INDEFINITE PRONOUNS IN ASSAMESE

Pushpa Renu Bhattacharyya

The study describes the indefinite pronouns in Assamese with its complexity and unique features and put emphasis on the morphological, semantic and syntactic properties. The term pronoun is used in the sense of the nominal expression and the substitution in the nominal slot only.

Keywords: indefinite, morphology, syntax, semantics.

1 Introduction

The present study is a modest attempt at description of the extensively used form and function of indefinite pronouns in Assamese a New Indo-Aryan language recognized by the constitution of India as one of the official languages spoken in Assam, situated in the Bhrahmaputra valley of North East India spreading an area of 78,438.00 square kilometres. According to the census report of 2011, the population of Assam is 31,169,272 the total numbers of native speakers of Assamese being 16.8 million, while the language is spoken by over 20 million people belonging to heterogeneous speech communities living together. Assamese is agglutinative with a SOV word order and nominative-accusative case alignment system with subject-verb agreement.

1.1 Pronouns in Assamese

The term pronoun is used here as pro-nouns i.e., grammatical items that can replace nouns and noun phrases. It must be mentioned that in Assamese, epithets are used as post nominal modifiers of the head proper nouns and of the second and third person head pronouns. Pronouns in Assamese are free forms. They are pronounced fully and can function deictically as well as anaphorically. They can also be suffixed with various morphemes like classifiers, plural markers, case markers, particles, etc. On the basis of their morphological representations and semantic features the pronouns may be identified and classified into different subclasses accordingly. In terms of their discourse function and frequency of use all the subclasses of pronouns can be grouped into two distinct major subtypes - central pronouns and peripheral pronouns.

1.1.1 Central pronouns

The central pronouns consist of five subclasses:
i. Personal pronouns
ii. Demonstrative pronouns
iii. Relative pronouns
iv. Interrogative pronouns
v. Anaphoric pronouns

1.1.2 Peripheral pronouns

The peripheral pronouns consist of three subclasses:
i. Indefinite pronouns
ii. Universal pronouns
iii. Miscellaneous pronouns

The various forms of pronominals[1] in Assamese exhibit idiosyncratic morphological patterns and syntactic behaviour inherent to those specific subclasses.

2 Indefinite pronouns

An indefinite pronoun is used to refer to unknown and unidentified persons or things exhibit human vs. non-human or inanimate distinctions inherently. The pronouns belonging to this group are in a logical sense quantitative that express various degrees of indefiniteness. The label indefiniteness is used to refer to a referent which is different from, but the same kind of entity as the one referred to before. The distribution of indefinite pronouns in syntax is highly complex with semantics and pragmatics features. They have both positive[2] and negative variants. The positive indefinite pronouns are specific[3] and non-specific while the negative ones are non-specific only. Both the types of indefinite pronouns exhibit human vs. non-human or inanimate distinctions.

2.1 Positive indefinite pronouns

The positive non-specific indefinite pronouns encoding human and non-human or inanimate referents are simple and derived. The derived has compound, complex and reduplicated variants. Reduplication can be either full or partial or

modified. Table 1 displays the subtypes of positive non-specific indefinite pronouns.

Table 1: Positive non-specific indefinite pronouns

Forms	Human /Inanimate
Simple	keu / kʰenʊ / kʊnʊ 'someone' kisu 'something [-AN]'
Derived	Compound (Human/Inanimate)
	zi-kʊnʊ 'anyone', dui-eta /dui-sarita 'a few [-AN]', dui-sari / dui-ek 'a few people'
	Complex (Human/Inanimate)
	ḅale-man 'many', kisu-man 'some', zɔn–dijek 'a few people' elek-pelek 'so and so (PL)' egal-man 'many [-AN]'
	Partially reduplicated (Human/Animate)
	zei-ħei 'anyone'
	Fully reduplicated (Human/Inanimate)
	kʊnʊ-kʊnʊ 'someone (PL)' kisu-kisu 'something(PL)[-AN]'

The types of simple indefinite pronouns have simple stems. The compounds are combinations of two free forms, e.g., two numerals dui-ek/dui-sari 'a few' or an interrogative pronoun and a relative pronoun as exemplified by zi-kʊnʊ 'anyone' respectively. A complex indefinite pronoun combines a bound form with a free form as in ḅale-man or egal-man 'many', where the bound suffix -man is used to imply approximation. A complex form may be a combination of two bound forms as in elek-pelek 'so and so'. In case of partial reduplication process two pronominal forms that belong to

different subtypes combine together as in zei-ħei 'anyone', zi-ti or za-ta 'whatever' where the second constituent is modified. The fully reduplicated pronouns take the same simple stem as the second element as kʊnʊ-kʊnʊ 'some'.

