SOME NOTES ON NOMINATIVE/GENITIVE OBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN JAPANESE[*]

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1. Introduction

This paper looks at the distribution of nominative and genitive objects in two types of potential constructions in Japanese. One type, a complex predicate involving the potential suffix *-rare*, is exemplified by (1a). The second type is shown in (1b), where the potential predicate *deki(ru)* 'can' selects a clause (or a phrase) headed by the nominalizer *koto* 'thing' (see Kuno (2002) and Kasai (2018)).

(1) a.   Taro-ga   koyubi-{ga/o/no}   mage-rare-ru   koto
          Taro-NOM   pinkie-NOM/ACC/GEN   bend-can-PRES   fact

     'the fact that Taro can bend his pinkie'

      b.   Taro-ga   koyubi-{ga/o/no}   mage-ru   koto-{ga/no}
           Taro-NOM   pinkie-NOM/ACC/GEN   bend-Pres   NMLZ-NOM/GEN
           deki-ru   koto
           can-PRES   fact

      'the fact that Taro can bend his pinkie'

While Case alternations between nominative and accusative have received a considerable amount of attention in the literature (Tada (1992), Koizumi (1998), Nomura (2005), Saito (2009), and M. Takahashi (2010) among many others), genitive objects have not received as much attention. I will investigate the syntactic nature of genitive objects by comparing their distributions with those of their nominative (and accusative) counterparts.

I will adopt the following set of assumptions about the determination of scope in Japanese. First, I assume that Japanese has no covert operation that affects scope (e.g., Quantifier Raising (QR)). Thus, the surface position of an element will determine its scope. Second, nominative Case is uniformly licensed by T whereas genitive Case is licensed by D (but see below for more discussion). Third, Case properties/values and scope are intimately related in the sense that the scope of an argument α cannot extend beyond the domain of the Case licensor of α.

Take the distribution of nominative subjects and genitive subjects as an illustration. Let us assume that a D-licensed genitive argument (see Miyagawa (1993)) may move to the spec of DP and take wide scope over the head noun.[1] On the other hand, a T-licensed nominative argument cannot move beyond TP, which is why the examples in (2) are unambiguous. Further, following Ochi (2001), whose work is based on Miyagawa (1993), I assume that genitive subjects take wide scope only when they have undergone overt movement into the spec of DP. Thus (3a) only has the narrow scope reading of the genitive subject because it remains within the adnominal clause in overt syntax.

(2) a. kinoo   zen'in-ga   kita   kanoosei
       yesterday everyone-NOM   came   probability

     'the probability that everyone came yesterday'   (probability > ∀; *∀ > probability)

   b. zen'in-ga   kinoo   kita   kanoosei
       everyone-NOM   yesterday came   probability

     'the probability that everyone came yesterday'   (probability > ∀; *∀ > probability)

(3) a. kinoo   zen'in-no   kita   kanoosei
       yesterday everyone-GEN   came   probability

     'the probability that everyone came yesterday'   (probability > ∀; *∀ > probability)

   b. zen'in-no   kinoo   kita   kanoosei
       everyone-GEN   yesterday came   probability

     'the probability that everyone came yesterday'   (probability > ∀; ∀ > probability)

Here are some of the points to be made in this paper. First, it is argued that Koizumi's (1998) interesting data pointing to the obligatory displacement of the nominative object do not undermine the idea that the nominative object may stay in its base position. Second, the genitive object is shown to have wide scope as well as narrow scope. I suggest that such observations might be accommodated by Miyagawa's (2012, 2013) idea that two types of Case licensing are available for genitive objects. Third, elaborating on Ochi and Isono (2020), I will explore the hypothesis that the potential construction with *deki(ru)* 'can' (see (1b)) instantiates a proleptic construction in the sense of Takano (2003). It should be noted here that the work reported here is currently under way, and some of the points made in the paper are still preliminary.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the syntactic distribution of nominative objects and examines some of Koizumi's (1998) data. In section 3, we shift attention to genitive objects. It will be suggested that scope properties of the genitive object may receive a natural account under Miyagawa's (2012, 2013) hypothesis. Section 4 will discuss some issues with the type of potential construction exemplified in (1b). The main idea

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[1] Alternatively, it may remain in its underlying position, in which case it takes scope in that position.

entertained in this section is that this type of construction involves a proleptic object. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. Nominative Objects and Optional Movement

As repeatedly noted in the literature, a nominative object with *dake* 'only' yields wide scope over the potential *-rare* whereas its accusative counterpart tends to yield narrow scope.

