Japanese multiple nominative constructions: The view of Antisymmetry

Miho Nagai, City University of New York, The Graduate Center

This paper examines multiple nominative constructions (MNCs) in Japanese, pursuing the question of how nominative *ga*-marked phrases are syntactically licensed. MNCs in Japanese, in which more than one *ga*-marked phrase can occur within a clause, have widely been studied by a number of linguists (e.g. Kuno, 1973; Fukui, 1986; Takezawa, 1987; Tateshi, 1991; Heycock, 1993; Vermeulen, 2005).

It has been claimed that the outermost ga-marked phrase in MNCs, as in (1b), shares the properties with the subject of the individual-level predicate that denote permanent properties of individuals, as in (1a), in that the (outermost) ga-phrase receives an exhaustive (or focused) reading. Building on the idea that the subject-predicate relationship can license not only positions, but also arguments independently of θ -assignment, Heycock (1993) claims that all the ga-phrases occurring in 'adjoined' positions are subjects of predication and that they are licensed by virtue of an aboutness relation. The main claim Heycock makes is that successive layers of predication (i.e., thematically closed sentences) can function as predicates, licensing a further subject in an A-position.

As shown in (1b), the only innermost ga-phrase has a very close connection to the predicate denoting the property. In contrast, outer ga-phrases show a significantly looser connection with the predicate. Clearly, not all ga-phrases have the same status. This can be confirmed by testing VP-fronting and the replacement by the proform soo ('so') (Akiyama, 2004). The proform soo can replace a lexical predicate which contains the innermost ga-phrase in (2a) and VP-fronting can (marginally) pied-pipe the innermost ga-phrase in (3b). This indicates that the lowest ga-phrase does not occupy SpecTP; rather, it probably stays in a lower position such as SpecvP. As can be seen in (4), VP-fronting with pied-piping of the innermost ga-phrase is impossible in a transitive structure –I take it that VP-fronting per se is not ungrammatical when the verb is transitive: what is ungrammatical is VP-fronting that pied-pipes the innermost ga-phrase. Suppose that some feature on v triggers object movement to one of the specifiers of vP. Now, if we assume that phrase structure obeys Antisymmetry (Kayne, 1994) and that the LCA is a PF constraint, there is no asymmetric c-command relation between the outer Spec and the inner Spec in (5a,b). Hence, no linear order can be established between these two elements, which, in turn, can explain the ungrammaticality of (4a). That is, first, Object Shift is grammatical when the subject leaves vP since a trace of a subject does not have to be linearly ordered, as in (5c,d). Second, vP-fronting with pied-piping of the subject is grammatical when there is no Object Shift since no symmetry is created on the edge of vP. This phenomenon is, in fact, reminiscent of VP-fronting in German. It is claimed that an indefinite DP can stay in situ while a definite DP is moved out of its base-position in German (e.g. Wurmbrand, 2004). On the basis of this, it can be postulated that the definite accusative DP Mamas Auto ('mom's car') is shifted from VP to SpecvP in (6) and that the indefinite nominative subject ein Idiot ('an idiot') within a fronted phrase, as in (6a), stays in SpecvP. The ungrammaticality of (6a) precisely shows that an indefinite nominative subject (in a base-position: SpecvP) and a definite accusative object (in a moved position: Spec ν P) cannot co-occur in specifers of ν P – due to a violation of antisymmetry – which is comparable to the Japanese data in (4a). This crucially suggests that the ga-marked subject originated in SpecvP can stay in situ when (i) there is some other ga-marked constituent outside of SpecvP in an MNC and (ii) there is no nominal object (an accusativemarked DP) in the structure because of antisymmetry.

This leads to the conclusion that Japanese MNCs are not instances of multiple adjunction, nor are they multiple specifiers. Rather, each *ga*-phrase and its predicate in an MNC are always mediated by a functional head.

