

Japanese Genitive Subject: A Comparison with Uyghur*

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1. Introduction

Drawing upon the analysis of Uyghur by Asarina and Hartman (2011), I propose that the genitive subject in Japanese appears in CP with an external D. This claim integrates previous observations of the Japanese genitive subject from the perspectives of the following two hypotheses: D-licensing (Miyagawa to appear a) and C-licensing (Hiraiwa 2005). Evidence for this analysis is provided by the C head *-no* in cleft constructions that an external D can select, in contrast with other C heads such as *-ka* and *-to*, and the possibility of CP adverbs (Cinque, 1999). Furthermore, I examine the possibility of the D-/C-licensing hypothesis to the Japanese genitive subject, comparing to the D-licensing account of the Uyghur genitive subject proposed by Asarina and Hartman (2011).

Alternating with the nominative subject marked by *-ga*, the Japanese genitive subject marked by *-no* can appear in some embedded clauses such as relative clauses (1) and complex NPs (2) but not in main clauses (3).

(1) Relative clauses

Ken-wa [kinoo Naomi-**ga/no** tukut-ta] susi -o tabe-ta.

Ken-Top yesterday Naomi-Nom/Gen make-Pst sushi-Acc eat -Pst

‘Ken ate the sushi that Naomi made yesterday.’

(2) Complex NPs

Naomi-wa [kinoo Ken-**ga/no** Kyoto-e it -ta] zizitu-o sit -tei -ru.

Naomi-Top yesterday Ken-Nom/Gen Kyoto-to go-Pst zizitu-Acc know-Prog-Prs

‘Naomi knows the fact that Ken went to Kyoto yesterday.’

(3) Main clauses

Ken-**ga/*no** ne -ta.

Ken-Nom/Gen sleep-Pst

‘Ken slept.’

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The genitive subject has been examined in almost every grammatical paradigm proposed to date (e.g. Harada 1971, Miyagawa 1993, to appear a, Ura 1993, Watanabe 1996, Ochi 2001, Kikuta 2002, Hiraiwa 2005, Maki and Uchibori 2008, Takahashi 2010). As is well known, not every embedded clause allows the genitive subject. Therefore, the issue at stake in the literature is to identify conditions where the genitive subject is acceptable. In the next section, I introduce previous analyses that are categorized into two major groups (Miyagawa to appear a): D-licensing analysis (e.g., Ochi 2001, Miyagawa to appear a) and C-licensing analysis (e.g., Watanabe 1996, Hiraiwa 2005).

2. Previous Studies

In this section, I introduce D- and C-licensing hypotheses in order to see their different assumptions for the structure of the Japanese genitive subject. The D-licensing analysis by Miyagawa (to appear a) posits a structural distinction for the nominative and genitive subjects. This assumption is based on the fact that the genitive subject usually occurs in subordinate clauses with a head noun such as *sushi* in (1) and *zizitu* ‘fact’ in (2), but not in the clauses without a head noun as shown below.

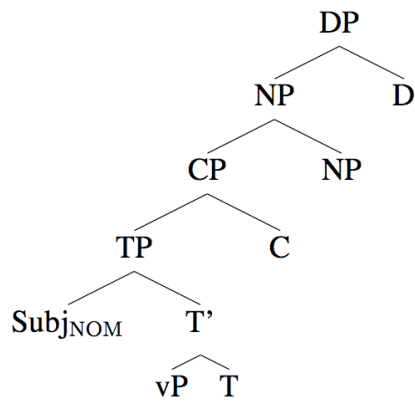
- (4) [Kinoo Naomi-**ga**/***no** kite -kara], Ken-wa susi -o tabe-ta.
yesterday Naomi-Nom/Gen come-after Ken-Top sushi-Acc eat -Pst
‘After Naomi came yesterday, Ken ate the sushi.’

The D-licensing hypothesis stipulates that the genitive subject must occur with a head noun that has a D in order to be licensed. The tree diagrams in Figure 1 are examples of the nominative and genitive subject structures based on Miyagawa’s D-licensing hypothesis, showing that the nominative structure contains CP in contrast with the genitive structure.¹

The C-licensing analysis proposed by Hiraiwa (2005), on the other hand, assigns the same structure, which contains a CP, to both the nominative and genitive structures. Hiraiwa (2005) claims that the genitive subject is licensed through the C-T relationship when C carries the feature [+N]. Figure 2 represents the nominative/genitive structure under the assumption of Hiraiwa’s C-licensing analysis.

