Syntax of Proper Names in Japanese[*]

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1 Introduction

While proper nouns in natural languages are commonly assumed to be primitive entities representing specific constants or individuals, recent literature (e.g., Matushansky 2008, Ghomeshi & Massam 2009, Izumi 2012, and Izumi 2016, among others) argues extensively that they are underlyingly predicative, and that their referential status is achieved compositionally. While this paper provides further evidence from Japanese that supports the predicate analysis of proper nouns, it also shows that Japanese exhibits a stark asymmetry between given names and family names, and thus it argues that proper nouns do not form a uniform class in syntax.

This paper is organized in the following manner: Section 2 provides the Japanese data. Section 3 reviews a feature-based account of proper nouns by Ghomeshi & Massam (2009). Section 4 applies Ghomeshi & Massam's (2009) analysis to the Japanese data. Section 5 concludes.

2 The data

This paper is mainly concerned with the construction in Japanese given in (1).

(1) a. *tanaka-no ojisan*
         tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
         'Tanaka's uncle / Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man'

     b. *zenigata-no   tottsan*
         Zenigata-GEN pop/old.fart
         'Zenigata, the Old Fart'

The construction can be schematized as [N1-*no* N2]. The first noun N1 must be a proper name, and the second noun N2 is a (subtype of) common noun. The two nouns are mediated by *-no*, which is commonly assumed to be the genitive case marker that attaches to the preceding noun. This construction can appear anywhere a referential item can appear. The data below show this by having the phrase in (1a) in the subject position (2a), the direct object position (2b), and the object of an adjunct postpositional phrase (2c).

(2) a. [*tanaka-no ojisan*]-*ga kita.*
tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man -NOM came
'Tanaka's uncle came. / Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man, came.'

b. *watashi-wa kinoo* [*tanaka-no ojisan*]-*o mikaketa.*
I-TOP yesterday -ACC saw
'I saw Tanaka's uncle yesterday. / I saw Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man, yesterday.'

c. *Taroo-ga* [*tanaka-no ojisan*]-*to isshoni aruiteiru.*
Taroo-NOM with together walking
'Taroo is walking together with Tanaka's uncle. / Taroo is walking together with Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man.'

Let us consider now the semantics of the construction. As is evident in the examples above, the construction exhibits an ambiguity. The ambiguity in (1a) partially results from the lexical polysemy of the noun *ojisan* which means either 'uncle' or 'middle-aged man'.[1] However, a closer look at the two readings suggests that they should also be structurally distinguished. The first reading that we consider is the **Possessive Reading** (**PR**), which involves a possessive relation which is straightforwardly translated into English using the possessive marker -*'s*. A crucial point is that the PR in (1) involves two referents. One referent is the individual whose name is Tanaka and the other one is his/her uncle. Let us assume that the DP projection exists in Japanese,[2] and that D is the the culmination of the nominal architecture which signals referentiality. Then, the PR should have a structure along the lines of (3), where the DP referring to Tanaka is embedded in another DP headed by the D signalling the referentiality of Tanaka's uncle.

(3)
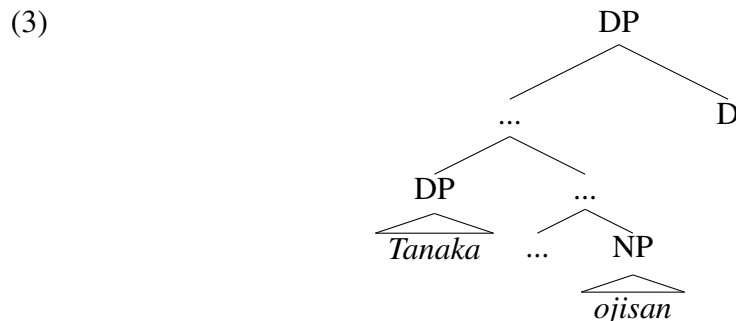
On the other hand, the other reading, which I call **Quotative Reading (QR)**, refers to only one individual: some known individual whose name is Tanaka and who is middle-aged. Given our assumption regarding DP, this means that there is only one D present in the structure.

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[1]The example in (1b) is familiar to many Japanese speaker since it is from a popular animation series. While the translation presented in the example is the most salient reading due to its popularity, it is also possible to interpret it as 'Zenigata's father/pop'.

