

A descriptive study of an indiscriminative NPI, “indeterminate-*bari*”, in Kagawa Japanese

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Abstract

Kagawa Japanese has a particle *bari*, which combines with an indeterminate pronoun resulting in forms such as *nani-bari* “what-*bari*”. This study aims to document the behavior of this hitherto unstudied form, “indeterminate + *bari*”. Distributionally, I show that such *bari*-phrases exhibit the characteristic behavior of negative polarity items (NPIs), appearing only under negation and some other limited contexts. With regard to their interpretations, *bari*-phrases obligatorily bear interpretation that the indicated individual is randomly chosen, which I claim to be comparable to what are called indiscriminative readings of Free-choice items in other languages. These behaviors of *bari*-phrases are expected to shed light on the theoretical studies of NPI-hood as well as those of indiscriminacy.

1 Introduction

Indeterminate pronouns in Japanese, such as *nani* ‘what’ or *dare* ‘who’, are known to combine with various particles to bear different interpretations (Kuroda, 1965). While Kagawa Japanese also utilizes this strategy, it has a different inventory of particles from Standard Japanese. In particular, Kagawa Japanese has a particle *-bari*, as exemplified in (1). Here, *bari* combines with an indeterminate pronoun *nani* “what” and bears an interpretation “just anything”.

- (1) ano ko-wa **nani-bari** tabe-n
 that kid-TOP what-*bari* eat-NEG
 “That kid does not eat just anything. (=He/she is picky about what he/she eats.)”

The purpose of this work is to document the distribution and interpretation of this hitherto unstudied element. Based on the judgments made by a female native speaker of Kagawa dialect born in 1965 in the Western area of Kagawa, I demonstrate that a *bari*-phrase is a Negative Polarity Item (NPI) with an obligatory indiscriminative reading.

Prior to undertaking a detailed description of its distribution and interpretation, I briefly describe the basic morphology of *bari*-phrases. *Bari* combines with a subset of indeterminate pronouns in Japanese. More specifically, in addition to *nani* “what” in (1), it combines with *dare* “who”, *doko* “where”, *itu* “when” and *doo* “how”.

- (2) **dare-bari**(-ga) koo-hen-de
 who-*bari*-NOM come-NEG-PRT
 “Not just anybody will come.”
- (3) **doko-bari** ika-n-tok-i
 where-*bari* go-NEG-ASP-IMP
 “Don’t go just anywhere.” (=You should be careful about where to go.)
- (4) **dore-bari** sawara-n-tot-te
 which-*bari* touch-NEG-ASP-INF
 “Don’t touch just any one of these.” (=You should be careful about which one to touch.)
- (5) itu-*bari* it-tara onkareru-n-de
 when-*bari* go-if get.scolded-NMLZ-PRT

“You’ll get scolded if you go just anytime.” (=You should carefully choose when to go.)¹

- (6) (?)**doo-bari** se-n-tot-te
how-*bari* do-NEG-ASP-INF
“Don’t do just anything.” (=You should be careful about how to behave.)

It is clearly incompatible with *naze/nande* “why”, *dotti* “which (dual)” and *dono-N* “which N”.

- (7) *{**naze-bari/nande-bari**} se-n-tot-te
why-*bari* do-NEG-ASP-INF
(intended) “Don’t do it for just any reason”
- (8) *{**dotti-bari/dono hon-bari**} sawara-n-tot-te
which.DU-*bari*/which book-*bari* touch-NEG-ASP-INF
(intended) “Don’t touch just {either of these/any book}.”

As can be seen in (2), *bari*-phrases can be optionally followed by a case marker.

Now that I have described the basic morphology of *bari*-phrases, I now go into the description of their distribution and interpretation.

2 Distribution

2.1 Polarity Sensitivity

Bari-phrases show a characteristic distribution reported for Negative Polarity Items (NPI) in other languages (Ladusaw, 1979; Kadmon and Landman, 1993, a.o.). Most canonically, *bari*-phrases appear under the scope of negation as shown in (1)–(4), (6) or in (9). This contrasts with the data in (10), which show that *bari*-phrases cannot appear in positive sentences.

- (9) ano-ko-ni-wa **nani-bari** yu-e-*n*-de
that-kid-DAT-TOP what-*bari* tell-can-NEG-PRT
“We cannot tell just anything to that kid.”
- (10) a. *kono inu-wa **nani-bari** tabe-ru
this dog-TOP what-*bari* eat-PRES
“This dog eats just anything.”
b. *ano ko-wa **nani-bari** hito-ni yuu-de
That kid-TOP what-*bari* others-DAT tell-PRT
“That kid tells just anything to other people.”

