POSSESSOR RAISING AND TWO TYPES OF HONORIFICATION[*]

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1.   Introduction

In Japanese, certain idiomatic predicates, including *kuti-ni awa-nai* 'not like' and *te-ni oe-nai* 'cannot control', may appear in two distinct syntactic forms, which can be distinguished by the morphological marking of the possessor argument. In (1a), the possessor is marked with dative case and is located in the clause, but in (1b), the possessor marked with genitive case appears in the possessum nominal.

(1)   a.   John-ni   sono-ryoori-ga   kuti-ni   awa-na-i.
           John-Dat   that-dish-Nom   mouth-Dat   fit-Neg-Pres

           'John does not like that dish.'

      b.   Sono-ryoori-ga   John-no   kuti-ni   awa-na-i.
           that-dish-Nom   John-Gen   mouth-Dat   fit-Neg-Pres

           'John does not like that dish.'

The two sentences in (1) carry the same meaning. Here, we can assume that the dative possessor argument of *kuti-ni awa-nai* 'not like' in (1a) appears first inside the possessum nominal constituting part of the idiom (by base-generation), as in (1b), and then undergoes overt raising. Notably in a possessor-raising construction like (1a), two types of honorification are possible, as seen in (2).

(2)   a.   Sensei-ni   sono-ryoori-ga   **o**-kuti-ni   awa-na-i.
           teacher-Dat   that-dish-Nom   Hon-mouth-Dat   fit-Neg-Pres

           'The teacher does not like that dish.'

      b.   Sensei-ni   sono-ryoori-ga   kuti-ni   at-te   **irassyara**-na-i.
           teacher-Dat   that-dish-Nom   mouth-Dat   fit-Ptcp   be.Hon-Neg-Pres

           'The teacher does not like that dish.'

As discussed by Harada (1976), Japanese has at least two types of honorification, one which is termed as 'possessive honorification', and the other 'subject honorification'. These two

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types of honorification are distinguishable morphologically. In (2a), which involves possessive honorification, the nominal honorific marker *o-* is attached to a body-part noun. (2b) represents a case involving subject honorification, where the honorific marker *-te irassyaru* is added to the verb.[1] In both sentences, the possessor argument *sensei* 'teacher'—which counts as an individual worthy of respect—is the target of honorification.

At first blush, it looks as though the target to which deference is directed is determined on the same structural condition in both types of honorification. Contrary to appearances, the two types of honorification fix their targets under different structural conditions. Japanese has two types of idiomatic expressions that display distinct syntactic properties in regard to possessor raising: one type involves the raising of the possessor to the clause subject position, and the other does not. On the basis of these idiomatic expressions, it will be shown that the two types of honorification target arguments located in distinct structural positions.

2. Dative possessors and their syntactic status

In Japanese, idiomatic expressions comprised of a body-part noun plus a verb are abundant, and many of them allow two variants to be formed, depending on whether the possessor is assigned either dative or genitive case, as seen in (3).

(3) a. John-ni   sono-gakusei-ga   te-ni   oe-na-i.
       John-Dat   that-student-Nom   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

       'John cannot control that student.'

    b. Sono-gakusei-ga   John-no   te-ni   oe-na-i.
       that-student-Nom   John-Gen   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

       'John cannot control that student.'

Since (3a) and (3b) express the same logical meaning, we can assume that in (3a), the dative possessor occurs in the clausal constituency by virtue of undergoing overt extraction out of the possessum nominal, where the genitive possessor appears in (3b). More specifically, when the possessor is marked with genitive case, as in (3b), it appears inside the host possessum nominal. On the other hand, the dative possessor in (3a) appears in the clause rather than in the nominal, owing to its overt possessor raising, even though it is base-generated in the possessum nominal.

In Japanese, we can find a number of idiomatic expressions displaying the same syntactic behavior as the idiom *te-ni oe-nai* 'cannot control'. Some of such idioms are listed below.

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[1] Japanese has several different markers for subject honorification. In this paper, we will make use of *-te irassyaru*, for it can be attached to idioms while preserving their idiomatic meanings.