(1) a. Mary-ga [Predicate kawaii] (Individual-Level Predicate) Mary-Nom cute 'It is Hanako who is cute.' b. bunmeikoku -ga [Predicate [dansei-ga [heikin-zyumyoo -ga mizikai]]] (Kuno 1973) male-Nom average life-span-Nom short civilized countries-**Nom** 'It is civilized countries that men-their average life-span is short in.' (*civilized countries are short.) (2) Tokyo-ga koosoo kenchiku-ga ooi rasiiga, (adapted from Akiyama 2004) Toyko-Ga high-rise building-Ga many seem but 'Although it seems that there are many high-rise buildings in Tokyo...' a. hontoo-ni Tokyo-ga *soo*-da to omowa-naka-tta actually Ga so Cop Comp think -Neg -Pst b. *hontoo-ni Tokyo-ga koosoo kenchiku-ga soo-da to omowa-naka-tta Ga high-rise building-Ga so Cop Comp think -Neg -Pst 'I did not think that Tokyo is actually so.' (3) Taro-ga mabuta-ga hareta (Akiyama 2004) Taro-Ga eyelid -Ga swell-Pst 'Taro's eyelids swelled. (It is Taro whose eyelids swelled.)' a. *[v hare]saei Taro-ga mabuta-ga ti sita. swell-even Taro-Ga eyelid -Ga do-Pst b. ?[v/VP mabuta-ga hare]saei Taro-ga ti sita 'Taro's eyelids even swelled.' (4) Taro-ga (dooyara) musuko-ga sensee -o nagutta (rasii) (adapted from Mihara 2004) Taro-Ga apparently son Ga teacher-Acc hit-Past (seem) 'Taro's son (apparently) hit a teacher. (It is Taro whose son hit a teacher.)' a. $*[_{\nu P} \underline{\text{musuko -ga}} [_{\nu P} \underline{\text{sense}}_{i-0} [_{VP} \underline{\text{naguri }} t_i]]]$ sae $[_{TP} \underline{\text{Taro-ga}} (\underline{\text{dooyara}}) t_{\nu P} \underline{\text{sita}}]$. even Taro-Ga (apparently) do-Pst -Ga teacher-Acc hit b. ??[_{vP} ti [_{vP} sensee -o [_{vP} naguri tj]]]sae [_{XP} Taro-ga (dooyara) musukoi-ga tvP sita]. teacher-Acc even Taro-Ga (apparently) son hit -Ga do-Pst 'Taro's son even hit a teacher.' (5) a. *[XP...[vP OB [vP SU [v' [VP ... tob ...]]]]] vP-fronting b. *[XP...[vP SU [vP OB [v' [VP ... tob ...]]]]] (5a or b) = (4a)c. \sum [XP SU...[vP OB [vP tsu [v' [VP ... tob ...]]]]] vP-fronting d. _[XP SU...[vP tsu [vP OB [v' [VP ... toB ...]]]]] (5c or d) = (4b)vP-fronting (6) a. *[_{VP} <u>Ein Idiot</u> [_{VP} <u>Mamas Auto</u>i [_{VP} zu Schrott gefahren ti]]] [_{XP} hat t_{VP} demals]. an idiot-_{Nom} mon's car-_{Acc} to scrap driven b. $[v_P \text{ ti } [v_P \text{ Mamas Auto}_j] [v_P \text{ zu Schrott gefahren } t_j]] [v_P \text{ hat } [\text{ein Idiot}]_i \text{ } t_V P \text{ demals}].$ to scrap driven has an idiot-Nom mom's car-Acc then 'What an idiot did back then was total Mom's car. (adapted from Hankamer & Lee-Schoenfeld 2005) **Selected References:** Akiyama, M. (2004). Multiple Nominative Constructions in Japanese and Economy. *Linguistic Inquiry*. Heycock, C. (1993). Syntactic predication in Japanese. Journal of East Asian Linguistics.

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