2.2 Negative indefinite pronouns

The negative indefinite pronouns express non-existence. The negative non-specific indefinite pronouns having human and inanimate forms occur with negative verbs[4] only. Table 2 represents negative indefinite pronouns in Assamese.

Table 2: Negative indefinite pronouns

Forms	Human /Inanimate
Simple	kʊnʊ 'nobody keʊ 'none' ekʊ 'nothing'
Compound	keʊ-kisu 'nobody' ekʊ-eta 'nothing'

As seen in Table 2, kʊnʊ 'someone' is used as a positive specific indefinite pronoun as a negative non-specific indefinite pronoun as well. It has another variant keʊ 'none'. The compound forms are combinations of a simple indefinite pronoun with another pronoun or a numeral. However, the indefinites that function as nominal modifiers are not pronouns, e.g., in kʊnʊ-zɔn manuh 'some persons', kʊnʊ-zɔn is a nominal modifier, but in kʊnʊ-zɔn 'someone' in isolation is an indefinite pronoun.

3 Dependents of indefinite pronouns

Adjectives may occur with indefinite pronouns in highly context bound utterances. The expression in (1) exemplifies an indefinite pronoun taking an adjective as a pre-head modifier.

(1)   [nɔtun] kiba
       new   something
       'something new'.

The following exemplifies a compound indefinite pronoun as head taking an adjective as a pre-modifier.

(2) [roŋin]   kiba-ɛta
    colourful   something
    'something colourful.'

Indefinite pronouns occur with post modifiers also. In the following example an adjective functioning as a modifier occurs as a post-head dependent.

(3) kʊnʊba [murkhɔ]
    some   idiot
    'some idiots.'

The expression in (4) provides an evidence for the fact that an indefinite pronoun functions as head that takes an indefinite quantifier as its modifier.

(4) kʊnʊba [kei-zɔni   -man]
    IND   QUAN-CL(SG:F)-APPROX
    'a few girls.'

The least frequent type of dependent of pronouns can be an appositive as exemplified by the following with an indefinite pronoun as the head that takes a proper noun as its dependent.

(5) [kʊnʊba] [benu   bɔrua]
    someone   Benu Barua
    'some Benu Barua.'

The pronouns either personal or other subtypes take quantifiers (i.e., numeral plus classifier) as post-head modifiers.

(6) ħihÕt [du-ta]
    3₃ PL   two-CL
     'both of them.'

(7) kʊnʊba [ɛ-zɔn]
    IND   one-CL
    'some one.'

The above examples show that indefinite pronouns may take adjective (both pre and post head positions), nominal appositive and quantifier as pre modifiers.

4 Morphophonemics and morphology

The positive non-specific type of indefinite pronoun encodes human referents with direct stems- kʊnʊ, keu and kʰenʊ 'someone' and non-human referent kisu 'something [-AN]'only. These indefinites can occur with both positive and negative verbs. The first form *kʊnʊ* occurs as

subject only, while all the others can function in different case marked positions. e.g.:

(8) kʊnʊ-e   nas-is -e   kʊnʊ-e
    IND-NOM   dance-IPFV-3   IND-NOM
     ga-is-e
     sing-IPFV-3
    'Someone is dancing, someone is singing.'

(9) kʰenʊ -k   dekʰ-i   besi
    IND-ACC   see-NF   more
     utsahi   no-ho-ba
     enthusiastic   NEG-happen -2₂
     'Don't be too enthusiastic by seeing others.'

Some derived composite forms of positive non-specific indefinite pronouns are exemplified below.

(10) zikʊnʊ-e   kam-tʊ
     IND-NOM   work-CL
     kor-ibɔ   par-e
     do-NF   can- 3
     'Anyone can do the work.'

(11) ḅaleman-e   teʊ-r   kɔtʰa-t
     IND-NOM   3₂ SG-GEN   word–LOC
      ħɔnmɔti   zɔna-l-e
      agreement   express-PST-3
      'Many agreed with him / her.'