(4) a.   *ki-ni sawaru* (mind-Dat touch) 'hurt one's feeling'
    b.   *kioku-ni aru* (memory-Dat be) 'remember'
    c.   *insyoo-ni nokot-te iru* (impression-Dat remain-Ptcp be) 'have an impression'
    d.   *kuti-ni au* (mouth-Dat fit) 'favor'
    e.   *te-ni au* (hand-Dat fit) 'can handle'
    f.   *ki-ni mesa-nai* (mind-Dat call-Neg) 'not like'
    g.   *ki-ni kuwa-nai* (mind-Dat eat-Neg) 'not like'
    h.   *te-ni oe-nai* (hand-Dat carry-Neg) 'cannot control'
    i.   *seikaku-ni at-te iru* (character-Dat fit-Ptcp be) 'suit'

These idioms take possessor and theme arguments, alongside a body-part noun.[2] When the possessor appearing in these idioms is marked with dative case, it acts as a syntactic subject. This can be confirmed by looking at whether or not it counts as the antecedent of the subject-oriented reflexive *zibun*. For example, with *te-ni oe-nai* 'cannot control', the dative possessor can be the antecedent of the reflexive *zibun* 'self'.

(5)   John$_i$-ni   zibun$_i$-no   gakusei-ga   te-ni   oe-na-i.
    John-Dat   self-Gen   student-Nom   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

    'John cannot control his student.'

It is true that many idioms show this syntactic pattern, but there are a few idioms (*yaku-ni tatu* 'of use, of help' *sewa-ni naru* 'get help', etc.) where the dative-marked possessor, which is extracted out of its host possessum nominal, does not acquire subject status syntactically. I will illustrate this point, making use of the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* 'of use, of help'.

(6)   a.   John-ni   sono-kenkyuu-ga   yaku-ni   tat-ta.
        John-Dat   that-research-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Past

        'That research was of use to John.'

    b.   Sono-kenkyuu-ga   John-no   yaku-ni   tat-ta.
        that-research-Nom   John-Gen   use-Dat   stand-Past

        'That research was of use to John.'

Superficially, the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* behaves in the same way as *te-ni oe-nai*, since the possessor argument may be marked with either dative or genitive case, as seen in (6). The fact that the possessor appears inside the possessum if it bears genitive case marking, as indicated in (6b), suggests that, just like other idioms in the same form, the dative possessor should be originated from within the possessum nominal.

    It is worth noting, however, that the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* stands in contrast with *te-ni oe-*

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[2] These are idioms in 'dative-V' forms. See Kishimoto (2008) and Miyagawa and Tsujioka (2004) on the discussion of their syntactic structures.

nai, in that the dative possessor fails to antecede the reflexive *zibun*.

(7) ?*John$_i$-ni   zibun$_i$-no   kenkyuu-ga   yaku-ni   tat-te   i-ru.
    John-Dat   self-Gen   research-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be-Pres

    (Lit.) 'Self's research is being of use to John.'

The fact that the dative possessor does not serve as the antecedent of the subject-oriented reflexive *zibun* suggests that it does not function as a subject.

    In effect, the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* is distinguished from *te-ni oe-nai*, in that the nominative rather than the dative phrase counts as a syntactic subject.[3] The following example, which contains the subject-oriented *zibun*, confirms this point.

(8)   John$_i$-ga   zibun$_i$-no   sensei-ni   yaku-ni   tat-te   i-ru.
    John-Nom   self-Gen   teacher-Dat   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be-Pres

    'John is being of help to his teacher.'

Since *zibun* has subject orientation, the acceptability of (8) shows that the nominative phrase of the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* should be construed as a syntactic subject.[4]

    The difference in the syntactic function of the nominative phrase between the two idioms can also be confirmed by checking whether the formal noun *koto* 'fact'—which does not carry any substantial lexical meaning—can be inserted to the nominative phrase.

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[3] The transitive counterpart of *yaku-ni tatu* is *yaku-ni tateru*. When the idiom *yaku-ni tateru* is used in lieu of *yaku-ni tatu*, as in (i), the theme argument is assigned accusative case, in stead of nominative case.

(i)   John-wa   sono-kenkyuu-o   yaku-ni   tate-ta.
    John-Top   that-research-Acc   use-Dat   stand-Past

    'John made use of that research.'

This is a typical pattern of causative alternation where a nominative subject is rendered into an accusative object. Thus, on the basis of the morphological pattern obtained for the pair of idioms *yaku-ni tatu* and *yaku-ni tateru*, we can reasonably state that the nominative phrase of *yaku-ni tatu* should serve as a syntactic subject.

[4] Since linear order is not relevant for the reflexive binding, the grammatical status does not change even if the dative phrase is moved to the sentence front, as in (i).

(i)   Zibun$_i$-no   sensei-ni   John$_i$-ga   yaku-ni   tat-te   i-ru.
    self-Gen   teacher-Dat   John-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be-Pres

    'John is being of help to his teacher.'

