

# 不定単数名詞を含む総称文について

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## On Indefinite Singular Generics

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Carlson (1977a,b)によれば、英語の総称文に現れる裸複数名詞(bare plural)は常に「種(kind)」を意味する。<sup>1</sup> また、不定単数名詞(indefinite singular)も総称文に現れることができる。

- (1) a. Dogs bark.  
b. A dog barks.

“bark”は種自体の性質を表す動詞ではないので、(1a)において意味されているのは、種を構成する個体が一般的に“bark”という性質を持つということである。したがって、ある面では(1b)の意味は(1a)の意味に含まれると考えることができる。裸複数名詞を主語とする総称文が文法的であれば、それに対応する不定単数名詞を主語とする総称文も文法的であると一般化しても、意味的な面からは問題がないように思われるが、この一般化は成立しない。

不定単数名詞を主語とする総称文においては、以下の引用文に述べられているように、述語は主語の何か「本質的な」あるいは「中心的な」特質を述べていなければならない。(1b)の場合、“dog”と“bark”の意味からしてこの制限は守られている。<sup>2</sup>

As noted already by Goodman (1955) and later by Lawler (1973), Dahl (1975), Burton-Roberts (1977), and subsequent researchers, characterizing sentences do not express accidental properties; rather, they state properties that are in some way “essential”. To put it in Dahl’s (1975) terminology, they are not only “descriptive” generalizations but “normative” ones. With this observation, we can further confirm our claim that indefinite singular NPs in their nontaxonomic reading cannot be kind-referring since they are tied to characterizing sentences. For example, note the following contrast between sentences expressing an accidental property and sentences expressing an essential or at least “central” property (the examples are Lawler’s):

- (29) a'. The madrigal is popular.  
a". The madrigal is polyphonic.  
b'. Madrigals are popular.  
b". Madrigals are polyphonic.  
c'. ?? A madrigal is popular.  
c". A madrigal is polyphonic.

[Krifka *et al.* (1995: 13)]

ここで、問題となるのは、(2 a)と(2 b)および(3 a)と(3 b)の関係である。

- (2) a. Madrigals are polyphonic.
- b. A madrigal is polyphonic.
- (3) a. Madrigals are popular
- b. ??A madrigal is popular.

裸複数名詞が、種を表すのであれば、(2 a)と(3 a)は種に対する直接の叙述(direct kind predication)であり、(2 b)と(3 b)は特徴づけの総称文(characterizing generic)の例ということになる。(2)の場合は(1)と同じことがいえる。(3 b)が意味的に奇妙であると考えられるのは、"popular"という性質が、"madrigal"の本質的性質ではないと考えられるからである。

Cohen (2001)は、(4)は(3 b)よりずっとよいこと、また、(5)は"madrigal"の本質的性質を述べているわけではないのに、(真ではないが)極めて容認度が高いことをあげてこの考え方に反論している。

- (4) A madrigal is a popular song.
- (5) A madrigal is monophonic.

上述のように、(3 a)は種に対する直接の叙述であると考えられるが、この点に関しても Cohen は、Burton-Roberts (1977)からの例文をあげて反論している。

- (6) a. Kings are generous.
- b. \*A king is generous.
- (7) a. Rooms are square.
- b. \*A room is square.

(6 a)の場合、"generous"という性質は、"king"という種の持つ性質であるとは到底考えることはできず、個々の"king"の持つ性質であると考えざるを得ない。(7 a)に関しても同じことがいえる。

また、特徴づけの総称文が"usually"のような副詞との共起を許すことから、(3 a)や(6 a)の文は、種に対する直接の叙述を示す例とは考えにくい。<sup>3</sup>

- (8) \*Dinosaurs are always/usually extinct.
- (9) a. Madrigals are always popular.
- b. Kings are usually generous.

このような根拠から、Cohen は、(3 a)のような文は、特徴づけの総称文であると考え、特徴づけの総称文であれば、叙述は種を構成する個体に関して行われていると考えられるので、(3 a)が認められるときに、(3 b)が許されないのはなぜかという問題が生じる。本質的な性質を述べていないからであると主張するのは、(3 a)を特徴づけの総称文と分析することと矛盾するし、本質的な特徴を述べない文も許される場合があることはすでに見たとおりである。

Cohen は、裸複数名詞が種を意味することには同意するが、それが直接的に(3 a)のような文が

種に対する記述であることにはつながらないし、(3a)のような文は特徴づけの総称文であると主張する。そうすると、(3b)のような文が認められないことを、Krifka *et al.*とは異なる理由をあげて説明しなくてはならない。