[2]Note that this assumption is just for the sake of clarity. See, for example, Bošković (2008) for arguments against DP in determinerless languages like Japanese. This paper does not hinge on this assumption, and the idea can be readily translated to a D-less theory of the nominal domain in Japanese. I also assume in this paper that Japanese has the complement–head order.

A closer look reveals that the environment where the QR is available is far more restricted than the one where the PR can be found. First, only a subset of "kinship" term can appear in the N2 position and yield the QR:

(4)   *tanaka-no sensei / isha   / asisutanto*
       tanaka-GEN teacher / doctor / assistant

       √PR: 'Tanaka's teacher/doctor/assistant'
       *QR: 'Tanaka, who is a teacher/doctor/assistant'

(5)   tanaka-no *sofu*   / *sobo*   / *oji* / *oba*
       tanaka-GEN grandfather grandmother uncle aunt

       √PR: 'Tanaka's grandfather/grandmother/uncle/aunt'
       *QR: 'Tanaka, who is a grandfather/grandmother/uncle/aunt'

Example (4) shows that the QR is not available when N2 is a non-kinship noun, and (5) illustrates that not every kinship term licenses the QR. On the other hand, the PR is available in both (4) and (5). The list in (6) provides a subset of nouns that may license the QR.

(6)   Sample of the nouns that allow QR:[3]

ojisan	'uncle, middle-aged man'	*danna*	'husband, master, patron'
obasan	'aunt, middle-aged woman'	*okusan*	'wife, lady, mistress'
ojiisan	'grandfather, elderly man'	*anisan*	'older brother, senior'
obaasan	'grandmother, elderly woman'	*anesan*	'older sister, senior'
obocchan	'son, ingenuous/wealthy boy'	*(o)niisan*	'older brother, senior'
ojoosan	'daughter, young lady'	*(o)neesan*	'older sister, senior'
goinkyo	'retired master'		

Secondly, the QR becomes unavailable when the honorific suffix *-san* or a title, such as *-sensei* 'Teacher' or *-kyooju* 'Professor', are attached to the proper name, as illustrated in (7). It should also be noted that while use of a family name without an honorific suffix or a title typically displays a sense of contempt in Japanese, the QR does not necessarily sound contemptuous. The PR without an honorific suffix or a title typically does.

(7)   a.   *tanaka-**san**-no   ojisan*
           Tanaka-HON-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man

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[3]This list is not exhaustive. Interestingly, as far as I understand, these kinship terms can be used in a vocative expression, while most of the kinship terms that do not permit the QR not to be permitted in a vocative expression.

i   *Ooi! ojisan!*
   Hey! middle.aged.man/uncle
   'Hey, Uncle/Mister!'

ii ??*Ooi! otooto!*
    Hey! younger.brother
    'Hey, Brother!'

√PR: 'Mr./Ms. Tanaka's uncle'
*QR: 'Mr. Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man'

    b.   *tanaka-**kyooju**-no   ojisan*
        Tanaka-professor-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
        √PR: 'Prof. Tanaka's uncle'
        *QR: 'Prof. Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man'

Third, while family names induce the PR/QR ambiguity, native Japanese given names fail to bring about the QR. *Taroo* and *Hanae* are typical give names in Japanese (male and female, respectively), and when they appear in the N1 position of the [N1-*no* N2] pattern, as shown in (8a–b), the QR is systematically unavailable. Example (8c), on the other hand, illustrates that family names like *Yamada* do not show such a restriction.

(8)   a.   *Taroo-no   ojisan*
           Taroo-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
           √PR: 'Taroo's uncle' *QR: 'Taroo, who is a middle-aged man'

        b.   *Hanae-no   obaasan*
           Hanae-GEN grandmother/elderly.woman
           √PR: 'Hanae's grandmother' *QR: 'Hanae, who is an elderly woman'

        c.   *Yamada-no   obaasan*
           Yamada-GEN grandmother/elderly.woman
           √PR: 'Yamada's grandmother' √QR: 'Yamada, who is an elderly woman'

Forth, the QR and the PR behave differently in that the QR becomes unavailable when an adjunct intervenes between N1 and N2, as in (9b), making the PR the only available reading. When an adjunct is placed before N1, the ambiguity is retained (9a). This supports the point made earlier that the syntactic structure corresponding to the QR differs from the structure for the PR schematized in (3). In addition, it suggests that the N1 of the QR appears quite low in the nominal functional layer, below where adjectival modification can take place and that the N1 cannot undergo movement within the nominal domain.