(4) sono   kodomo-ga   koyubi dake-ga   mage-rare-ru   koto
     the   child-NOM   pinkie   only-NOM   bend-can-PRES fact

 'the fact that the child can bend only the pinkie'   [only > can; (?)can > only]

(5) sono   kodomo-ga   koyubi dake-o   mage-rare-ru   koto
     the   child-NOM   pinkie   only-ACC   bend-can-PRES fact

 'the fact that the child can bend only the pinkie'   [??only > can; can > only]

While nominative objects have a tendency to take wide scope, the fact that examples like the following, discussed by Nomura (2005), are not contradictory shows that they may take narrow scope.

(6) Taro-ga   koyubi-dake-ga   ugokas-e-ru   no-wa
     Taro-NOM   pinkie-only-NOM   move-can-PRES   NMLZ-TOP
     sit-te-ita   ga,   kusuriyubi-dake-ga   ugokas-e-ru
     know-PROG-PAST   but   ring.finger-only-NOM   move-can-PRES
     no-ni-wa   odoroi-ta.
     NMLZ-DAT-TOP be.surprised-PAST

                                                                  [can > only; #only > can]

 'I have known that Taro can move only his pinkie but I am surprised to know that he can also move only his ring finger.'

Ochi and Isono (2020) presents additional support for the view that nominative objects may have low scope. In (7a), where *kirei-ni* 'perfectly' precedes a nominative object, the latter takes only narrow scope, whereas in (7b), where the word order is reversed, the salient reading is one in which the nominative object takes wide scope.

(7) a. Taro-ga   kirei-ni   koyubi-dake-ga mage-rare-ru   koto
         Taro-NOM   perfectly pinkie-only-NOM bend-can-PRES fact

 'the fact that Taro can bend only his pinkie perfectly.'   [can > only; *only > can]

    b. Taro-ga   koyubi-dake-ga   kirei-ni   mage-rare-ru   koto
        Taro-NOM   pinkie-only-NOM   perfectly bend-can-PRES   fact

 'the fact that Taro can bend only his pinkie perfectly.'   [??can > only; only > can]

Assuming that adverbs like *kirei-ni* 'perfectly' mark the left edge of *v*P/VP, Ochi and Isono argue that the nominative object is located inside *v*P/VP in overt syntax when it linearly follows the manner adverb, which is why it takes scope under *-rare*, given the assumption that scope in Japanese is determined on the basis of the surface position of the relevant element. According to Ochi and Isono's analysis, (7b) has the wide scope reading of the nominative object because the object has moved in overt syntax to the domain of T, which Case-licenses the object. In effect, Ochi and Isono advocate the view that a nominative object may remain in its base position (and gets licensed via Agree), or it may move to the domain of T.

However, evidence against such view is found in Koizumi (1998). Consider (8), which shows that the accusative object and the nominative object behave differently when VPs are coordinated. For Koizumi, the ungrammaticality of (8b) would mean that the nominative object and the verb do not form a surface constituent and that the nominative object is always outside of VP.

(8) a. Taro-ga   koyubi-o   mage, kusuriyubi-o   nobas-e-ru   (koto)
       Taro-NOM pinkie-ACC bend   ring.finger-ACC extend-can-PRES fact

   '(the fact that) Taro can bend his pinkie and extend his ring finger.'

   b. *Taro-ga   koyubi-ga   mage, kusuriyubi-ga   nobas-e-ru   (koto)
       Taro-NOM pinkie-NOM bend   ring.finger-NOM extend-can-PRES fact

   '(the fact that) Taro can bend his pinkie and extend his ring finger.'

Could this type of data be accommodated under the view that the nominative object may remain inside VP in overt syntax? I would like to propose that (8b) is ungrammatical not because the nominative object and the verb do not form a surface constituent but because the absorption of the accusative Case of *mage(ru)* 'bend' has not taken place in the first conjunct, due to the absence of the potential *-rare* that is adjacent to the verb in this conjunct. As a result, the accusative Case of *mage* 'bend' needs to be discharged, thereby excluding the possibility that the object is assigned nominative Case.