Cohen は、その理由をトピック性(topicality)と、Esteshick-Shir (1997)のトピック制約(topic constraint)に求める。<sup>4</sup>

In order to see why this is so, we need to consider the notion of *topicality*. Topics, almost by definition, must be specific; they have to refer to some entity (or a set of entities). Generic BPs (bare plurals) denote kinds, and kinds are individual entities (Carlson 1977). Therefore, generic BPs are specific, hence are licensed as topics. Generic ISs (indefinite singulars), on the other hand, cannot denote kinds, hence are not specific and may not be topics. Nongeneric ISs, on the other hand, may refer to a specific individual (these are so-called *specific indefinites*) and may, consequently, be topics. The following minimal pair, from Reinhart (1981), illustrates this point:

- (17) a. She said about sharks that they will never attack unless they are very hungry.  
b. She said about a shark that it will never attack unless it is very hungry.

While (17a) can be read generically, (17b) can only read as a statement about a specific shark.

Esteschik-Shir (1997) argues extensively for *the topic constraint*: every sentence must have a topic.

[Cohen (2001) : 188]

Cohen は、不定単数名詞も特定性を増せば、トピックになることができることを、(10)で示している。ただしこの場合、総称性は失われる。この文は、"king" 一般の記述ではなく、"Henri IV of France" という特定 "king" の記述である。<sup>5</sup>

- (10) A king who once said 'Paris is well worth a mass' was generous.

しかし、この考え方では、不定単数名詞を含む文が総称文にはなれない場合は説明できても、(1b)のような、問題のない文の説明ができない。

Carlson (1995)は、総称性へのアプローチの仕方に、帰納主義的見方(inductivist view)と規則・規制の見方(rules and regulations view)の2種類があると主張している。帰納主義的見方に従えば、ある総称文の述語が表す性質を、十分に多くの関連する個体が持っていれば、その文は真となる。一方、規則・規制の見方に従えば、ある総称文が表す規則が実際に有効である(in effect)ならばその文は真となる。(11a)と(11b)を比較した場合に、(11b)の方は何らかの規則・規制を表していると解釈される。

- (11) a. Gentlemen open doors for ladies.  
b. A gentleman opens doors for ladies.

コンテキストの指定がなければ、総称的な解釈ができない文も、コンテキストが与えられると、

総称的な解釈ができるようになる場合がある。いわば、与えられたコンテキストに応じて、何らかの規則・規制が成立すると考えることができる。(12)の文は総称的な解釈を持たないが、(13)の文は総称的な解釈を持つ。また、(14)の文は、これまでの議論では総称文としては受け入れられなかったものが、コンテキストを与えられることで、容認できるようになることを示している。

- (12) a. A Norwegian student whose name ends with 's' or 'j' wears green thick socks.  
 b. A tall, left-handed, brown haired neurologist in Hadassa hospital earns more than \$50,000 a year.
- (13) a. You know, there are very interesting traditions in Norway, concerning the connection between name, profession, and clothing. For example, a Norwegian student . . .  
 b. The new Hadassa manager has some very funny paying criteria. For example, a left-handed . . .
- (14) a. Sire, please don't send her to the axe. Remember, a king is generous!  
 b. How dare you build me such a room? Don't you know a room is square?

Cohen は、こういった規則・規制を表す総称文は、何らかの意味において実在する実体を表しており(つまり、総称文自体が規則・規制と考えられ)、意味解釈においては、それ自体が、述語 "in effect" の項となるので、トピック性に関する問題は生じないとしている。

しかし、コンテキストが与えられることによっていわば一般性が相対化され、その分不定単数名詞の特定性が増加したのと同じ効果が得られるので、文が容認可能になると考えることもできる。

Carlson (1989)は、以下のように述べている。

Generic sentences require *two* elements to be related to one another in order to have a complete generic interpretation. The first element is a nongenerically interpreted matrix sentence or predicate containing the sentence main verb; then "something else" is required to complete the generic interpretation. In example (1) [=Hurricanes arise in this part of the Pacific.] it is the locative phrase (or, perhaps, just the NP in the PP); in example (8) [=A computer computes the daily weather forecast.] it is the direct object; in example (11) [=A cat runs across my lawn every day.] it is the time adverbial; and in an example like "Cats meow" it is the subject. Subjects, it turns out, appear to be the favored "something else", but this by no means exhausts the possibilities. For want of better terminology, I will call this "something else" "the related constituent" (and sentences in which subject plays the related constituent are "standard generics").