(9)   a.   *okanemochino tanaka-no   ojisan*
           rich   Tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
           √PR: 'Tanaka's rich uncle'
           √QR: 'Tanaka, who is middle-aged, who is rich'

        b.   *tanaka-no   okanemochino ojisan*
           Tanaka-GEN rich   uncle/middle.aged.man
           √PR: 'Tanaka's rich uncle'
           *QR: 'Tanaka, who is middle-aged, who is rich'

Finally, the examples in (16) show that the construction with the QR retains the "rigid designator"-like status of proper nouns, allowing a *de re* reading, while with the PR, it may have a *de dicto* reading.

(10) a. *hanako-wa* [*tanaka-no   ojisan-to*   ] *kekkon*
          Hanako-TOP   Tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man-with   marry
          shitagatteiru.
          want.to.do
          √QR with *de re*: 'Hanako wants to marry Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man.'
          *QR with *de dicto*: 'Hanako wants to marry someone or other whose name is Tanaka and who is a middle-aged man.'
          √PR with *de re*: 'Hanako wants to marry Tanaka's uncle.'
          √PR with *de dicto*: 'Hanako wants to marry someone or other who is an uncle of Tanaka's.'

      b. *hanako-wa* [*tanaka-to*   ] *kekkon shitagatteiru.*
          Hanako-TOP   Tanaka-with   marry want.to.do
          √'Hanako wants to marry Tanaka.'
          *'Hanako wants to marry someone or other whose name is Tanaka.'

Let us summarize what we discussed in this section so far. The [N1-*no* N2] construction exhibits the QR only when the N1 is a family name and the N2 is a member of a subset of kinship terms. When a quotative reading is available, the construction is typically ambiguous as it may also evoke the PR. The syntactic context where the QR is available is highly restricted, in that N1 has to be a bare family name and not every kinship term can appear in the N2 position. The [N1-*no* N2] construction with the QR is akin to proper names, in that it does not allow a *de dicto* interpretation.

(11) Summary: Where N1-*no* N2 ...

	PR	QR
N2 = "ambiguous kinship term" & N1 = family name:	√	√
N2 ≠ ambiguous kinship term:	√	*
N1 is suffixed:	√	*
N1 is a given name:	√	*
Rigid designator status:	*	√

2.1 An excursus: apparent counterexamples
Before moving onto the next section, it is necessary to take the following examples into account:

(12) a. [*oda-no baka*]-*ga kocchi-ni   kita.*
          Oda-GEN idiot -NOM this.way-to came
          'Idiot Oda came this way.'

      b. [*oda-kyooju-no   hentai*]-*ga mata kocchi-o   miteru.*
          Oda-professor-GEN pervert -NOM again this.way-ACC is.looking.at
          'Pervert Prof. Oda is looking at us.'

      c. [*kenji-no kusottare*]-*ni-wa   koreijoo kakawaru-na.*
          kenji-GEN shit.splatter -DAT-NOM any.more get.involved-NEG.IMP
          'Don't get involved in Bastard Kenji any more.'

The examples in (12) at first glance suggest that the observations we have made in the previous section are inadequate. First, nouns in the N2 slot in (12) are not "kinship" terms. Secondly, examples (12a–b) show that given names or suffixed last names may appear in the N1 slot, contrary to what we discussed with examples (7) and (8). The nominal constituents with the [N1-*no* N2] pattern in (12) nonetheless have readings similar to the QR.

Despite the apparent similarities, the examples in (12) are distinct from the examples with the QR that we saw in the previous section. Crucially, the N2s in (12) are defaming terms, and hence the entire [N1-*no* N2] construction evokes a derogatory feel towards the referent of the N1. On the other hand, the examples in (1) as well as all the other examples with the QR in the previous section do not carry any derogatory sense. If the N2 is not obviously derogatory, it will be sarcastically reinterpreted, as in (13). Lastly, (14) shows that the [N1-*no* N2] sequence with a derogatory feel under discussion in this section can be used exclamatorily, while the examples in the previous sections cannot. These facts all suggest that what we observe in (12) is a different species from what we are concerned with in this paper, and that they should not be conflated.