Support for this conjecture comes from a passive configuration that involves coordination. (9a), in which the passive *-rare* is attached only to the second verb, is ungrammatical. This point shows that the first verb needs to be paired up with *-rare* that is adjacent to it in order for the accusative Case to be successfully absorbed.

(9) a. *Taro-ga   Hanako ni yotte   ie-de   sikar-i, soto-de
       Taro-NOM   Hanako by   home-at   scold   outside-in
       homer-are-ta   (koto)
       praise-PASS-PAST   fact

   '(the fact that) Taro was scolded at home and praised outside home by Hanako'

b. Taro-ga   Hanako ni yotte   ie-de   sikar-are,   soto-de
Taro-NOM   Hanako by   home-at scold-PASS   outside-in
homer-are-ta   (koto)
praise-PASS-PAST   fact

'(the fact that) Taro was scolded at home and praised outside home by Hanako'

Therefore, Koizumi's observation is not incompatible with the idea that a nominative object may remain in its base position inside VP.

3. Genitive Objects

Now let us turn to genitive objects. As shown in the following pair of examples, a wide scope reading is possible when the genitive object is not preceded by another element of the adnominal clause (as noted by Miyagawa (1993) and Ochi (2001)). This state of affairs is parallel to what we saw in (3).

(10) a. paatii-ni   zen'in-no   yob-e-ru   kanoosei
party-to   everyone-GEN invite-can-PRES   probability

'the probability that I can invite everyone to the party'

(probability > ∀; *∀ > probability)

b. zen'in-no   paatii-ni yob-e-ru   kanoosei
everyone-GEN   party-to invite-can-PRES   probability

'the probability that I can invite everyone to the party'

(probability > ∀; ∀ > probability)

I assume that the wide scope reading of (10b) comes from the derivation in which *zen'in-no* 'everyone-GEN' has moved to the spec of DP in overt syntax. (10a) is unambiguous because the genitive object has not moved out of the adnominal clause: *zen'in-no* linearly follows *paatii-ni* 'to the party.' In what follows, I will consider how genitive objects scopally interact with other elements in the adnominal domain.

Let us start with the observation that the genitive object behaves just like the nominative object in VP co-ordination contexts (cf. (8)).

(11) a. *Taro-ga   koyubi-no   mage, kusuriyubi-no   nobas-eru koto
Taro-NOM   pinkie-GEN   bend   ring.finger-GEN   extend-can fact

'the fact that Taro can bend his pinkie and extend his ring finger.'

b. Taro-ga   koyubi-no   mage-rare, kusuriyubi-no   nobas-eru koto
Taro-NOM   pinkie-GEN   bend-Can ring.finger-GEN   extend-can fact

'the fact that Taro can bend his pinkie and extend his ring finger.'

Because the verb in the first conjunct cannot undergo Case absorption, the object of the first conjunct in (11a) needs to be accusative. So, the ungrammaticality of (11a) does not show that the genitive object is outside of VP in overt syntax. In fact, the following example, which is modeled after (7a), shows that the genitive object may take narrow scope.[2]

(12) sono   kodomo-ga   kirei-ni   koyubi dake-no   ugokas-e-ru   koto
      the   child-NOM   perfectly   pinkie only-GEN   move-can-PRES fact

   'the fact that the child can move only the pinkie in a perfect manner'

                                                        [can > only; *only > can]

Similarly, the following example, which is minimally different from (6) in that genitive objects are employed instead of nominative objects, is reasonably acceptable.

(13) Taro-ga   kirei-ni   koyubi dake-no   ugokas-e-ru   no-wa
      Taro-NOM   perfectly pinkie only-GEN   move-can-PRES   NMLZ-TOP
      sit-te-ita   ga   kirei-ni   kusuriyubi-dake-no   ugokas-e-ru
      know-PROG-PAST but   perfectly ring.finger-only-NOM   move-can-PRES
      no-ni-wa   odoroi-ta.
      NMLZ-DAT-TOP   be.surprised-PAST

                                                        [can > only; #only > can]

   'I have known that Taro can move only his pinkie in a perfect manner but I am surprised to know that he can also move only his ring finger in a perfect manner.'

These data show that the genitive object may stay within VP in overt syntax.