[Carlson (1989 : 177)]

総称性が、何らかの関連を持つ、ふたつの要素間の関係に関わるものであることは間違いないことだと思われる。規則・規制の性質を強く持つ(11b)に関してもそれは変わらないと考えられる。この場合は、一種の規範を示す関係ではあるが、それが主語と述語の間で一般的に成立する、もしくは成立すべきものであることを述べている。コンテキストが与えられなくても受け入れられる総称文であるということは、もっとも一般性の高い関係が成立するということである。これは、当然のことながら、ふたつの要素間の本質的な関係となる。これが、通常主張される不定単数総称文に対する条件である。

Carlson (1989)は、ふたつの要素間の関係について以下のようにも述べている。

What is wrong, then, with the vapid generalizations of (21b-23b) is that there is no related constituent in the sentence to support a generic interpretation (assuming 'it' to be nondenoting); why examples of (17b-20b) have only "universal" readings for their subjects is that the subject is the only candidate within the sentence to supply the related constituent necessary for a generic interpretation. But before we explore this relational account further, we need to mention one other source of "related constituents."

[Carlson (1989: 177)]

- (17) a. Slaves work Lower Slobbovia's salt mines  
b. Slaves work.
- (18) a. Mice squeak when you pound on this wall.  
b. Mice squeak.
- (19) a. Flowers grow out behind the old shed.  
b. Flowers grow.
- (20) a. A robot cooks my morning coffee.  
b. A robot cooks.
- (21) a. It rains hard here.  
b. (??) It rains.
- (22) a. It snows in Florida once every decade or so.  
b. (??) It snows.
- (23) a. It gets foggy when there is an easterly wind and cool temperatures.  
b. (??) It gets foggy.

[Carlson (1989: 176)]

コンテキストとの関係は、談話(discourse)の影響という観点から検討され、通常単独では受け入れられない文が、談話のトピックとの関係で容認されるようになることが示される。特に、(26d)は、関係付けられるべき何かが文中に登場しないにもかかわらず、談話のトピックのおかげで文が容認可能になることを示している。

Some element understood as a part of the discourse, and not a part of the syntactic representation of the sentence itself, can also condition a generic reading—it appears that the discourse itself may supply the related constituent necessary to complete the interpretation. For instance, example (25), suggested to me by Emmon Bach, has no natural generic reading if understood in isolation:

- (25) John builds a cabin.

The only available reading seems to be a present-tense "announcer's" sense. Yet, if one understands a previous discourse in which the topic of conversation is how John works off his frustrations, or what he does every time he wants to make a little extra money, then it can

clearly be understood as a generic. The key element in making (25) a generic, then, is contributed by the discourse in which it is embedded. Below are some more examples:

- (26) a. (Topic: What happens in the event of a fire). An alarm sounds.  
 b. (Topic: What happens in a recession). People get laid off.  
 c. (Topic: Late-summer small-town events). A circus arrives in town.  
 d. (Topic: Winter weather round these parts). Oh, it does snow, you know.

One might reasonably question whether examples like those in (25) and (26) have generic meanings; perhaps they are non-generics that contribute to a generic proposition upon being integrated into a discourse. What few facts bear on this question (assuming it's a coherent one in the first place) favor treating them as generics rather than non-generics. For instance, the unequivocal marker of a generic in English—the “used to” construction—is quite natural in appropriate discourse:

- (27) (What Aristotle did when frustrated.) Aristotle used to write a book.  
 (Cf. ‘A. used to write a book’ without supporting context)

[Carlson (1989 : 177-178)]

以上述べてきたように、不定単数名詞を主語とする総称文の解釈、容認性に関しては、コンテキストや談話といった、文のレベルを超えた範囲を考慮に入れる必要がある。総称文というものは、いわば人間の知識を表した分であり、その点から見れば、総称文の意味が、単に語の意味から構成的に導かれるのではないのはむしろ当然のことであろう。

#### 註

1 依存複数 (dependent plural) に関しては、Link (1995)、加藤 (2001) の依存総称名詞句 (dependent generic noun phrase) についての議論参照。

2 “characterizing sentence” に関しては以下の記述参照。

The second phenomenon commonly associated with genericity are propositions which do not express specific episodes or isolated facts, but instead report a kind of *general property*, that is, report a regularity which summarizes groups of particular episodes or facts. Examples can be found in the natural readings of the sentences in (2). Here (2 a) does not report a particular episode but a habit—some kind of generalization over events; and (2 b) does not state something about a specific potato but about potatoes in general—a generalization based on properties of individual potatoes. This second notion of genericity is clearly a feature of the whole sentence (or clause), rather than of any NP in it; it is the whole generic sentence that expresses regularities which transcend particular facts.