(13) [*kenji-no sensei-sama*]-*ga mata nanika hennna koto-o itteru.*
      kenji-GEN teacher-HON -NOM again some   strange thing-ACC is.saying
      'The Great Teacher Kenji is saying something strange again.'

(14) a. *kenji-no kusottare!*
          kenji-GEN shit.splatter
          'That bastard Kenji!/What a bastard of Kenji!' (cf. *You bastard!*)
      b. ?? *tanaka-no ojisan!*
          tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man

3 Ghomeshi & Massam (2009): A feature-based analysis

Having discussed the data, let us now turn to the analysis of the structure of the [N1-*no* N2] construction with the QR. I adopt the analysis of proper names developed by Ghomeshi & Massam (2009) (henceforth G&M) as a starting point, which I review in this section.

G&M assume that proper names are syntactically complex, consisting of both N and D (Longobardi 1994), and that they differ from common nouns both at the N-level and at the D-level. They claim that the differences are marked in terms of syntactic features. At the N-level, proper nouns and common nouns are demarcated by the features [NAME] and [COMMON]. G&M claim that nouns with [NAME] "pick out sets of individuals bearing the same *name*", whereas nouns with [COMMON] "pick out sets of individuals sharing the same properties [...] other than having the same name" (p. 74). Now as for the D-level, G&M claim that the phonologically null D (in English) that takes a proper name is a morpho-phonological realization of a specific feature set consisting of a special feature [PROPER], as well as [SINGULAR] and [DEFINITE], assuming post-syntactic Vocabulary Insertion *à la* Distributed Morphology (Halle & Marantz 1994). This is illustrated in (15). Thus, the

null D for proper nouns shares semantic properties with the definite D *the*, in such a way that the feature set of *the* is a proper subset of the null D.[4]
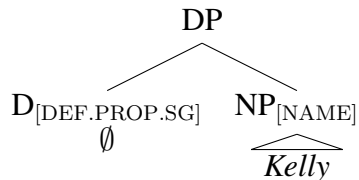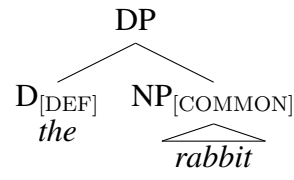
(15) a. ⟨ ∅ ⇔ [PROPER, SINGULAR, DEFINITE] ⟩
     b. ⟨ *the* ⇔ [DEFINITE] ⟩   G&M:(11)

The motivation for this feature specification, in particular the presence of the unique feature [PROPER], comes from a cross-linguistic observation that some languages make the common–proper distinction overtly at the D-level. For example, the data in (16) show that Niuean (Tongic, Austronesian) has a pair of absolutive case markers (*a* and *e*), which are assumed to be of syntactic category D and contrast in terms of common vs. proper. In addition, the Catalan data in (17) shows that the language has a determiner *En* which surfaces only with a male proper noun and is distinct from the common determiner *el*.

(16) Niuean   G&M:(2a,b)

    a. *Ne tohitohi **a** **Sione**.*
       PST writing ABS.P Sione
       'Sione was writing.'

    b. *Kua egaega **e** **kau kauvehe**.*
       PERF rosy ABS.C PL cheek
       'The cheeks are rosy.'

(17) Catalan   G&M:(4–6)

	MASCULINE	FEMININE
COMMON	*el noi* 'the boy'	*la dona* 'the girl'
PROPER	***En** Joan* 'John'	*La Maria* 'Mary'

The trees in (18) below summarize this section. Singular proper name DPs, like *Kelly*, have the structure presented in (18a). Its structure is similar to that of common nouns, presented in (18b), in that it has the DP-layer above NP. It has a phonologically null determiner, which is a realization of the feature set consisting of [PROPER], [SINGULAR], and [DEFINITE].

(18) a.

                  DP
           D[DEF.PROP.SG] NP[NAME]
              ∅
                  Kelly

    b.