   But genitive objects may take scope over the potential *-rare* 'can.' In fact, the wide scope reading of genitive objects is quite salient in certain cases. Let us consider an examples like the following.

(14) kaabu   dake-{ga/no}   ut-e-ru   sensyu
      curveball only-NOM/-GEN   hit-can-PRES   player

   'a player such that it is only the curveball that he/she can hit'

As the translation shows, the salient (and natural) reading of this example is the one in which the genitive object (as well as its nominative counterpart) takes scope over *-rare* 'can.' Further, the most salient reading of (15) is the one in which the genitive object takes scope over negation (although the narrow scope reading may be possible as well).

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[2] Note that attaching *-dake* 'only' to a genitive argument does not always yield a good result. See the discussion below.

(15) sono   kanzya-ga   koyubi dake-no   ugokas-e-nai   koto
      that   patient-NOM   pinkie only-GEN   move-can-NEG   fact

    'the fact that that patient cannot move only the pinkie'

This is a somewhat surprising result in the light of the set of assumptions adopted earlier. As the genitive object linearly follows the nominative subject in this example, the former has not moved to the domain of D, i.e., its Case licensor. So how should we deal with the fact that a wide scope reading is available in examples like (14) and (15)?

    As we have been assuming that the scope of an argument α is strictly determined by the surface position of α, we are led to the view that the genitive object is in a relatively high position within a clause when it takes wide scope.[3] Now, this seemingly unexpected behavior of the genitive object may in fact follow from Miyagawa's (2012, 2013) *Genitive of Dependent Tense* (GDT) hypothesis.[4] GDT was first introduced by Miyagawa (2012) for capturing the distribution of genitive arguments in temporal adverbial clauses. In (16a), genitive marking of the subject of the unergative predicate *hasir(u)* 'run' of the temporal adjunct clause leads to degradation. But no such degradation is detected in (16b), where the predicate is unaccusative. In short, this type of temporal adjunct clause allows a genitive subject if the latter is an internal argument.

(16) a. Kodomo-{ga/??no}   hasiru   made,   mati-masyoo.
          child-NOM/GEN   run   until   wait-let.us

       'Let us wait until the child runs.'

    b. Kodomo-{ga/no}   kuru   made,   mati-masyoo.
          child-NOM/GEN   run   until   wait-let.us

       'Let us wait until the child comes.'

Assuming with H. Takahashi (2010) that there is no D (or N) in the adjunct clause headed by *made* 'until,' Miyagawa (2012) argues that genitive in examples like (16b) is licensed in a manner analogous to the genitive of negation in Slavic, a phenomenon where an internal argument may optionally bear genitive in a negative clause: See Pesetsky (1982). Miyagawa proposes that this type of genitive is assigned by a combination of *v* and another element that occurs in its vicinity: negation in the case of Russian, and a specific type of tense, what he refers to as 'dependent tense,' in the case of Japanese. Thus, in Slavic, genitive is (optionally) assigned to an internal argument by a combination of (weak) *v* and negation, and in Japanese, by a combination of weak *v* and dependent tense. This GDT-licensing is unavailable in (16a)

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[3] I continue to assume that the genitive object remains within VP in overt syntax when it takes narrow scope.

[4] Another possibility is that the genitive object may be proleptic in the sense of Takano (2003) when it takes wide scope.

because there is no weak *v* head in this case (and the external argument of *hasir(u)* 'run' is not c-commanded by the strong *v* head).

Let us now return to (15). Since GDT involves dependent T (as well as weak *v*), and since negation is located below T, we may in fact expect a GDT-licensed genitive phrase to be able to (perhaps optionally) move to the domain of T, thus above negation. But the precise mechanism of GDT remains unclear at the current stage of our investigation, so the above remark should be taken as a tentative suggestion.

4. Proleptic Nominative/Genitive Objects

Let us now turn to another potential construction whose main predicate is *dekir(u)* 'can', which takes as its complement a phrase (or a clause) nominalized by the nominalizer *koto*.

(17) Watasi-wa   eigo-{o/ga}   hanas-u   koto-ga   deki-ru.
      I-TOP   English-ACC/NOM   speak-PRES   NMLZ-NOM   can-PRES

      'I can speak English.'

Coordinating *koto*-phrases excludes the option of nominative on the object (see Kasai (2018)).