One of the reduplicated positive non-specific indefinite pronouns shown in Table 2 exhibits a specific genitive construction, in which the initial constituent suffixed with the genitive case functions as the possessor and the final constituent as the head in a possessional construction as in elek-ɔr pelek 'so and so (PL)' used to refer to some distant indefinite referents. It can be used in both subject and object positions with relevant cases.

(12) elek-ɔr   pelek-ɔloi   iman
     IND-GEN   IND-DAT   so
     sinta   no-kor-ib-a
     worry   NEG-do-FUT-2₂
     'Don't bother much about so and so.'

The positive non-specific indefinite type has a unique partially and modified reduplicated variant with distinctions of humanness and animacy used to imply 'anyone' or 'anything.' The direct stems

used for [+HUM] are zi-ħi and zei-ħei and its indirect stems are za-ta. It has a reduced variant without the initial phonemes /z-/ and /t-/ or /ħ-/ as in genitive marked a-r ta-r and accusative marked a-k ta-k. The [-AN] type has different variants that can be used to encode direct object only. Its indirect stems are zih-tih as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Reduplicated indefinite pronouns

Case	[+Human]	[-Animate]
Nominative	zi-ħi-(e), zei-e - ħei-e	zi-ti, za-ta, zi-ki
Accusative	za-k ta-k , a-k ta-k	zih-ɔk(e) tih-ɔk(e), ziti, za ta
Genitive	za-r ta-r, zeiħei-r	a-r ta-r, zih-ɔr tih-ɔr
Dative	zeiħei -loi, zata –loi	ziti-loi, zata-loi

As seen from Table 3, in case of some reduplicated pronouns of this type, the same case is suffixed to both the constituents or both the constituents remain unmarked; while in others just one case is suffixed to the reduplicated constituent as a whole as exemplified.

(13) zei-e   ħei-e   ene   kam
     IND-NOM   IND-NOM   like   work
     kor-ibɔ   nʋ-(p)ar-e
     do-NF   NEG-can-3
     'Anybody cannot do such a work.'

(14) zi –ti-∅   no-ko-ba
     IND.ACC   NEG- say-2_2
     'Do not speak nonsense.'

(15) a-k   ta-k   ħuḍ - i
     IND-ACC   IND-ACC   ask-NF
     tʋma-r   gɔr-tʋ   ulia-l-ʋ
     2_2 SG-GEN   house-CL   find-PST-1
     'I have managed to find your house by asking one and another.'

Before giving a description of the positive specific type, it is a necessary prerequisite to illustrate the negative type, as both are compositionally related.

The negative non–specific indefinite pronoun has both [+HUM] and [-HUM] variants as displayed in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: Negative non-specific indefinite pronouns

Case	[+Human]	[-Human]
Nominative	kʋnʋ(e) /kʋneʋ / keu-e	ekʋ(e)
Accusative	kakʋ	ekʋ
Genitive	karʋ	-
Dative	karʋ-loi	ekʋ-loi

As presented in Table 4, the [+human] negative indefinite pronoun has three ʋ-ending direct stems. They are- kʋnʋ-, kakʋ- and karʋ- 'nobody' / 'none'. The first is used to refer to subject, the second encodes direct object, while the third encodes possessor. As shown in the Table 4, the non-human indefinite pronoun ekʋ 'nothing' shares the same direct stem for encoding all functions. Both the pronouns thus formed can be optionally be suffixed with the overt nominative marker depending on the transitivity of the verb. While there is no form for the genitive case for the non-human category, the accusative of both are unmarked for case, but the dative of both are overtly marked. The following exemplifies negative indefinite pronouns as subjects.

(16) azi-loi-ke   ta-k
     today-DAT-EMPH 3_3SG:M- ACC
      keu-e   dekh-a   n-a-e
     IND-NOM   see-NF   NEG-be 3
     'No one has seen him till today.'

(17) kʋneʋ- ɸ   ta-k
     IND-NOM 3_3SG:M- ACC
     na-mat-il-e
     NEG-call-PST-3
     'None had invited him.'

The examples in the following show its use as the object.