                  DP
           D[DEF] NP[COMMON]
           the
                  rabbit

4 The analysis

Having reviewed G&M's analysis, we are now ready to provide an analysis of the Japanese data. The central claim that I put forward here is the following: Proper

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[4]The feature [SINGULAR] is crucial for an analysis of the English determiner system, since plural proper names, such as *The Beatles* and *The Smiths* in English require the default definite determiner *the*. This feature is, however, not required in the analysis of Japanese proper names put forward in this paper.

names in Japanese are "somewhat" compositional, but not all proper names have the same status. Recall that family names with a honorific suffix -*san* or a title -*sensei* 'Teacher' behave equal to given names. This means that last names and given names need to be distinguished in such a way that family names are "barer" than given names. This distinction is syntactically expressed.

It is natural to assume that both family names and given names enter the narrow syntax with [NAME] as both of them pick an entity with those names. The difference comes in terms of the presence/absence of the feature [PROPER]. Let us further assume that the location of [PROPER] is language-dependent, and in Japanese, it can appear in a nominal functional projection F located between N and D. I argue, then, that the family name picks up [PROPER] syntactically/post-lexically, as shown in (19a), whereas the (native Japanese)[5] given name is lexically associated with both [NAME] and [PROPER], as in (19b). Let us further assume that in the usual case the N head of the proper name in Japanese undergoes head-movement to the F^0 position, though the movement is string-vacuous.

(19)   a.

b.
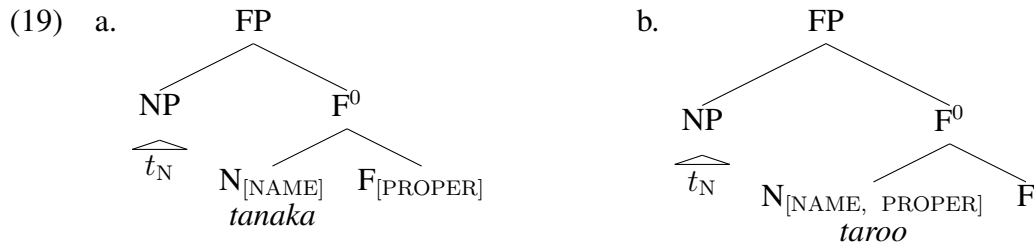
In addition, I argue that the kinship terms listed in (6) that may appear in the N2 position may be selected by F with [PROPER]. In that case, the kinship N undergoes head-movement to F, and the N1 enters the structure later. Thus the family name has to be licensed by the genitive marker -*no*, as illustrated in (20).

(20)
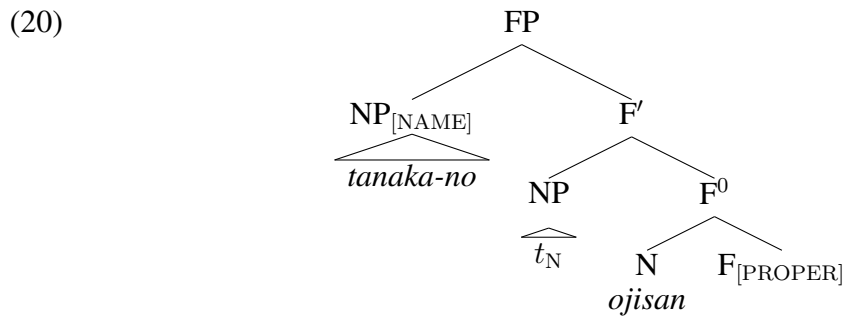
While I do not have a theoretical answer to why (a subset of) kinship terms can enter into the derivation in this way, it should be pointed out that kinship terms are cross-linguistically more likely to behave like proper nouns. For example, G&M show that in Niuean, kinship terms appear with proper case marking (G&M: (10)), and Longobardi (1994: footnote 19) notes that a subset of kinship names in Italian act like proper names, in that they can undergo N-to-D movement.

This structure successfully accounts for the unavailability of the QR with given names. Consider (21).

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[5]See the discussion around (30–32).

