

Workshop

Nominalization, Gender and Classifier

Jointly Hosted by

National Institute for Japanese Language and
Linguistics (NINJAL)

Tokyo, Japan

*Project: "Empirical Study of the Typology of
Nominalization — from Theoretical, Fieldwork,
Historical and Dialectal Perspective"*

Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w
Poznaniu,

Poznań, Poland

*Department of South Asian Studies, Institute of
Oriental Studies, Faculty of Modern Languages
and Literature*

Date: 1 June 2026

Venue: Room 104b, Collegium Novum, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

09:45 – 11:15

In Praise of Exceptions

Prof. Masayoshi Shibatani

Rice University / Kobe University

11:15 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:15

*Attenuation of Gender and Emergence of Classifiers in Indo-Aryan
Languages*

Prof. Prashant Pardeshi

NINJAL

12:15 – 13:00

Gender and Classifiers in Halbi and Bhatri

mgr. Husendra Sethiya

Institute of Oriental Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University

13:00 – 13:15

Short Break

13:15 – 14:00

*The road less travelled by - noun and nominalization from
inflectional perspective*

prof. dr hab. Arkadiusz Jabłoński

Institute of Oriental Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University

14:00 – 14:30

Discussion

Abstracts

In Praise of Exceptions

Masayoshi Shibatani

Professor Emeritus, Rice University / Kobe University

Visiting Professor, National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics

This presentation examines apparent challenges to the Shibatani hierarchy of gender/classifier marking through a detailed analysis of a diverse range of data, primarily from Asia.

Cross-linguistically, genitives show a striking resistance to classifier marking, even in languages where classifiers are otherwise licensed in structurally higher domains (numerals and demonstratives) and lower ones (adjectival and verbal nominalizations). We argue that this exceptional pattern is not anomalous, but follows from the interaction of two factors: (i) the presence of a robust genitive marker, which disfavors GEN–CLF double marking; and (ii) diachronic maturity, whereby innovative constructions characteristically lag behind more entrenched grammatical patterns.

Contrary to the common tendency to treat exceptions as noise or nuisance to be ignored, this study demonstrates that exceptions provide compelling evidence for:

- the reanalysis of genitive and participial marking as nominalizers
- classifier and gender marking as forms of classifying nominalization
- classifiers and gender constituting a unified classificatory system rather than distinct phenomena
- the dynamic interaction between functional pressures and structural responses
- a typological framework that is dynamic as well as comparative

Attenuation of Gender and Emergence of Classifiers in Indo-Aryan Languages

Prof. Prashant Pardeshi

National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL) and

Japanese Language Sciences Program, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI)

Global macro-typological studies of gender and classifier systems have traditionally treated these two noun classification systems as mutually exclusive categories (Dixon 1982).

However, subsequent research has shown that gender and classifiers may coexist within the same language (Corbett 2013). Indo-Aryan languages spoken in India provide an important

case in point. Earlier areal typologies (Emeneau 1956; Masica 1991; Barz & Diller 1985) describe a broad west-to-east decline in gender marking and an east-to-west decline in classifier marking across Indo-Aryan languages. While these studies offer valuable large-scale generalizations, they do not adequately account for the synchronic distribution or diachronic development of gender and classifier systems in individual languages.

Drawing on primary fieldwork data, this presentation demonstrates that the micro-typology of gender and classifiers proposed by Shibatani (2023) provides a more empirically grounded framework for understanding both the attenuation of gender and the emergence of classifier marking in Indo-Aryan languages. The analysis shows that these processes proceed gradually along both structural and functional dimensions, rather than through abrupt categorical shifts.

The study compares several Indo-Aryan languages and varieties, including Konkani, Marathi, Hindi, and Assamese, and identifies a continuum ranging from robust gender marking without classifiers to complete loss of gender accompanied by elaborate classifier systems. The proposed framework captures intermediate stages in which gender marking becomes restricted, optional, or semantically weakened while classifier marking simultaneously expands across nominal and modifier environments.

The findings contribute to typological theory by demonstrating that gender loss and classifier emergence are interconnected diachronic processes that can coexist synchronically within a single language family.

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Gender and Classifier Marking in Halbi and Bhatri

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Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Keywords: Classifier, Gender markers, Nominalization

This study investigates whether the classifier and gender marking patterns in Halbi and Bhatri conform to the nominalization hierarchy proposed by Shibatani (2023), and, if not, how these languages diverge from it.

Shibatani (2023) analyzes gender and classifier marking as instances of classifying nominalization, proposing a hierarchy that constrains their synchronic distribution and predicts diachronic developments across languages. According to this hierarchy, numerals are the category most likely to exhibit classifier or gender marking, followed by demonstratives, genitives, adjectives, and verbal nominalizations.

The study examines the following hierarchy in both NP and modification use:

NP use: NUM > DEM > GEN > ADJ > V-based NMLZ

Mod use: NUM > DEM > GEN > ADJ > V-based NMLZ

In Halbi, classifiers are restricted to numerals only (e.g., *dui-tʰən beʃa* 'two-CLF son'), while gender markers appear in the remaining categories except with numerals. For adjectives and V-based nominalizations, gender marking is obligatory, in NP use where the adjective cannot appear without gender marking. Bhatri, conversely, employs classifiers across all adnominal categories, with gender marking possible everywhere except with numerals. Both languages exhibit mandatory marking for adjectives and V-based nominalizations, as in the Bhatri example (1) adjectives (2) V-based nominalization.