(18) a. *Watasi-wa   eigo-ga   hanas-u   koto   to
        I-TOP   English-NOM   speak-PRES   NMLZ   and
        huransugo-ga   yomu   koto-ga   deki-ru.
        French-NOM   read   NMLZ-NOM   can-PRES

        'I can speak English and read French.'

   b. Watasi-wa   eigo-o   hanas-u   koto   to
       I-TOP   English-ACC   speak-PRES   NMLZ   and
       huransugo-o   yomu   koto-ga   deki-ru.
       French-ACC   read   NMLZ-NOM   can-PRES

       'I can speak English and read French.'

Kasai (2018) presents such contrast as evidence that the nominative object obligatorily moves out of VP, unlike its accusative object. While I agree with Kasai that the nominative object in this type of potential construction is outside VP, I would like to suggest that it is not a result of movement. Rather, I pursue the idea that it is a proleptic object in the sense of Takano (2003). Following Takano, let us assume that the proleptic object is base-generated in the domain of the potential predicate, *deki(ru)* 'can.' It binds a gap inside the nominalized clause.

(19) [Watasi-wa [$_{VP}$ eigo-ga$_i$ [$_{NP}$ [*pro*$_i$ hanas-u]   koto]-ga   deki]-ru]
      I-TOP   English-NOM   speak-PRES   NMLZ-NOM can-PRES

Some arguments are provided by Ochi and Isono (2020) for this view. For instance, the nominative object in this type of potential construction, unlike the nominative object in the complex predicate construction, does not have a low scope reading. Thus, unlike (6), (20) is not pragmatically plausible.

(20) #Taro-ga   koyubi-dake-ga   ugokas-u   koto-ga   deki-ru
     Taro-NOM   pinkie-only-NOM   move-PRES   NMLZ-NOM   can-PRES
     no-wa   sit-te-ita   ga kusuriyubi-dake-ga   ugokas-u
     NMLZ-TOP   know-PROG-PAST but ring.finger-only-NOM   move-PRES
     koto-ga   deki-ru   no-ni-wa   odoroi-ta.
     NMLZ-NOM   can-PRES   NMLZ-DAT-TOP   be.surprised-PAST

     'I have known that Taro can move only his pinkie but I am surprised to know that he can also move only his ring finger.'

This observation can be explained if the nominative object does not originate in the nominalized clause in this type of potential construction. Returning to (18a), we can say that it is ungrammatical for the same reason as (8b): when the object is base-generated inside the VP of the *koto*-clause, it needs to be accusative because the accusative Case features of *yomu* 'read' and *hanasu* 'speak' need to be discharged.

The discussion so far indicates that the nominative object should not be treated in a uniform manner in the two types of potential constructions. The nominative object in the complex predicate configuration originates in the the lower (i.e., the most deeply embedded) VP, but it is a proleptic object in the type shown in (17). In what follows, I would like to add another piece of potential evidence for such view.

The following discussion centers around the distribution of the focused genitive object (although, admittedly, details need to be worked out). Let us start with (21), which would serve as the baseline data for the subsequent discussion. Case alternation occurs on the subject in (21a) and on the object in (21b).

(21) a.   Taro-{ga/no}   ut-e-nai   booru
        Taro-NOM/GEN hit-can-Neg   ball

        'the type of pitch/ball that Taro cannot hit'

    b.   kaabu-{ga/no}   ut-e-nai   sensyu
        curveball-NOM/GEN   hit-can-Neg   player

        'the player who cannot hit the curveball'

Now, as pointed out by Akaso and Haraguchi (2011) and Miyagawa (2013), there is a subject vs. object asymmetry when the genitive phrase is focused. Let us consider the examples in (22), which employ complex predicates. While the genitive object can be focused (22b), speakers generally agree that the genitive subject cannot be focused, as shown in (22a).

(22) a.　maikai　　Taro　dake-{ga/??no}　　ut-e-nai　　　tama
　　　　every.time　Taro　only-NOM/GEN　　hit-can-Neg　ball

　　　'the type of pitch that only Taro cannot hit every time'

　　b.　maikai　　　kaabu　　dake-{ga/no}　　ut-e-nai　　sensyu
　　　　every.time　curveball　only-NOM/GEN　hit-can-Neg　player

　　　'the player such that it is only the curveball that he or she cannot hit every time'

Now let us consider the genitive object in the potential construction with *deki(ru)* 'can.' Here is the baseline data for (24).