(21)   *Taroo-no   ojisan*
Taroo-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
$\sqrt{}$PR: 'Taroo's uncle'
*QR: 'Taroo, who is a middle-aged man'

```
                        FP
                 _____/ _____
                /               \
    NP[NAME, PROPER]             F'
         /\                 ____/ \____
    taroo(-no)             /           \
                          NP            F⁰
                          /\          __/ \__
                         t_N         /       \
                                    N      F[PROPER]
                                  ojisan
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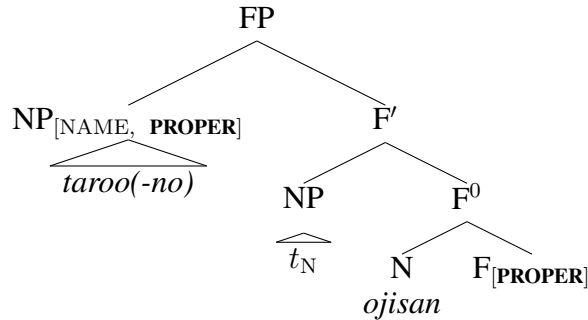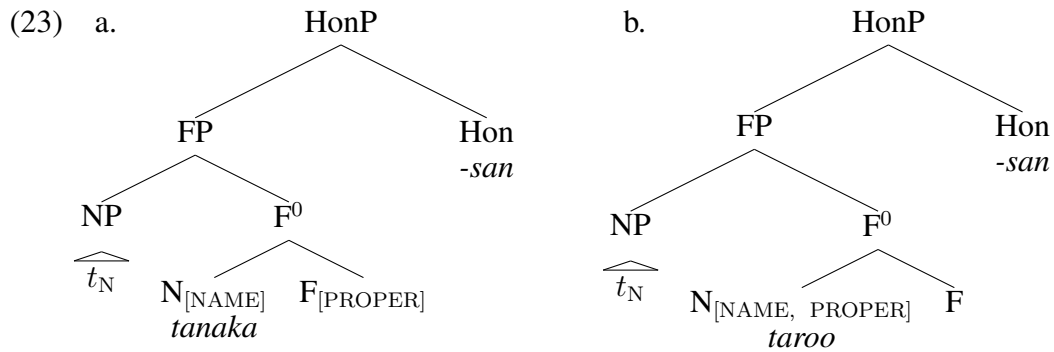
As the given name *Taroo* lexically carries [PROPER], the structure in (21) comes
with two [PROPER] features. Assuming that maximally one [PROPER] can be al-
lowed in a given nominal layer, this leads to semantic uninterpretability. In addi-
tion, the [PROPER] that comes with *Taroo* will be unlicensed as the presence of the
kinship term *ojisan* 'uncle/middle aged man' blocks head-movement of the given
name to F. The PR with the structure schematized in (3) is still possible, and thus it
becomes the only available interpretation with the given name.

We now turn to the observation that proper names with the honorific suffix *-san*
or a title, such as *-sensei* 'Teacher' or *-kyooju* 'Professor', fail to bring about the
QR, just like given names. While it is tempting to posit that the honorific suffix and
a title are reflexes of [PROPER], appearing in F, I argue against this since they can
attach to given names, as shown in (22):

(22)   *Tanaka* = family name, *Hanako* = given name
  a.   *tanaka-san* 'Mr./Ms. Tanaka', *tanaka-sensei* 'Teacher Tanaka', *tanaka-*
       shichoo 'Mayor Tanaka'
  b.   *hanako-san* 'Ms. Hanako', *hanako-sensei* 'Teacher Hanako', ??*hanako-*
       shichoo 'Mayor Hanako'

As we attribute the unavailability of the QR with a given name to the redundant
presence of [PROPER], we would then expect (22b) to be ungrammatical if the hon-
orific suffix or titles have [PROPER]. Therefore, I propose that the honorific suffix
and titles are of the category Hon(orific), and that they select FP with [PROPER], as
the structures in (23) illustrate.

(23) a.

```
              HonP
             /    \
           FP      Hon
          /  \     -san
        NP    F⁰
        |    /  \
        t_N  N[NAME]  F[PROPER]
             tanaka
```

b.