Other licensors of *bari*-phrases are conditional clauses (e.g. (11)), *before* clauses (e.g. (12)), and comparatives (e.g. (13)).

- (11) **nani-bari** tabe-*tara* taityoo waru-naru-de
what-*bari* eat-if physical.condition bad-become-PRT
“You’ll get sick if you eat just anything.”
- (12) zibun-de **nani-bari** suru-*maeni* zyoosi-ni soodan-si-nasai
self-by what-*bari* do-before boss-DAT consult-do-IMP

¹The informant allowed the combination of *itu* and *bari* in a conditional clause, but not in a negative sentence. (cf. Section 2)

“Consult with your boss before you do just anything by yourself.” (=Be careful about what you do without consulting with your boss.)

- (13) zibun-de **nani-bari** suru-*yor*i dareka-ni kiita-hoo-ga ee-de
 self-by what-*bari* do-than someone-DAT ask-NMLZ-NOM good-PRT
 “It is better to ask someone than doing just anything by yourself.”

Other contexts that are reported to license NPIs in other languages do not license *bari*-phrases. More specifically, they are not licensed by a polar question (e.g. (14)), *too*-construction (e.g. (15)), clause-taking negative predicates (e.g. (16)) and quantifiers like *at-most* (e.g. (17)).

- (14) ***anta nani-bari** taberu?
 you what-*bari* eat
 “Do you eat just anything?”
- (15) ***nani-bari** yomu-ni-wa me-ga waru-*sugiru*-n-ya-gana
 what-*bari* read-for-TOP eye-NOM bad-too-NMLZ-COP-PRT
 “My eyesight is too bad to read just anything.”
- (16) ?***nani-bari** taberu-no-wa *yame*-ta-n-yo
 what-*bari* eat-NMLZ-TOP stop-PAST-NMLZ-PRT
 “I have quit eating just anything”
- (17) **saidai san-nin-ga nani-bari* tabe-ta
 at.most three-CL-NOM what-*bari* eat-PAST
 “At most three people ate just anything.”

Similarly to other NPIs in (Standard) Japanese (Kataoka, 2006), *bari*-phrases can occur in a subject position as shown in (18). Like *rokuna* NPI but unlike *-sika* NPI in (Standard) Japanese (Aoyagi and Ishii, 1994; Kataoka, 2006; Miyagawa et al., 2016), a single negative marker can license multiple *bari*-phrases at the same time as shown in (19).

- (18) **dare-bari-ga** ki-tara komaru-gana
 who-*bari*-NOM come-if get.in.trouble-PRT
 “We’ll get in trouble if just anyone comes.”
- (19) **dare-bari-ni nani-bari** iwa-n-toite-yo
 who-*bari*-DAT what-BARI say-NEG-ASP.IMP-PRT
 “Don’t tell just anything to just anybody”

So far, the observations are clearly indicative of the polarity sensitivity of *bari*-phrases. At this point, it is worth clarifying whether they are NPIs or negative concord items (NCIs), especially given that an indeterminate-based polarity sensitive item in Standard Japanese, *nani-mo*, is often argued to be an NCI, rather than an NPI (Watanabe, 2004; Miyagawa et al., 2016). NCIs are inherently negative items that, when co-occurring with another negative marker, exhibit concordance and convey a single semantic negation (Zeijlstra, 2022, a.o.). NPIs and NCIs are said to be distinguishable based on several diagnostics (Vallduví, 1994, a.o.) and *bari*-phrases behave like NPIs rather than NCIs in this regard. First, as already seen in (11)–(13), a *bari*-phrase can be licensed by elements other than the Neg marker, which is the hallmark of NPI rather than NCI (Vallduví, 1994). Second, licensing of NCIs is said to be clause-bound while licensing of NPIs is not (Giannakidou, 2000). In this context, licensing of *bari*-phrase can be long-distance. For example, (20) shows that the matrix negation licenses a *bari*-phrase in the embedded clause.

- (20) [konana-koto **dare-bari**-ni yuu-tot-ta-to]-wa sira-nkat-ta-n-ya
 such-thing who-*bari*-DAT say-ASP-PST-that-TOP know-NEG-PAST-NMLZ-COP
 “I didn’t know that (he/she) had told such a (embarrassing) thing to just anybody.”