(9) a.   John-ni   sono-kodomo(-no-koto)-ga   te-ni   oe-na-i.
          John-Dat   that-child-Gen-fact-Nom   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

          'John cannot control that child.'

     b.   John-ni   sono-kodomo(*-no-koto)-ga   yaku-ni   tat-ta.
          John-Dat   that-child-Gen-fact-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Past

          'That child was of help to John.'

As discussed by Kuno (1976), Sasaguri (1999), Kishimoto (2004, 2005), Takubo (2007), and others, the formal noun *koto* can be inserted into a nominal functioning as an object. This syntactic operation is possible with the nominative phrase of *te-ni oe-nai*, but not *yaku-ni tatu*. In particular, the unacceptability of (9b) on the intended interpretation where *koto* is counted as a formal noun would be expected if the nominative phrase of *yaku-ni tatu* functions as a syntactic subject.

On the basis of the two kinds of idiomatic expressions, i.e. *yaku-ni tatu* and *te-ni oe-nai*, it can be shown that the targets of possessive and subject honorification are fixed under distinct syntactic conditions. First, as can be seen in (10), the dative phrase *Ito-sensei* of the idiom *te-ni oe-nai* can be targeted by both possessive and subject honorification.

(10) a.   Ito-sensei-ni   sono-kodomo-ga **o**-te-ni   oe-na-i.
          Ito-teacher-Dat   that-child-Nom   Hon-hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

          'Prof. Ito cannot control that child.'

     b.   Ito-sensei-ni   sono-kodomo-ga te-ni   oe-nai-de   **irassyar**-u.
          Ito-teacher-Dat   that-child-Nom   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Ptcp   be.Hon-Pres

          'Prof. Ito cannot control that child.'

On the other hand, for the idiom *yaku-ni tatu*, the following contrast in acceptability is observed between the two types of honorification.

(11) a.   Ito-sensei-ni   watasi-ga **o**-yaku-ni   tat-ta.
          Ito-teacher-Dat   I-Nom   Hon-use-Dat   stand-Past

          'I was of help to Prof. Ito.'

     b. *Ito-sensei-ni   watasi-ga yaku-ni   tat-te   **irassyar**-u.
          Ito-teacher-Dat   I-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be.Hon-Pres

          'I am being of help to Prof. Ito.'

(11b) involves subject honorification, and this example is deviant on the intended interpretation where the dative possessor *Ito-sensei* is counted as the target of subject honorification. By contrast, (11a), which involves possessive honorification, is acceptable in

just the same way as (12), where the possessor—the target of possessive honorification—appears inside the idiomatic expression.

(12) Watasi-ga   Ito-sensei-no   **o**-yaku-ni   tat-ta.
     I-Nom   Ito-teacher-Gen   Hon-use-Dat   stand-Past

    'I was of help to Prof. Ito.'

Possessive honorification is also licit when the possessor of the idiom *te-ni oe-nai* occurs inside the host possessum nominal.

(13) Sono-kodomo-ga   Ito-sensei-no   **o**-te-ni   oe-na-i.
     that-child-Nom   Ito-teacher-Gen   Hon-hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

    'Prof. Ito cannot control that child.'

Furthermore, when the possessor *Ito-sensei* is marked with genitive case, it cannot be the target of subject honorification. This holds true for both *yaku-ni tatu* and *te-ni oe-nai*, as illustrated in (14).

(14) a. *Sono-kodomo-ga   Ito-sensei-no   te-ni   oe-nai-de   **irassyar**-u.
         that-child-Nom   Ito-teacher-Gen   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Ptcp   be.Hon-Pres

      'Prof. Ito cannot control that child.'

    b. *Watasi-ga   Ito-sensei-no   yaku-ni   tat-te   **irassyar**-u.
         I-Nom   Ito-teacher-Gen   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be.Hon-Pres

      'I am being of help to Prof. Ito.'

Note that with the idiom *yaku-ni tatu*, the nominative phrase can be taken as the target of subject honorification. Thus, the nominative argument *Ito-sensei* in (15) can be interpreted as the individual to which deference is directed.

(15) Sono-keikaku-ni   Ito-sensei-ga   yaku-ni   tat-te   **irassyar**-u.
     that-project-Dat   Ito-teacher-Nom   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp   be.Hon-Pres

    'Prof. Ito is of help to that project.'