```
              HonP
             /    \
           FP      Hon
          /  \     -san
        NP    F⁰
        |    /  \
        t_N  N[NAME, PROPER]  F
             taroo
```

This means that if a suffixed family name appears in the N1 position, it can only be interpreted as an HonP, which contains F with [PROPER], creating the redundant presence of [PROPER].

(24) *tanaka-**san**-no   ojisan*
       Tanaka-HON-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
       √PR: 'Mr./Ms. Tanaka's uncle'
       *QR: 'Mr. Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man'

```
                        FP
                      /    \
                  HonP      F′
                 /   \     /  \
               FP    Hon  NP   F⁰
              /  \   -san  |   /  \
            NP    F⁰       t_N N   F[PROPER]
            |    /  \          ojisan
            t_N N[NAME] F[PROPER]
                tanaka
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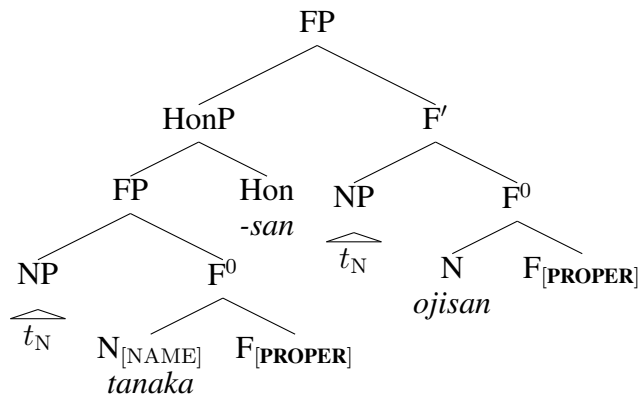
Let us now briefly turn to N2, in relation to the honorific suffix. Recall that the [N1-*no* N2] pattern with the QR does not necessarily sound impolite, although the use of a family name without an honorific suffix or a title typically displays a sense of contempt in Japanese. Given the analysis so far, if we were to place the honorific suffix -*san* to the example in (24), we would place it after N2. This would be ungrammatical.

(25) * [*tanaka-no   oji**san***   ] -***san***
         tanaka-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man   -HON

Notice that most of the N2s that allow the QR, presented in (6) and repeated in (26), are morphologically complex, suffixed with some sort of "affective" marker signalling the speaker's attitude to the referent.[6]

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[6]*Danna* 'husband, master, patron' and *goinkyo* 'retired master' are exceptions. Some speakers find *danna* 'husband, master, patron' is unacceptable as an N2. Also, the grammaticality with *goinkyo* 'retired master' improves when it is suffixed with -*san* for some speakers.

(26) Nouns that allow QR:

ojisan	'uncle, middle-aged man'	*danna*	'husband, master, patron'
obasan	'aunt, middle-aged woman'	*okusan*	'wife, lady, mistress'
ojiisan	'grandfather, elderly man'	*anisan*	'older brother, senior'
obaasan	'grandmother, elderly woman'	*anesan*	'older sister, senior'
obocchan	'son, ingenuous/wealthy boy'	*(o)niisan*	'older brother, senior'
ojoosan	'daughter, young lady'	*(o)neesan*	'older sister, senior'
goinkyo	'retired master'		

The examples in (27) below illustrate that these terms are morphologically complex, allowing different affective suffixes.

(27)   a. *oji-* 'uncle'
          oji-san   *oji-chan*   *oji-sama*
            -HON   -DIMINUTIVE   -POLITE

      b. *(o)baa-* 'grandmother'
          obaa-san   *obaa-chan*   *obaa-sama*
            -HON   -DIMINUTIVE   -POLITE

The generalizations observed in this paper hold even when different suffixes are used, as shown in (28).

(28)   a. *tanaka-{chan/sama}-no*   *ojisan*
          tanaka-{DIMINUTIVE/POLITE}-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
          √PR: 'Mr./Ms. Tanaka's uncle'
          *QR: 'Mr./Ms. Tanaka's uncle'
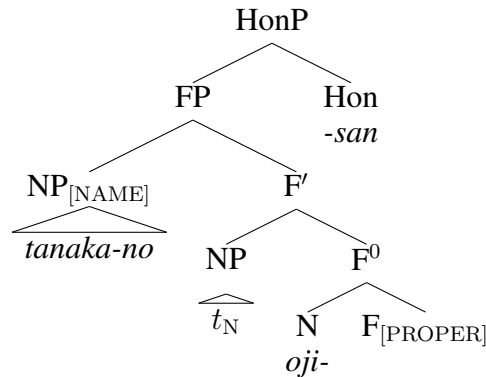
      b. *tanaka-no* { *oji-chan*   / *oji-sama*   }
          tanaka-GEN   -DIMINUTIVE /   -POLITE
          'Tanaka, who is a middle-aged man'

Assuming that the composition of a kinship term stem and a suffix happens syntactically, the structure in (20) is revised as the one in (29), which accounts for the fact that the phrase is not contemptuous.

