominal elements are commonly emphasized in the dominant descriptions of its grammar. Japanese nominals are by default described as non-inflected. This is especially striking in comparison with verbal elements, regularly described as inflected (conjugated). This status quo in the grammatical description of Japanese results in difficulties in addressing its morphological features and in the virtual impossibility of comparing its inflecting phenomena with those of other languages. This volume presents several possible reasons for the dominance of the unparadigmatic (as the author calls it) approach, with particular emphasis on the non-morphological Sino- and Anglo-centric descriptions. An analysis of selected, though representative, historical and contemporary works on the grammatical description of Japanese, both morphological and non-morphological, along with their main features and flaws, occupies a substantial part of the monograph. This is supplemented with a proposal for a projected morphological approach to the Japanese nominal phenomena, compatible with the morphological characteristics of the language, with a tentative list of Japanese adnominal markers to be considered as the morphological case markers.

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