(23)　kaabu-{ga/no}　　　　utu　koto-no　　　deki-nai　　sensyu
　　　curveball-NOM/GEN　hit　NML-GEN　　can-Neg　　player

　　　'the player that cannot hit the curveball'

Now consider (24), in which the object is focused. This time, there is a contrast: a degradation is detected when the object is genitive, unlike in the case of (22b).[5]

(24)　maikai　　　kaabu　　dake-{ga/??no}　　utu　koto-no　　　deki-nai　sensyu
　　　every.time　curveball　only-NOM/??GEN　hit　NML-GEN　　can-Neg　player

　　　'the player such that every time, it is only the curveball that he/she cannot hit'

In short, the genitive object in the two types of potential constructions does not behave alike when focus is involved, which reinforces the idea the genitive object (and its nominative counterpart) in the two potential constructions should not receive a unified account.

But how shall we make sense of the contrast in (24)? It is tempting to analyze it by taking into account the asymmetry shown in (22): the internal genitive argument can be focused while the external genitive argument cannot be focused. Miyagawa (2013) offers an analysis of this contrast by resorting to his GDT hypothesis, by proposing that GDT applies not only in temporal adjunct clauses but more generally in adnominal domains as a whole. According to Miyagawa's proposal, a D-licensed genitive phrase cannot be focused whereas a GDT-licensed genitive phrase can be focused. His idea can be summed up as follows. D-licensing requires that the adnominal clause in which a genitive phrase occurs be a bare TP that lacks the C layer, because CP is a phase and blocks an external probe (i.e., D) from accessing a material inside it. A TP clause, on the other hand, is not a phase, so that its internal element can be accessed from a probe located outside of this TP. On the other hand, a focused phrase needs to occur in a CP as the focus head resides in the CP zone. As a result, a genitive phrase cannot be D-licensed and focus-licensed at the same time. This is why (22a) is bad with genitive on the subject. The situation is crucially different in (22b). Miyagawa argues that genitive is GDT-licensed. GDT-licensing can take place within a CP, since genitive is licensed clause-internally. Hence, there

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[5] Some of the speakers I consulted did not find a significant contrast between (22b) and (24). However, no speaker reported that the latter is better than the former.

is no conflict between genitive licensing and focus licensing.

Now the question is whether Miyagawa's GDT analysis can help us accommodate (24). The answer is negative. The proleptic object can be GDT-licensed. Hence we have no grounds for ruling out (24) while ruling in (22b).

(25) Kaabu-{ga/no}   utu koto-no   dekiru   made   rensyuu-site kudasai.
      curveball-NOM/GEN hit NML-GEN   can   until   practice-do   please

      'Please practice until you can hit the curveball.'

Thus no account is available for the degraded status of (24) with the genitive object, and we are merely left with a descriptive statement to the effect that the proleptic genitive object resists focus. Still, the reasonably acceptable status of (22b) shows that this type of example does not (have to) involve a proleptic object even when it takes wide scope.

Let me end this paper with two remarks about the prolepsis strategy. First, recall that for Ochi and Isono (2020) and for this paper, the potential construction with *deki(ru)* necessarily involves a proleptic object when the object is nominative or genitive. Our discussion so far has not excluded the possibility that this strategy is available in the complex predicate version of the potential construction. An investigation of this issue needs to be left for another occasion.

Second, let us evaluate Takano's claim that the gap bound by the proleptic object need not be in the direct object position of the embedded VP. For instance, we obtain (26b) along with (26c) when the main predicate of the potential construction has indirect and direct objects, as in the case of *makase(ru)* 'assign/leave' in (26a).

(26) a. Watasi-wa   Hanako-ni   sono sigoto-o makase-ta.
         I-TOP   Hanako-DAT   that   job-ACC leave-Past

         'I left that job to Hanako.'

     b. Watasi-wa   Hanako-ga   sono sigoto-o makase-rare-ru.
         I-TOP   Hanako-NOM   that   job-ACC leave-Can-Pres

         'I can leave that job to Hanako'

     c. Watasi-wa   sono sigoto-ga   Hanako-ni   makase-rare-ru.
         I-TOP   that job-NOM   Hanako-DAT   leave-Can-Pres

         'I can leave that job to Hanako'

However, there is a reason to think that (26b) and (26c) are not quite on a par. As the following examples show, the alleged proleptic object cannot be genitive in the former.