(18) kɔtha-tʋ   kakʋ- ɸ   no-ko-ba
     fact -CL   IND. ACC   NEG-say-FUT 2_2
     'Don't divulge the fact to anyone.'

(19) ta-k   ekʊ- ɸ   no-ko-ba
      3₃SG:M-ACC   IND.ACC   NEG-say-FUT2₂
      'Don't tell him anything.'

The following is an example of compound negative non-specific indefinite pronoun.

(20) ta-r   keʊ-kisu   n-a-e
      3₃SG:M-GEN   IND   NEG-be 3
      'He has no one (i.e., kith and kin).'

Negative indefinite co-occurs only with negativised verbs as substantiated by the ungrammaticality of following sentences.

(21) * gɔr-ɔt   kʊnʊ   as-e
      house-LOC IND   be-3

(22) * kɔtʰa-tʊ   kakʊ   ko-ba
      fact -CL   IND   say –FUT 2₂

Of the [+HUM] positive specific subtype with the specificity marker –ba the direct variant kʊnʊba- takes the nominative case and the oblique variant karʊba takes all other case markers as in the following.

Table 5: Positive specific indefinite pronouns

Stem	Case	Word form
kʊnʊba- karʊba-	nominative accusative genitive dative	kʊnʊba-(e) karʊba-k karʊba-r karʊba-loi

The following are examples of positive specific indefinite pronouns occurring in various syntactic positions.

(23) kʊnʊba-e   karʊba-k
      IND-NOM   IND-ACC
      mar-is-e
      beat-IPFV-3
      'Someone is beating some other.'

(24) kʊnʊba- ɸ   ah-is-e
      IND-NOM   come-IPFV-3
      'Someone is coming.'

(25) kali   karʊba-r   gɔr-ɔt
      yesterday   IND-GEN   house-LOC

      suri   ho-is-e
      theft   happen-IPFV-3
      'There had been a theft yesterday at someone's   home.'

The positive specific indefinite pronouns ki- and kih- used to refer to non-human and /or animate, non-animate referents are complex forms derived by the insertion of the specificity marker –(ɔ)ba by the process of anaptyxis. It has two direct variants, one is kiba-, which does not take the overt nominative case and the other is kihɔba- 'something', formed by insertion of the vowel ɔ, followed by the specificity marker ba, which takes all case markers as shown by Table 6.

Table 6: [–HUM/±AN] Positive specific indefinite pronouns

Direct stem	Case	Word form
ki-/kih-	nominative	kiba / kihɔba-e
	accusative	kiba / kihɔba-k, ziba
	genitive	kihɔba-r
	dative	kihɔba-loi

The sentences in (26) and (27) exemplify the use of positive specific indefinite pronouns.

(26) kiba- ɸ   ko-ba   neki
      IND.ACC   say-2₂   QF
      Do you want to say something?'

(27) kihɔba-e   mat-is-e
      IND-NOM   call-IPFV-3
      'Something is producing a sound.'

These ba- ending indefinite pronouns need to be distinguished from the interrogative-indefinite pronouns with the dubitative particle -ba used to express the speaker's sense of doubt or anxiety interspersed with the question. Phonologically, the question word carries the rising intonation, while the dubitative particle is marked by a falling intonation. It has a limited number of contrastive forms for both human and non-human referents. Table 7 represents those pronouns.

Table 7: Interrogative-indefinite pronoun

Case	[+Human]	[-Human]
Nominative	kʊn-ba	ki-ba
Accusative	kak-ba	kihɔk-ba
Genitive	kar-ba	kihɔr-ba
Dative	kaloi-ba	kihɔloi–ba

The use of these pronouns in various case marked positions are shown below.

(28) kʊn-ba - ɸ   ah-is-il
    INT-IND-NOM   come -IPFV-PST3
    'Who might have come?'

(29) ħi- ɸ   ki-ba- ɸ
    3₃SG:M- NOM   INT-IND-ACC
    an-is-e
    bring-IPFV-3
    'What might he have brought?'

The bound form–(ɔ)ba is used as a specific marker suffixed to question words or interrogative pronouns to derive the complex forms of positive specific indefinite pronouns like kʊnʊ-ba 'someone', kih-ɔba 'something', ki-ba 'something' and relative pronoun zi-ba 'whichever / whatever [-AN]', encoding human, non-human, animate and inanimate referents respectively. Some of them exhibit compound forms, e.g., kiba-eta 'something', kiba-kibi 'somethings' etc.

