

Genitive Objects in Kansai Japanese

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It is widely known that Japanese allows a case alternation called Nominative-Genitive (*ga-no*) conversion, in which a subject DP can be marked either with a nominative marker *-ga* or with a genitive marker *-no* under certain circumstances. On the other hand, it has long been assumed that an accusative marker *-o* cannot be replaced with a genitive marker. In other words, it has been said that Japanese does not have Accusative-Genitive (*o-no*) conversion.

Contrary to the general consensus, however, Asano and Ura (2010) report that the Accusative-Genitive conversion is allowed in Kansai dialect of Japanese (Kansai Japanese), which is spoken in a western area of Japan. The example of the Accusative-Genitive conversion is given in (1).

(1) Accusative-Genitive conversion

moe-ru gomi **-o/-no** sute-ru basyo
burn-Pres garbage -Acc/-Gen dump-Pres place

‘the place where one throws flammable garbage’

(adapted from Asano and Ura (2010: 40))

This case conversion has not often been discussed in the literature because its distribution is highly limited. In this paper, I give an analysis of the Accusative-Genitive conversion in Kansai Japanese, based on the comparison with the Nominative-Genitive conversion. Based on Miyagawa’s (1993) DP approach to the Nominative-Genitive conversion, I argue that genitive-marked objects move from inside the prenominal clause to the specifier position of the head DP in overt syntax. Furthermore, I add one new observational fact about the Accusative-Genitive conversion; genitive-marked objects cannot be preceded by any overt element within the prenominal clause.

The movement of genitive objects to the specifier position of the head DP is motivated by the fact that while accusative-marked objects do not take scope over head nouns, genitive-marked objects do.

(2) a. [[hon-ka manga]-**o** kau] kanousei-ga takai.

[[book-or comic]-Acc buy probability-Nom high

‘The probability of buying a book or a comic is high.’

‘*The probability of buying a book or the probability of buying a comic is high.’

b. [[hon-ka manga]-**no** kau] kanousei-ga takai.

[[book-or comic]-Gen buy probability-Nom high

‘The probability of buying a book or a comic is high.’

‘The probability of buying a book or the probability of buying a comic is high.’

The sentence in (2a) has only one reading in which the head noun *kanousei* ‘probability’ takes scope over the accusative-marked object *hon-ka manga* ‘a book or a magazine’, while the sentence in (2b) has one more reading in which the genitive-marked object takes scope over the head noun. This fact of scope interactions suggests that genitive-marked objects are moved to the higher position than the head DP.

Also, I argue that genitive-marked objects cannot be preceded by any overt element within the prenominal clause, which was not stated in the previous research. The relevant example is given in (3).

- (3) *Zitaku-de daitouryou-no ansatusu-ru keikaku-ga tate-rare-ta.*
 home-at president-Gen murder-Pres plan-Nom make-Pass-Pst
 ‘*The plan to murder the president **at home** was made.’
 ‘The plan to murder the president was made **at home**.’

In (3), the adverbial *zitaku-de* ‘at home’ can be interpreted only as modifying the matrix verb *tate-rare-ta* ‘was made’, and cannot be interpreted as modifying the verb inside the prenominal clause *ansatusu-ru* ‘murder’. This example indicates that no overt elements can precede genitive-marked objects within the prenominal clause.

Furthermore, this fact lends support to my analysis in which I argue that the movement of genitive objects takes place in overt syntax. If we supposed that the movement took place at LF, then we would predict that adverbials could precede genitive-marked objects within prenominal clauses. If we assume that the movement takes place in overt syntax, then why no overt elements can precede genitive-marked objects naturally follows; the genitive-marked object occupies the specifier position of the head DP and appears outside the prenominal clause which modifies the head DP, as in (4b), so nothing inside the prenominal clause can precede the genitive-marked object.

- (4) a. [DP [... Object_{ACC} ...] NP]
 b. [DP Object_{GEN} [... t ...] NP]

Selected references

Asano, Shin’ya, and Hiroyuki Ura (2010) “Mood and Case: With Special Reference to Genitive Case Conversion in Kansai Japanese,” *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 19, 37-59.
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