(27) a. Hanako-{ga/*no}   (mottomo ansin-site) makase-rare-ru   tagui-no
       Hanako-NOM/*GEN   most   security-do leave-Can-PRES type-GEN
       sigoto
       job

       'the type of job that I can leave to Hanako (with the utmost sense of security)'

   b. (mottomo ansin-site) sono sigoto-{ga/no} makase-rare-ru hito
       most   security-do that   job-NOM/GEN   leave-Can-Pres person

       'the person to whom I can leave the job (with the utmost sense of security)'

This contrast seems to suggest that (26b) is not a proleptic construction. Rather, it is derived by focusing the indirect object by attaching -ga, which in this case may be a genuine focus particle, to the indirect object. This type of -ga is attached, for instance, to a PP in a stative construction.

(28) Ko-no   mise-wa   ano eki   kara-ga   itiban tikai.
     this-GEN   store-TOP that station from-FOC   most   close

     '(lit.) As for this store, from that station is the closest to it.'

Let us speculate that the -ga marked phrase in (26b) retains the oblique Case assigned by the postposition -ni, although its phonetic form is suppressed when the focus particle -ga is attached to it. And since it already bears Case in its base position, genitive Case cannot be assigned to it. This may be why *Hanako* in (27a) cannot be genitive.

    Furthermore, as a focused element, *Hanako-ga* in (26b) is presumably displaced to the left periphery (-ga is glossed as focus (FOC) in the following representation).

(29) [CP Watasi-wa [CP Hanako-ga   [TP [vP [[ti sono sigoto-o   makase]-rare]-ru]]]
          I-TOP   Hanako-FOC   that   job-ACC leave-can-PRES

The obligatory displacement of the focused phrase in this type of example may help us account for the following contrast noted by Takano (2003 fn. 21).

(30) a. ??Watasi-wa sono sigoto-o   Hanako-ga   makase-rare-ru.
          I-TOP   that job-ACC   Hanako-NOM   leave-can-PRES

       'I can leave that job to Hanako.'

   b. Watasi-wa   Hanako-ni   sono sigoto-ga   makase-rare-ru.
       I-TOP   Hanako-DAT that   job-NOM   leave-can-PRES

       'I can leave that job to Hanako.'

Under the present perspective, the -ga marked phrases in the two examples occupy distinct positions. In particular, *Hanako-ga* in (30a) is located in a position much higher than the

position of *sono sigoto-ga* 'that job-NOM' in (30b): the latter may be staying inside VP in overt syntax (even if it is a proleptic object, it may remain in the domain of the potential predicate). Scrambling an element to a position between a topic (*Watasi-wa* 'I-TOP') and the phrase focus-marked by *-ga* seems to lead to degradation. Note that the focused PP behaves similarly in this respect. (31b), where the word order is reversed, is degraded.

(31) a. Watasi-wa   Taro to-ga   eiga-ni   ik-e-ru.
        I-TOP   Taro with-FOC   movie-DAT   go-can-PRES

        'I can go to a movie with Taro.'

   b. ??Watasi-wa   eiga-ni   Taro to-ga   ik-e-ru.
        I-TOP   movie-DAT   Taro with-FOC   go-can-PRES

        'I can go to a movie with Taro.'

Thus, bringing the distribution of genitive objects into consideration may be useful when probing into the nature of proleptic constructions.

5. Conclusion

This paper has discussed some data and issues that bear on the syntax of nominative and genitive objects. It was shown that the genitive object may take wide scope as well as narrow scope with respect to elements such as the potential *-rare* and negation. As suggested in section 3, such observations may be accommodated by Miyagawa's (2012, 2013) idea that two types of genitive Case licensing are available for internal arguments. The paper also discussed the hypothesis that the potential construction that employs *deki(ru)* 'can' resorts to the proleptic strategy. Several important questions remain unanswered. Most importantly, I have not been able to address the issue of whether the proleptic strategy is available in the other type of potential construction, i.e., the complex predicate construction. Such issues must be kept for future research.

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