

## 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')

- (3) a. [<sub>FocP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> ... Nom-subj.... T] Foc] NP      b. [<sub>TP</sub> ... Gen-subj.... T] NP

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, *v*P. 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.

**Sel. references:** [1] Akaso & Haraguchi. 2012. On the Agent/Theme Asymmetry in Japanese Nominative/Genitive Conversion. *WAFL* 8. [2] Fujimaki. 2011. *Fukusi-no Kakimaze to Syooten Kaisyaku*. [3] Ochi. 2001. Move F and *Ga/No* Conversion in Japanese. *JEAL* 10. [4] Sakai. 1994. Complex NP Constraint and Case-Conversion in Japanese. *Current Topics in English and Japanese*.