- (2) a. John smokes a cigar after dinner.  
 b. A potato contains vitamin C, amino acids, protein and thiamine.

We will call sentences like these *characterizing sentences*, or sometimes simply *generic sentences*, as they express generalizations. They are opposed to particular sentences, which express statements about particular events, properties of particular objects and the like. [Krifka *et al.* (1995 : 2 - 3)]

3 副詞との共起に関しては以下の記述参照。

This test distinguishes characterizing sentences from particular sentences as follows: Combine the sentence in question with an adverb like *usually* or *typically*. If the resulting sentence exhibits at most slight change of meaning, then the original sentence is characterizing. With particular sentences, the change in meaning obtained by applying these adverbs is quite drastic. To be somewhat more precise, if the original sentence is characterizing, then adverbs like *usually* explicitly convey the information that there may be exceptions to the rule which the sentence expresses, and that there actually are instantiations of the rule. If the original sentence is particular, these adverbs change the meaning from a report of a specific event or a particular fact to a general rule. Some examples:

- (20) a. A lion has a bushy tail.  
 b. A lion usually has a bushy tail.  
 (21) a. A lion stood in front of my tent.  
 b. A lion usually stood in front of my tent.

In (20), the insertion of *usually* brings about only a minor change in meaning: there is a sense in which (20b) might be called somewhat weaker than (20a), since it points explicitly to the fact that there might be exceptions to the rule. In the case of (21), however, the change is from the report of a specific event to a claim about a regularity of events, which is a much more thorough change of meaning. [Krifka *et al.* (1995) : 9]

4 Esteshick-Shir (1997)は未見。

5 句の特定性, 種への言及, 特徴づけなどに関しては, 以下の引用を参照。

Then the initial four-way cross-classification with the nominal system can be exemplified as follows:

- (31) a. *A lion (as in A lion has a bushy tail)* is nonspecific and non-kind referring.  
 b. *Simba/a lion, namely, Simba (as in Simba stood in front of my tent)* is specific and non-kind referring.  
 c. *A cat (in the taxonomic reading, as in A cat shows mutations when domesticated)* is kind-referring but non specific.  
 d. *The lion/A cat, namely the lion (taxonomic reading)* is kind referring and specific.

The third of our four dimensions concerns the type of sentence itself, rather than the NP used. Thus we obtain the following cross-classification of characterizing and particular sentences with different NP types as subjects:

- (32) a. *A lion has a mane.* (characterizing; non specific non-kind reference)  
 c. *Shimba ate lunch.* (particular; specific non-kind reference)  
 d. *Simba roars when he smells food.* (characterizing; specific non-kind reference)

- f. *A predatory cat (usually) is protected by law.* (characterizing; nonspecific)
- g. *The lion vanished from Asia.* (particular; specific kind reference)
- h. *The lion roars when it smells food.* (characterizing; specific kind reference)

We observe two gaps, both with particular, sentences containing nonspecific NPs. Nonspecific NPs (in the sense in which we intend the term here) only occur with characterizing sentences. In addition, if an NP that may be nonspecific occurs with a characterizing predicate, this NP tends to be interpreted as nonspecific. We should conclude from this that nonspecific NPs are tied to characterizing sentences, or put differently, that particular predications do not allow nonspecific NPs as subjects, whether they make nonspecific reference to objects or to kinds. This affinity between characterizing sentences and nonspecificity has often been observed, for example by Dahl (1975), who remarked that the following sentences only have one interpretation each, instead of two:

- (33) a. A dog is barking.
- b. A dog barks.

Here (33a) is a particular sentence about a particular (specific) dog, and (33b) is a characterizing sentence which is not about a particular (specific) dog but intuitively speaking, about dogs in general. Thus, although *a dog* maybe either specific or nonspecific in and of itself, (33a) cannot be interpreted as a particular sentence about the kind *Canis familiaris* (or the class of dogs) stating that they happen to bark at the moment, and (33b) cannot be interpreted as a characterizing sentence about a particular dog, stating, say, that Rover barks.

[Krifka *et al.* (1995 : 15-16)]

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### ABSTRACT

English indefinite singular generics have properties different from those of bare plural generics. Many researchers point out that some “essential” property needs to be predicated of the subject of an indefinite singular generic for it to be acceptable. But in some context an indefinite singular generic is acceptable even though this constraint is violated. I will discuss this point in this article focusing mainly on Carlson (1989) and Cohen (2001).

### KEY WORDS

generic, genericity, indefinite singular, context

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