(29)

```
                          HonP
                         /    \
                       FP      Hon
                      /  \      -san
              NP[NAME]     F'
                |         /  \
            tanaka-no   NP    F⁰
                        |     /  \
                       t_N   N    F[PROPER]
                            oji-
```

Finally, I claim that the "family name vs. given name" distinction is mildly lexical by showing that there are exceptions. For this, we need to consider stage names that are given to Performers of traditional Japanese performing arts, such as *rakugo* and *kabuki*. (30) gives a small sample of traditional stage names of rakugo storytellers.

(30)   Sample of *rakugo* storyteller names:
      Sanyuutei Enraku   *Yanagiya Kosan*   *Hayashiya Syoozoo*
      Sanyuutei Rakutaroo   *Yanagiya Kosanji*   *Hayashiya Hikoroku*
      Sanyuutei Kooraku   *Yanagiya Sankyoo* *Hayashiya Kikuzoo*

These names consist of a *yagoo* or *teigoo* 'stage title', which acts like a family name, and a "name", which is like a given name, pinpointing a specific rakugo storyteller. In (30), *Sanyuutei*, *Yanagiya*, and *Hayashiya* are stage titles, and they are followed by given names. What is interesting is that, even though given names are "given" to a specific individual, rakugo storytellers inherit given names from older generations. Perhaps due to this slightly less referential nature of them, the given names of the stage names allow the QR:

(31)   a. *Enraku-no   ojisan*
      Enraku-GEN uncle/middle.aged.man
      √QR: 'Enraku, who is a middle-aged man.'
    b. *Utamaru-no   ojiisan*
      Utamaru-GEN grandfather/elderly.man
      √QR: 'Utamaru, who is an elderly man.'

In addition to these stage names, foreign given names can give rise to the QR, as in (32). These examples strengthen the point that the matter is lexical.

(32)   a. (Looking at pictures of a man cosplaying as a T-800 Terminator at an event:)
      ato, **aanorudo-no ojisan**-*yori-wa*   *zuutto*
      also Arnold-GEN   middle.aged.man-than-TOP much.more
      otokomae-kamo.
      handsome-maybe
      'Also, (he's) maybe way more handsome than middle-aged Arnold (Schwarzenegger).'[7]
    b. *santa-no   ojisan*
      Santa(.Claus)-GEN middle.aged.man
      'Old Santa (Claus)'

5 Concluding remarks

This paper has provided additional evidence that proper nouns are not atomic: they receive their referential status compositionally. However, it has also shown that we cannot treat all proper nouns equally, and the asymmetry should be given in the syntax.

While very little work has been done on the differences among various kinds of proper nouns, and this paper may be rather novel in this regard, this is not a new insight at least descriptively. For example, it is well known that in English,

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[7]Found at `http://luvbigal.blog80.fc2.com/blog-entry-2174.html` (retrieved on May 23, 2017)

honorific titles such as *Mr.* and *Ms.* strongly prefer to attach to family names. It is also well known that family names are more salient than given names in sentences like (33).

(33) a. We're going over to **the Smiths** for dinner.
      b. All **the Jennifers** on the team were playing especially well. (Elizabeth Cowper p.c.)

In addition, Elizabeth Cowper (p.c.) points out that (33a) does not "refer to a house that's occupied by a group of unrelated people who happen to be named Smith". Finally, Irish Gaelic family names are compositional, consisting of a prefix, such as *Mac* and *Ó* which changes according to the referent's gender and marital status. Also, often they can be substituted with the definite article *an* 'the', as illustrated in (34). The forms with *an* are used referentially, and they may appear in various positions of a clause. Given names do not observe these properties.

(34) a. *Ó Domhnaill* (O'Donnell) → *An Dálach*
      b. *Mac Suibhne* (Sweeney) → *An Suibhneach*   (James McCloskey, p.c.)

These observations, together with the Japanese findings laid out in this paper, call for a more detailed and cross-linguistically adequate investigation of the syntax of proper nouns.

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