Third, and most crucially, NCIs are known to bear a negative meaning by itself, for example in an elliptical answer where the negative marker is included in the ellipsis site (Watanabe, 2004). Unlike indeterminate+*mo* in Standard Japanese or its correspondent in Kagawa Japanese, indeterminate+*tya(a)* ((21-a)), *bari* phrases cannot be used in such an elliptical answer ((21-b)).

- (21) (A and B have been talking about the silly TV program A watched yesterday. Now, A asks B:)
- A: hudan nani mi-yo-n?
 usually what watch-ASP-Q
 “What do you watch usually?”
- a. B: nan-mo / nan-tyaa
 what-*mo* / what-TYA
 “nothing”
- b. B: *nani-bari
 what-*bari*
 (intended) “I don’t watch just anything” (I’m picky about what to watch.)

Thus, I conclude that *bari* phrases are NPIs, rather than NCIs.

2.2 Episodicity

So far, I have discussed that *bari*-phrases exhibit characteristic distribution of NPIs. In Section 3, I discuss *bari*-phrases in relation to free-choice items (FCIs). Now, FCIs are generally known to be licensed only in non-episodic contexts (see Section 3). Given that the examples discussed earlier were predominantly non-episodic, a question might arise whether mere non-episodicity is sufficient for licensing *bari* phrases. However, non-episodicity alone is insufficient and negation (or other NPI-licensing contexts) is necessary. For example, we saw above the data in (10), where positive habitual sentences fail to license *bari* phrases. The example in (22) illustrates the same point, indicating that (non-necessity) modal marker *-re* fails to license *bari* phrases.

- (22) (When asked whether there are anything that you cannot eat:)
- *watasi-wa **nani-bari** tabe-re-ru
 1sg-TOP what-*bari* eat-can-PRES
 “I can eat just anything.”

Overall, I have shown that *bari* phrases can be considered to be NPIs, based on its distribution. The next section discusses the interpretation of *bari* phrases.

3 Interpretation

Bari phrases bear interpretations that the indicated item is randomly chosen. When *bari*-phrases appear under negation, the randomness of the choice comes under the scope of negation.

The sentence in (23), for example, suggests that the CEO is not meeting with people randomly. That is, the CEO is now picky about who to meet with and will not meet an unqualified person.

- (23) syatyoo-wa ima-wa **dare-bari**-ni-wa ai-yora-n-no-desu
 CEO-TOP now-TOP who-*bari*-DAT-TOP meet-ASP-NEG-NMLZ-COP.POL
 “The CEO is not meeting with just anybody recently.”

This “random choice” reading sometimes results in the depreciation (cf. Haspelmath (1997)). As an illustration, consider the sentence in (24), in which the *bari*-phrase is situated within a conditional clause without a negation. In this case, the interpretation is that if you randomly choose what you say, you will end up in a newspaper due to a blunder.

- (24) (*To someone who’s got promoted to a significant position*)
nani-bari yuu-tara sinbun-ni noru-de
 what-*bari* say-if newspaper-DAT get.on-PRT

“If you say just anything, you’ll get on the newspaper.”

The “random choice” interpretation is comparable to what is called *indiscriminacy*, which is often associated with Free-choice items (FCIs) in other languages (Haspelmath, 1997; Horn, 2000; Jayez and Tovená, 2005; Cisneros, 2020). For example, an FCI *any* in English, especially when aided by *just* (i.e. *just any*), is said to bear indiscriminative reading. The example in (25), where *just any* is under the scope of negation, implies that the speaker would marry a person chosen based on some particular criteria, not a person chosen at random.

- (25) I wouldn’t marry just anyone. (Horn, 2000, 172)

As has just been mentioned, in other languages, indiscriminative reading is often borne in certain contexts by items that otherwise behave as FCIs (Haspelmath, 1997). However, *bari*-phrases need to be distinguished from mere FCIs for the obligatoriness of their “random choice” interpretation. This obligatoriness can be demonstrated by the observation that a *bari*-phrase is odd in a context where choice is expected to be made non-randomly. To illustrate, in (26), a FCI *nandemo* is possible while a *bari*-phrase is not allowed. In the situation described by this sentence, the addressee can freely choose what to buy to get a coupon card. However, crucially, according to our world knowledge, the addressee will not make the choice randomly. Thus, the unacceptability of a *bari* phrase in (26) indicates that the use of *bari* obligatorily suggests the randomness of the choice.²