Since the subject-oriented reflexive *zibun* can be anchored to the nominative phrase of *yaku-ni tatu*, as we saw above, we can state that the target of honorification in (15) is the subject of the clause. The data regarding the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* indicate that the distribution of the two types of honorification—possessive and subject honorification—differs crucially.

    Notably, from the data, we can easily see that there is a fairly tight correlation between reflexivization and subject honorification: when a nominal fails to antecede the reflexive *zibun*, it cannot be targeted by subject honorification as well. If so, we can say that only when the possessor is raised to Spec, TP is subject honorification targeting this nominal made

available.

In the case of the idiom *te-ni oe-nai*, it is the dative possessor, but not the genitive possessor, that counts as the target of subject honorification. The reason why this difference arises can be easily discerned if we look at where the argument is located on the surface, as schematically illustrated in (16).[5]

(16) a.   [TP Possessor-Dat [Theme-Nom [~~Possessor-Dat~~ N]-ni V-te] irassyar-u]

    b. *[TP   [Theme-Nom [Possessor-Gen N]-ni V-te] irassyar-u]

With the idiom *te-ni oe-nai*, the possessor marked with dative case is located in the subject position, while the genitive possessor stays within its possessum nominal. Thus, the dative possessor, but not the genitive possessor, can be the legitimate target of subject honorification.[6]

Note that when the possessor of *te-ni oe-nai* bears genitive case marking, the subject position is not filled by any argument, as illustrated in (16b). In fact, the examples in (17) suggest that the nominative-marked theme argument is not raised to the subject position even if the possessor appears inside the host nominal.

(17) a.   John-ni   sono-kodomo(-no-koto)-ga   te-ni   oe-na-i.
                John-Dat   that-child-Gen-fact-Nom   hand-Dat   carry-Neg-Pres

            'John cannot control that child.'

    b.   Sono-kodomo(-no-koto)-ga   John-no   te-ni   oe-na-i.
                that-child-Gen-fact-Nom   John-Gen   hand-Dat carry-Neg-Pres

            'John cannot control that child.'

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[5] In the representations that follow, I will use an arrow to indicate a structural licensing relation between the honorific marker and its target.

[6] One interesting fact is that a resumptive reflexive can sometimes appear in the position from which the dative possessor is raised.

(i) John$_i$-ni   sono-kenkyuu-ga   zibun$_i$-no   yaku-ni   tat-ta.
    John-Dat   that-research-Nom   self-Gen   use-Dat   stand-Past

    'That research was of help to John himself.'

We can assume that the reflexive *zibun* 'self' here is an overt realization of a copy (or trace) left behind by movement, and differs from an ordinary reflexive pronoun *zibun*. This assumption is reasonable, in view of the fact that the reflexive *zibun* in (i), unlike the ordinary subject-oriented *zibun*, can only be bound by the dative possessor without subject orientation.

As noted earlier, the formal noun *koto* can be inserted if the host noun functions as a direct object syntactically. Crucially, the possibility of *koto*-insertion does not change regardless of whether the possessor is marked with dative or genitive case. Since the formal noun can be added in (17b) just in the same way as (17a), the theme argument should function as an object even if the possessor appears inside the host possessum nominal. Therefore, in the light of (17b), we can confirm that the genitive-possessor variant of the clause headed by *te-ni oe-nai* gives rise to the configuration (16b), where the subject position is not filled.

If we look closely at the idiom *yaku-ni tatu*, we find that the nominative rather than the dative phrase counts as the target of subject honorification. This suggests that the dative possessor is not raised to Spec, TP even if it is extracted from within the host nominal. In fact, we can ascertain that the dative possessor remains within vP rather than in Spec,TP, in light of the fact that the focus particle *bakari* can be associated with it in a sentence like (18).

(18) Sono-hon-ga   Ito-sensei-ni   yaku-ni   tat-te-**bakari**   i-ru.
　　 that-book-Nom   Ito-teacher-Dat   use-Dat   stand-Ptcp-only   be-Pres

　　 'That book was only of use to Prof. Ito.'

As discussed by Kishimoto (2009, 2010), the focus domain of the particle *bakari* extends over vP (but not beyond), so *bakari* can only be associated with an element inside vP. In (18), the particle *bakari* attached to the verb can be associated with the dative possessor; hence, we can have the interpretation that the book was useful only for Prof. Ito. This fact suggests that the dative possessor of the idiom *yaku-ni tatu* should reside in a vP-internal position.