(1) Bhatri (Sethiya 2023)

niko ʃa/biʃi aʃ
good CLF/NMLZ.NM be.PRST
(this one) is good.

(2) *renu-ər [anla ʃa/biʃi]NMLZ ke]NP rədʒəʃ kʰəj-la*
Renu-GEN bring.PFV.3SG CLF/NMLZ.NM ACC Rajat eat-PFV.3SG

Whatever Renu brought, Rajat ate.

The patterns observed in Halbi and Bhatri may be summarized as follows:

Halbi / Bhatri

- NP Use: NUM>^{OPT}DEM>^{OPT}GEN>ADJ>V-BASED
- Modification use: NUM>^{OPT}DEM>^{OPT}GEN>^{OPT}ADJ>^{OPT}V-BASED

(No mark= CLF/NMZL marking obligatory; ^{OPT}=optional marking; *=marking impossible)

The findings show that both languages conform to Shibatani's hierarchy in NP use up to the genitive category. However, the obligatory use of classifier or gender marking with adjectives and verbal nominalizations in NP use diverges from the hierarchy, which predicts that nominalization marking should become optional or not possible beyond the genitives (Sethiya 2023). The evidence from Halbi and Bhatri therefore suggests an expansion of Shibatani's proposed distributional hierarchy and highlights the need to investigate the underlying structural factors and broader motivations behind this phenomenon.

References

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“The road less travelled by - noun and nominalization from inflectional perspective”.

Prof. Dr. Hab. Arkadiusz Jabłoński

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

An inflectional perspective of description is not particularly prominent in contemporary general linguistics.

Nevertheless, it is within an inflectional framework that certain language phenomena can be evaluated on systemic grounds. This applies above all to the fundamental opposition between nominal and verbal lexemes, which can be contrasted through their inflectional patterns. Systemic inflectional oppositions translate only partially into derivational phenomena. Likewise, diachronic oppositions exhibit only limited validity when examined in synchronic terms.

On these grounds, several examples of Japanese nominalization can be presented, with particular emphasis on regular inflectional phenomena manifested in vertical honorifics and in split-predicate constructions.

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About Masayoshi “Matt” Shibatani

Masayoshi “Matt” Shibatani is the Deedee McMurtry Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at Rice University and Professor Emeritus at Kobe University, Japan. He received both his B.A. (1970) and Ph.D. (1973) in linguistics from the University of California, Berkeley.

He was a Fellow at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at the Australian National University (1998–1999) and at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California (2000–2001), and served as a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at La Trobe University, Australia (2008–2009). He also held the Christensen Fellowship at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford University (2009), and has held visiting professorships at leading research universities, including UCLA, the University of California, Santa Barbara, the University of Illinois, the University of Hawai‘i, SOAS University of London, Keimyung University (Korea), Kyoto University, El Colegio de México, the University of Buenos Aires, and Fudan University (China).

Professor Shibatani served as President of the Linguistic Society of Japan (1997–2000) and is an honorary member of the Linguistic Society of the Philippines. His research specializes in language typology, syntax, linguistic theory, and Japanese and Austronesian linguistics.

His authored books include *Nihongo no Bunseki / Analysis of Japanese* (Taishukan, 1978) and *The Languages of Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 1990). His edited volumes include *Approaches to Language Typology* (1995) and *Grammatical Constructions: Form and Meaning* (1996), both published by Clarendon Press, Oxford, as well as *The Grammar of*

Causation and Interpersonal Manipulation (2002), *Syntactic Complexity* (2009), and *Nominalization in Languages of the Americas* (2019), all published by John Benjamins.

He also served as co-editor-in-chief of the 12-volume *Handbooks of Japanese Language and Linguistics*, published by Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, completed in 2025.

Since retiring from active teaching at Rice University in June 2021, Professor Shibatani has continued to be actively engaged in linguistic research. He served as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Humanities Center of the University of Tokyo (2021–2022) and is currently participating, both as Visiting Professor and lead researcher, in the five-year research project “Empirical Study of the Typology of Nominalization—from Theoretical, Fieldwork, Historical, and Dialectal Perspectives” (PI: Prashant Pardeshi) at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics in Tokyo.

Professor Shibatani is the recipient of the 5th NIHU International Prize in Japanese Studies awarded by the National Institutes for the Humanities, Tokyo, Japan.

About Prashant PARDESHI

Prashant PARDESHI (PhD, Kobe University, 2000) is a professor in the Research Department, National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL), Tokyo and Japanese Language Sciences Program, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies (SOKENDAI), Japan. He is interested in functional linguistic typology and has published articles in such journals as *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Linguistics*, *Journal of Japanese Linguistics*, *Annual Review of South Asian Languages and Linguistics*, and *Gengo Kenkyu* as well as in collections of articles published in the West and in the East. He is also the author of *A Functional Account of Marathi’s Voice Phenomena* (Brill, 2016), a co-editor of *Handbook of Japanese Contrastive Linguistics* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2018) and *Verb-verb complexes in Asian Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

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