- (26) {*nandemo*/#*nani-bari*} (ik-ko) koote-kure-tara kuupon-ken-o watasi-masu-yo
 FCI/what-*bari* one-CL buy-BEN-if coupon-card-ACC give-POL-PRT
 “If you buy anything, I’ll give you a coupon card”

At the same time, *bari*-phrases seem to exhibit a characteristic they have in common with FCIs, that is, their sensitivity to episodicity. Generally, FCIs are known to be incompatible with episodic contexts (unless it is modified) (Giannakidou, 1998; Dayal, 1998, a.o.). For example, in English, FC *any* is not allowed in the episodic sentence in (27). Similarly, *bari*-phrases are

²See Jayez and Tovená (2005) for a similar observation on French *n’importe quel*. They attribute this observation to what they call *equative* value of this item, which is distinct from indiscriminative value of this item under their view. I abstract away from the distinction between indiscriminacy and equative value in this paper, although the distinction might need more attention in studying the detailed semantics of this item.

not compatible with episodic sentences. Recall that I argued in Section 2.2 that non-episodicity alone, without negation (or other NPI licensors), is not enough to license *bari*-phrases. However, (28) shows that, even under negation, episodic contexts are avoided by *bari*-phrases. That is, *bari*-phrases seem to require both NPI-licensing contexts and non-episodic contexts.

(27) *John talked to any woman. (Dayal, 1998, 434)

(28) *kinoo-wa dare-bari-ni awa-nkat-ta
 yesterday-TOP who-*bari*-DAT see-NEG-PAST
 “I didn’t see just anybody yesterday.”

However, I must note that this incompatibility with episodicity is sometimes lifted. For example, (29) is accepted in spite of its episodicity. I leave it to future research to explore the circumstances under which *bari*-phrases are deemed acceptable in episodic contexts.

(29) kinoo-wa (onaka-no tyoosi-ga warukat-ta-ken) nani-bari
 yesterday-TOP stomach-GEN condition-NOM bad-PAST-because what-*bari*
 tabe-nkat-ta-n-ya
 eat-NEG-PAST-NMLZ-COP
 “I didn’t eat just anything yesterday (because the condition of my stomach was bad).”

4 Conclusion and Discussion

In this paper, I have documented the behavior of the *bari*-phrases in Kagawa Japanese. Distributionally, I have shown that *bari*-phrases are licensed only under contexts that are known to license NPIs in other languages. Based on this along with other observations, I have concluded that *bari* phrases are also NPIs. With regard to their interpretation, I have shown that they obligatorily bear indiscriminate reading and, in that sense, are distinguished from FCIs for which indiscriminate reading is salient only in some contexts.

The behavior of *bari* phrases has implications for the study of indiscriminacy and NPIs. First, while indiscriminate reading is sometimes considered a pragmatic enrichment of free choice (Haspelmath, 1997), I have shown that *bari*-phrases differ from FCIs in obligatorily bearing indiscriminate reading. This adds to the evidence that indiscriminate reading cannot be reduced to mere pragmatic enrichment (Jayez and Tovená, 2005; Cisneros, 2020).

Second, the behavior of *bari*-phrases is expected to give implications on the analysis of NPI-hood. One prominent theoretical question regarding NPIs is what makes an element a grammatical NPI (Zeijlstra, 2022, a.o.). Some previous studies consider the NPI-hood to be a syntactic property (Herburger and Mauck, 2013, a.o.), and others derive the NPI-hood from the semantics of the item (Kadmon and Landman, 1993; Krifka, 1995, a.o.). Thus, an interesting question would be whether we can derive the NPI-hood of *bari*-phrases from their indiscriminate semantics. While indiscriminate reading of FCIs is said to be most natural under negation (Haspelmath, 1997; Horn, 2000), indiscriminate readings of FCIs in other languages are still licensed under positive contexts (see the data in Giannakidou (1998) and Jayez and Tovená (2005)). This indicates that indiscriminate reading alone is not enough to straightforwardly account for NPI-hood. On the one hand, this might suggest that NPI-hood of *bari*-phrases is a syntactically determined property. Alternatively, the differences in the NPI-hood might be the result of fine-grained semantic differences between the optional indiscriminate reading of FCI and the true indiscriminate semantics of *bari*-phrases. Either

way, the behavior of *bari*-phrases is expected to shed light on the licensee question of NPIs.

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