However, it has another ba- ending variant used as interrogative-indefinite pronoun, where a case marked interrogative pronoun is suffixed with –ba as a dubitative particle to express the speaker's sense of doubt or anxiety interspersed with the question. Phonologically, the question word carries the rising intonation, while the dubitative particle is marked by a falling intonation. It has a limited number of contrastive forms for both human (e.g., kʊn-ba, kak-ba, kar-ba) and non-human (e.g., ki-ba, kihɔk-ba, kihɔr-ba) referents.

However, the same form suffixed to the indefinite quantifier *kei* as *kei-ba* followed by classifiers may be used to imply 'quite a few' (Chowdhary 2012: 272) with reference to indefinite referents of various types of animacy, e.g., kei-ba-zɔn (human), kei-ba-ta (human / non-human / inanimate).

5 Marking of number

Number distinction has no grammatical bearing on the language. The morphological processes associated in the formation of plural forms of the various subclasses of pronouns are illustrated below.

Except few, most of the indefinite pronouns are inherently neutral in exhibiting number differentiations. The morphological processes associated in the formation of derived plural indefinite pronouns may be summed up as in the following:

i. Suffixation of plural markers

 kʊnʊ 'some (SG)'>kʊnʊ - bʊr / -bilak 'some (PL)'

ii. Compounding

zɔn-oik 'one person'> zɔn-diek 'more than one',

 kiba-eta   'something   [-HUM]>kiba-kibi 'something (PL)[-AN]';

kʊnʊ 'some (SG)'>kʊnʊ-kʊnʊ 'some (PL)'.
 elek-pelek 'so and so(PL)';

iii. Reduplication:

kiba 'something (SG)'>kiba-kibi 'somethings',

kʊnʊ 'some (SG)'>kʊnʊ-kʊnʊ 'some',

kʊnʊba 'some (SG)'>kʊnʊba kʊnʊba 'some (PL)'

6 Marking of gender

In case of some indefinite pronouns gender is distinguished on the basis of whether the masculine classifier -zɔn, -tʊ or the feminine classifier -zɔni is used as its final constituent, e.g., kʊn-tu 'which one (M)' > kʊn-zɔni 'which one (F)'; kʊnʊ-zɔn 'someone (M)'> kʊnʊ-zɔni 'someone (F)' respectively.

Gender in pronouns of Assamese is found to be only restrictively grammatical.

7 Semantic features of indefinite pronouns

The semantic feature of indefiniteness characterizes indefinite pronouns. They may encode positivity or negativity. The positive indefinite pronouns may again imply specificity or non-specificity. The semantic distinctions of animacy/inanimacy and humanness/non-humanness are the additional salient features of indefinite pronouns. The final element –ʊ, signalling indefiniteness is shared by most of the positive non-specific indefinite pronouns like kʊnu, keu, khenʊ, kisu 'someone' as well as negative non-specific indefinite pronouns karʊ, kakʊ 'none' and ekʊ 'nothing' etc.

Specificity is associated with -(ɔ)ba- ending indefinite pronouns as in kʊnʊba-, karʊba- 'someone', kiba 'something', kihɔba 'something'.

The positive non-specific indefinite pronouns suffixed with classifiers indicate sex distinctions as in kʊnʊzɔn 'someone (SG:M)', kʊnʊzɔni 'someone (SG:F).'

Reduplicated indefinite pronouns are used to mark plurality as in zeiħei 'anyone', ziti/zata 'anything', zikʊnʊ 'any one', kʊnʊkʊnʊ 'some.'

The meaning differences can be seen in NPs with indefinite pronouns as the head with or without dependents. For example, kiba 'something' or kʊnʊba 'someone' can have a specific sense when it occurs with a quantifier as it's dependent as in kiba eta 'something' or kʊnʊba ezɔn 'someone.'

8 Pragmatics of indefinite pronouns

8.1 Indirectness and politeness

Indefinite pronouns are very deeply related with the concept of politeness. It has been argued that there is a correlation between indirectness and politeness. In general not to address another person too directly is considered to be a very general politeness strategy. For example, the subject position of the imperative sentence which is canonically characterized by an ellipse subject can be overtly filled up by an indefinite pronoun in place of the 2nd person pronoun.