In the case of the idiom *yaku-ni tatu*, the dative possessor appears in the clause, but it is not raised to Spec, TP.[7] With this idiom, it is the nominative-marked theme argument that is raised to Spec, TP, so the clause containing the predicate *yaku-ni tatu* should have the syntactic configuration (19).

(19) a.   [$_{TP}$ Theme-Nom [Possessor-Dat [~~Possessor-Dat~~ N]-ni V-te] irassyar-u]

　　 b. *[$_{TP}$ Theme-Nom [Possessor-Dat [~~Possessor-Dat~~ N]-ni V-te] irassyar-u]

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[7] In this case, the nominative phrase is expected to fall outside the focus domain of *bakari*. This is in fact true, as can be seen in (i).

(i) Ito-sensei-ni-wa   sono-hon-ga   yaku-ni tat-te-**bakari**   i-ru.
　　 Ito-teacher-Dat-Top   that-book-Nom   use-Dat stand-Ptcp-only   be-Pres

　　 'That book is only of use to Prof. Ito.'

Example (i) does not have an interpretation where the nominative phrase counts as the focus of *bakari*, showing that it is located outside vP.

In this case, the theme argument, which is marked with nominative case, appears in the subject position, so we would naturally expect that the nominative theme should be the legitimate target of subject honorification.

Turning to possessive honorification, the dative possessor of the idiom *te-ni oe-nai* starts out from the position where the genitive possessor resides on the surface. Now, given that the dative possessor first appears inside the possessum nominal, it is easy to see that possessive honorification is licit regardless of whether the possessor appears in the subject position or within the body-part noun.

(20) a.   [$_{TP}$ Possessor-Dat [Theme-Nom [~~Possessor-Dat~~   o-N]-ni V]]

     b.   [$_{TP}$ [Theme-Nom [Possessor-Gen   o-N]-ni V]]

In both configurations (20), possessive honorification can target the possessor, because it is licensed by virtue of its base-generation in the specifier position of the host possessum nominal.

In the same vein, possessive honorification is possible with the dative possessor of the idiom *yaku-ni tatu*, since it starts out from the position which is occupied by the genitive possessor, as shown in (21).

(21) a.   [$_{TP}$ Theme-Nom [Possessor-Dat [~~Possessor-Dat~~   o-N]-ni V]]
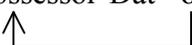
     b.   [$_{TP}$ Theme-Nom [[Possessor-Gen   o-N]-ni V]]
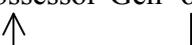
Possessive honorification is licit regardless of whether or not the possessor is overtly extracted from within the possessum nominal. We observe no difference in the possibility of possessive honorification between *yaku-ni tatu* and *te-ni oe-nai*, because the possessor is base-generated within the possessum noun in both idioms.

In essence, the data considered in this section show that the two types of honorification are licensed in distinct structural conditions. On the one hand, the legitimacy of subject honorification is determined according to whether or not a target nominal is located in the subject position, i.e. Spec, TP. Possessive honorification, on the other hand, targets a nominal located in the specifier of the host nominal to which the possessive honorific marker *o-* is attached. If the dative possessor appears in the subject position via extraction out of the possessum nominal, two types of honorification—possessive and subject honorification—are possible.

With an idiom like *te-ni oe-nai*, the possessor is overtly raised to Spec, TP via overt extraction out of the host nominal when it is marked with dative case. In this case, the possessor can be the legitimate target of subject honorification. When marked with genitive case, the possessor remains inside the possessum nominal, in which case subject honorification is not possible. Since the possessor is base-generated inside the possessum nominal, it can be the target of possessive honorification. The facts of possessive honorification remain constant regardless of whether the possessor is marked with either dative or genitive case.

In the case of *yaku-ni tatu*, the nominative theme rather than the possessor is counted as the target of subject honorification, since the former is realized as a syntactic subject. On the other hand, both the dative-marked and the genitive-marked possessors can be the target of possessive honorification, on the basis that they are base-generated in the specifier position of the host possessum nominal.

3.   Conclusion

In Japanese, there are two types of idiomatic expressions that differ in the nature of possessor raising: one type of idiom (*te-ni oe-nai* 'cannot control') raises the possessor to the clause subject position, and the other (*yaku-ni tatu* 'of use, of help') does not. These two kinds of idiomatic expressions show distinct behavior with respect to subject and possessive honorification. On the basis of these idiomatic expressions, it has been shown that the two kinds of honorification determine their targets under different structural positions: subject honorification targets an argument located in Spec, TP, while possessive honorification takes as its target the specifier of the possessum nominal to which the nominal honorific marker is attached.

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