Genitive Subject Positions in Japanese
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Synopsis: It is well-known that Genitive subject (henceforth, Gen-subj.) can appear in Japanese Pronominal Sentential Clauses (PSC), exemplified in (1a). This phenomenon, known as Nominative/Genitive Conversion (NGC), cannot occur in root sentences, as in (1b).

(1) a. John-ga/no yon-da hon ('the book John read')
   John-Nom/Gen read-Past book
b. John-ga/*no hon-o yon-da. ('Taro read a book.')
   John-Nom/Gen book-Acc read-Past

One of the remaining issues on NGC is the position of Gen-subj.: Do both Nominative subject (Nom-subj.) and Gen-subj. occupy the same syntactic position? This issue has been left ambiguous, for data is not classified so as to draw a generalization for scrutiny. In this paper we claim that the position of Nom-subj. can be different from that of Gen-subj., illustrating that Gen-subj. cannot move from its original/merge site, in spite of its seeming dislocation.

Observation: Akaso & Haraguchi (henceforth, A&H) (2011), based upon their observation that Focus Particles such as ‘-dake (only)’ cannot appear within PSCs containing Gen-subj., as in (2), argued that the syntactic categories of Japanese PSCs are of two types: one is Focus Phrase (FocP) for PSCs containing Nom-subj., and the other is TP for the ones containing Gen-subj., lacking CP, along Rizzi’s (1997) cartographic approach, as illustrated in (3).

(2) Taro-dake-ga/*no non-da kusuri
   Taro-only-Nom/Gen take-Past medicine
   ('the medicine that only Taro took')


Furthermore, A&H (2012) claimed that Gen-subj. can be sub-classified into Agent Gen-subj. and Theme Gen-subj., according to its thematic role. For instance, VP-adverbs like manner adverbs (e.g. ‘kanzen-ni (completely)’) cannot appear at the left of the former, as in (4a), while they can at the left of the latter, as in (4b).

(4) a. kanzen-ni Taro-ga/??*-no kowashi-ta kuruma Agent Gen-subj. →??/*
   completely Taro-Nom/Gen break-Past car ('the car Taro broke completely')
b. kanzen-ni ondo-ga/-no sagat-ta riyuu Theme Gen-subj. → OK
   completely temperature-Nom/-Gen fall-Past reason
c. ondo-ga/??-no kanzen-ni sagat-ta riyuu Theme Gen-subj. → ?
   temperature-Nom/-Gen completely fall-Past reason
   ('the reason temperature fell completely')

Under the standard assumption of adverb-licensing, VP-adverbs occur as adjunction to VP. (4a) shows that they cannot be scrambled across the Agent Gen-subj., which merges at Spec, vP. On the other hand, in (4b) Theme Gen-subj. appears at the right position of VP-adverbs, for it merges within VP. When Theme Gen-subj. moves across a VP-adverb, the grammaticality degrades as shown in (4c). (Note that Nom-subj. is scrambled to the clause-initial position: either Spec, TP or Spec, FocP, in (4c), which means that its position is
different from that of Gen-subj.) From these observations we can reach the generalization that scrambling cannot occur within PSCs containing Gen-subj. Following Nakamura’s (2008) analysis of focus-driven scrambling, Fujimaki (2011) claimed that adverb scrambling is seen as the focus-movement targeting Spec, FocP. The contrast between Agent Gen-subj. and Theme Gen-subj. in (4) can be straightforwardly explained by A&H’s proposal that PSC containing Gen-subj. is TP, for scrambling cannot take place without FocP.

**Implications:** This analysis leads us to reconsideration of the following example.

(5) Taro-ga/no kino yon-da hon (‘the book Taro read yesterday’)
    Taro-Nom/Gen yesterday read-Past book

It has been seen that Gen-subj. is within PSC, by tacit understanding that its subject position is the same as the Nom-subj. position. But if our analysis is on the right track, Gen-subj. in (5) is base-generated at Spec, DP because no trigger of FocP can move it to the left of T-related adverbs like ‘kino (yesterday)’. It is not a new proposal, but actually Sakai (1994) pointed out that Gen-subj. can merge at Spec, DP, but not within PSC. (See also Ochi (2001).) This is supported by the following contrast, where Transitivity Restriction (TR) seems to disappear when Gen-subj. is placed at the left of T-related adverbs (e.g. Aspect adverbs), as in (6).

(6) a. Taro-no sude-ni hon-o yonde-shimatta kanosei
    Taro-Gen already book-Acc have read possibility

    b. *Sude-ni Taro-no hon-o yonde-shimatta kanosei
        already Taro-Gen book-Acc have read possibility
        (‘the possibility that Taro has already read the book’)

This is because TR prevents the subject from being genitive case-marked in (6b), while in (6a) the genitive NP (i.e. Taro-Gen) merges at Spec, DP, and so TR is voidable. This can also explain the scope (un)-ambiguity between the two types straightforwardly.

(7) a. rubii ka shinju-no kotoshi-kara yasuku-natta riyuu-o osiete
    ruby or pearl-Gen this year-from cheap-became reason-Acc tell me
    reason > [ruby or pearl]; [ruby or pearl] > reason

    b. kotoshi-kara rubii ka shinju-no yasuku-natta riyuu-o osiete
        this year-from ruby or pearl-Gen cheap-became reason-Acc tell me
        reason > [ruby or pearl]; *[ruby or pearl] > reason
        (‘Tell me the reason why either ruby or pearl becomes cheap.’)

**Conclusion:** We have shown that the position of Gen-subj. in Japanese PSC can be different from that of Nom-subj. and that two types of Gen-subj. appear at the different positions, for FocP is not available in PSCs containing Gen-subj. and scrambling cannot take place.