(30) kʊnʊba -   zʊ-a   aru
     IND -NOM   go-IMP.2₂   and
     sɔkidar - zɔn   - ɔk   mat-i
     chowkidar –CL(SG:M)– ACC   call-NF
      an-a
     bring-IMP.2₂
     'Someone go and call the chowkidar.'

The opposite also holds true when in a specific context of discourse, the positive specific indefinite pronoun is used to make sarcastic remarks or utterances with a sense of mirth towards the addressee, e.g.,

(31) kʊnʊba-e   ama – k   mɔt-a
     IND-NOM   1PL-ACC   call-NF
     n-a-e
     NEG-be-3
     'Someone has not talked to us.'

This may be interpreted as 'Why are you not talking to me?'

The following is a conversation between a mother and her child expressing the small steps of politeness, where the mother indirectly accuses the child and the child tries to exonerate himself/ herself from the blame.

(32) Mother
     kʊnʊba-e   kɔl   kʰa – l-e
     IND-NOM   banana   eat-PST-3
     'Someone has eaten banana(s).'

     Child
     mɔe - ɸ   kʰʊ-a   nae
     1SG –NOM   eat-NF   NEG
     'I have not.'

The use of the positive specific indefinite pronoun renders a polite overtone to a question by turning it into an indirect one, as exemplified by the following pairs of utterances with the interrogative pronoun ki and the indefinite pronoun kiba.

(33) a. ki   ho-l
        INT   happen-PST.3
        'What happened?'

(33) b. kiba   ho-l   neki
      IND   happen-PST.3   QF
      'Has anything happened?'

The same is the case in the following pairs of utterances, where the use of the positive specific indefinite pronoun in sentence (b) encodes a polite enquiry about the stock of food in the house, in contrast to (a) with an interrogative pronoun which sounds more like a demand to know about it.

(34) a. kʰa-boloi ki   as-e
      eat-NF   INT   have-PRES.3
      'What is there to eat?'

(34) b. kʰa-boloi kiba
      eat-NF   IND
      as-e   neki
      have -PRES.3   QF
      'Is there something to eat?'

8.2 Generic Sense

The positive non-specific indefinite pronouns are the best examples of generic interpretations, e.g.,

(35) zikʊnʊ-e   kam-tʊ   kor-ibɔ   par-e
      IND-NOM work-CL do-NF   can-3
      'Anyone can do the work.'

8.3 Special Sense

The positive non-specific indefinite pronouns suffixed with classifiers indicate sex distinctions as in kʊnʊ-zɔn 'someone (SG:M)', kʊnʊ-zɔni 'someone (SG:F)'.

(36) kʊnʊ- zɔni-e   nas-is -e
      IND-CL(SG:F)-NOM   dance-IPFV-3
      kʊnʊ- zɔni-e   ga-is-e
      IND- CL(SG:F)-N   sing-IPFV-3

'Someone (F) is dancing, someone (F) is singing.'

9 Conclusions

The foregoing was an attempt to present the main features of indefinite pronouns in Assamese in terms of the forms and functions. The study shows that indefinite pronouns play an important role in the language.

References

Aldridge, Maurice V. 1982. *English quantifiers: A study of quantifying expressions in linguistic science and modern English usage.* Amersham: Avebury.

Bach, E. 1968. Nouns and noun phrases. In E. Bach, and Robert T. Harms (eds.), *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, &Winston, 91-124

Bakker, C.L. 1970. Double negatives. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 1:169-86.

Bhat, D. N. S. 1993. *Indefiniteness and Indeterminacy*. MS, Mysore, Central Institute of Indian Languages

Chowdhary, R.C. 2012. On Classifiers in Asamiya. In Hyslop G., S. Morey and M.W. Post (eds.) *North East Indian Linguistics,*Vol.4, Cambridge University Press India Pvt. Ltd.

Online References

Assamese Language, Web Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assamese_language on 7th August, 2017

---

[1] The term pronominal is used as replacer of nominal constructions.

[2] The term positive is used to describe presence   while negative is used to describe absence of an indefinite quantity.

[3] The term specific refers to a particular instance of a class of referents and non-specific refers to the whole class of entities.

[4] Examples of negative indefinite pronouns occurring with negative verbs are shown in sub section 4 (examples 16-20).