

# Genitive Objects in Kansai Japanese

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## 1. Introduction

• It is widely known that while Japanese allows a Case alternation called Nominative-Genitive (ga-no) conversion, it does not allow so-called Accusative-Genitive (o-no) conversion (AGC).

• However, Asano & Ura (2010) report that in Kansai Japanese, which is spoken in a western area of Japan, an object DP in a prenominal clause can be marked either with an accusative case marker *-o* or with a genitive case marker *-no*.

→Kansai Japanese allows AGC.

- (1) [gomi-o/-no sute-ru] basyo  
 garbage-ACC/-GEN dump-PRES place  
 'the place where one dumps garbage'

(Adapted from Asano & Ura 2010: 40)

### Questions

- How should the AGC be analyzed?
- Why is it possible only in Kansai Japanese?

## 2. Basic Properties of AGC

**i. Overt subjects are not allowed in a prenominal clause.**

- (2) [Taro-ga gomi-o/\*-no sute-ru] basyo  
 Taro-NOM garbage-ACC/-GEN dump-PRES place  
 'the place where Taro dumps garbage'

**ii. When the verb receives a preterite interpretation, AGC is banned.**

- (3) [gomi-o/\*-no sute-ta] basyo  
 garbage-ACC/-GEN dump-PAST place  
 'the place where one dumped garbage'

**iii. The prenominal clause must be immediately subordinate to the head noun.**

- (4) Kono basyo-ni gomi-o/\*-no sute-ru.  
 this place-at garbage-ACC/-GEN dump-PRES  
 'One dumps garbage at this place'

- (5) [gomi-o/\*-no sute-ru] you meireisi-ta.  
 garbage-ACC/-GEN dump-PRES that order-PAST  
 '(I/you/he/she) ordered someone to dump garbage.'

(adapted from Asano & Ura 2010: 42-44)

## 3. Analysis of AGC

• Kusumoto (2013) observes that the distribution of AGC is similar to that of the so-called non-past *-ta* form in two respects.

- They are limited to noun-modifying environments.
- They are not compatible with overt subjects.

### The non-past *-ta* form

- (6) [mizu-ga/-no hait-ta] koppu  
 water-NOM/-GEN enter-PAST cup  
 'the cup that has water in it'

• The verb *hair-* 'enter' is an unaccusative verb, and it has a transitive counterpart *ire-* 'pour'.

• Kansai Japanese allows a genitive-marked object to co-occur with the transitive verb attached to the non-past *-ta*, while the standard Japanese does not.

- (7) [mizu-o/-no ire-ta] koppu  
 water-GEN pour-PAST cup  
 'the cup that has water in it'

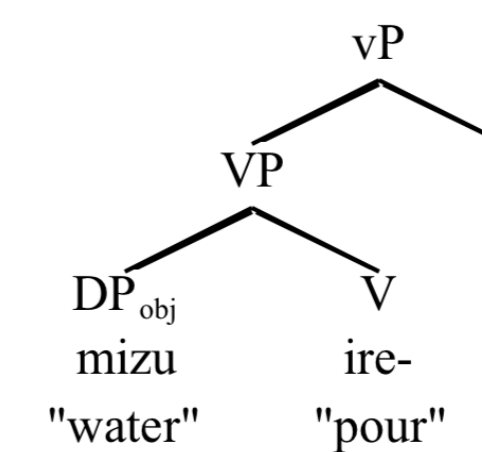
## 4. Proposal

• The examples (6) and (7) have almost the same meaning and almost the same configuration: the genitive-marked DP, the verb, and the noun.

→We can assume that they have the same structure, and that the genitive Case is assigned to the DPs in the same way.

### Proposal

• The unaccusative little *v*, which is introduced in the examples like (6), can also be used for transitive verbs in Kansai Japanese.



• The unaccusative little *v* does not assign an accusative Case. Put differently, it lacks the ability of phi-feature agreement.

→According to Chomsky (2001), it is not a phase head.

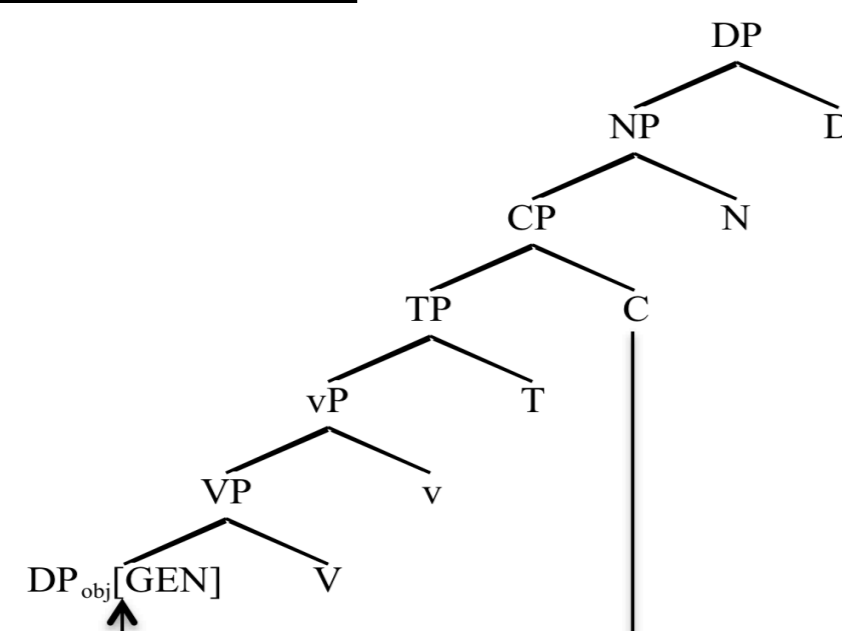
• Since the object DP cannot be assigned an accusative Case by the little *v*, it must agree with something else which is structurally higher than *v*.

## 5. Details of Proposal

• I assume, following Hiraiwa (2001), that a genitive Case is assigned (checked) by C. If a DP agrees with C, it is assigned a genitive Case or its genitive Case feature is checked.

• C is considered a host of phi-feature agreement (Chomsky 2008). The genitive Case licensing by C can be seen in Turkish, for example.

### Proposed structure for AGC



• The unaccusative *v* does not count as a phase head, so the vP does not prevent C from entering into an agreement relation with an object DP.

## 6. Conclusion

• The unaccusative little *v* does not select an external argument, so assuming that there is an unaccusative little *v* head in a clause with AGC is compatible with the unavailability of overt subjects with AGC.

• By stipulating that only C which is selected by a noun has the ability to assign a genitive Case, we can give an explanation to the third property of AGC; the prenominal clause must be immediately subordinate to the head noun. This is compatible with the fact that in declarative sentences or complement clauses, DPs cannot be marked with a genitive Case.

• In my analysis, the dialectal difference between Kansai Japanese and the standard Japanese (the availability of AGC) can be attributed to the difference in the behavior of functional heads.

• Many questions remain as to what is the exact nature of the external argument of the unaccusative little *v* (*pro?*), how the accusative Case is assigned to the object DP instead of the genitive Case without changing the meaning of the phrase, and so on.

### References

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