¹ As in Figure 1, Miyagawa (to appear) claims that the genitive subject does not move to SpecTP. He argues, “when the T lacks any formal grammatical features as a result of not being selected by C, T does not trigger movement, hence there is no EPP on T”. Therefore, the subject at SpecvP has no motivation for movement to SpecTP. In this paper, I put aside the issue of the position of the subject DP. Also, see Miyagawa (to appear) for the evidence that the genitive subject structure does not contain CP.

a. Nominative Structure



b. Genitive Structure

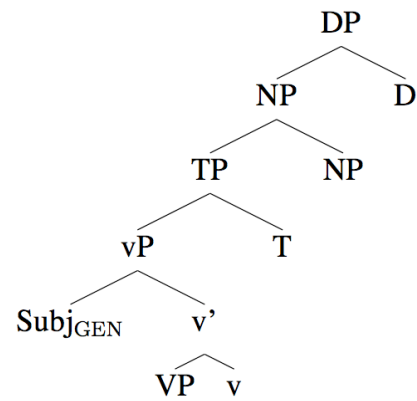


Figure 1: Nominative and Genitive structures in the D-licensing (Miyagawa to appear a)

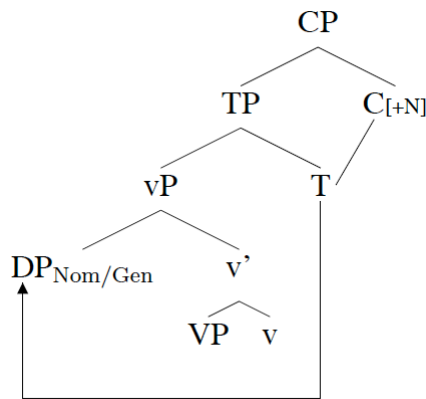


Figure 2: Nominative/Genitive structure in the C-licensing hypothesis (Hiraiwa 2005)

Contrary to the D-licensing analysis that assumes the existence of an external D head as a necessary condition for the genitive subject, the C-licensing analysis predicts the genitive subject from the adnominal form of a predicate, which is a reflex of the [+N] feature. The following example shows that the predicate of the embedded clause takes the adnominal form and can appear with the genitive subject.

- (5) [John-ga/no suki-**na**] ongaku-wa blues da.
 John-Nom/Gen like-Adn music -Top blues be.Prs
 ‘The music that John likes is the Blues.’ (Hiraiwa 2005:112)

To summarize, the D-licensing analysis assumes the existence of an external D in order to license the genitive subject in an embedded clause that does not include CP. Conversely, the C-licensing analysis assumes that the genitive subject appears in CP without an external D.

3. Uyghur Genitive Subject

Separate from the issue of whether C or D licenses the genitive subject in Japanese, in this section, I introduce the genitive subject in Uyghur to show that the Uyghur genitive subject appears in CP with an external D, which is a mixture of the properties of C- and D-licensing hypotheses that are introduced in the last section.

According to Hiraiwa (2005), the case alternation between nominative and genitive on a subject is observed cross-linguistically. Altaic languages such as Dagur, Turkish, Uyghur, and Middle Korean have been studied with respect to the alternation or the genitive subject (e.g., Hale 2002, Whitman 2006, Kornfilt 2008, Asarina and Hartman 2011, Miyagawa to appear a), and both the D- and C-licensing hypotheses have been proposed. Some of the languages exhibit a morphological agreement with the genitive subject. As explicated in Miyagawa (to appear a), a placement of agreement suggests which head licenses the genitive subject. For instance, the Dagur genitive subject appears in embedded clauses with a head noun that has morphological agreement (Hale 2002), and is considered to be an example of D-licensing (6). On the other hand, the Turkish genitive subject appears with an agreement on C (Kornfilt 2008), and illustrates C-licensing of the genitive subject (7).

(6) Dagur

[**mini** au -sen] mer^y -**min**^y sain.

1sGen buy-Perf horse-1s.Gen good

‘The horse I bought is good.’

(Hale 2002:109)

(7) Turkish

[ben-**im** al -dığ -**im**] at iyi -dir.

I -Gen buy-Factive -Nml.1s horse good-is

‘The horse I bought is good.’

(Miyagawa to appear a, citing J. Kornfilt (p.c.))

Contrary to the above two languages, the morphological agreement with the genitive subject in Uyghur appears either on a head noun of the embedded clause (8a) or on a verbal complex (8b) optionally with an overt C head *-liq* (Asarina and Hartman 2011).²

(8) Uyghur

a. [men-**ij** ket -ken -(liq)] heqiqet-**im** muhim

² ‘RAN’ in Uyghur in (8) refers to an aspectual morpheme (see Asarina and Hartman 2011).

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I-Gen leave-RAN-(LIQ) fact -1sg.Poss important

‘The fact that I left is important.’

b. Ötkür [Aygül-**nuŋ** ket -ken -(lik)] -i -ni di -d -i.

Ötkür Aygül-Gen leave-RAN-(LIQ)-3.Poss-Acc say-Pst-3

‘Ötkür said that Aygül left.’

(Asarina and Hartman 2011)

(8a) shows that the agreement with the genitive subject appears on the head noun, which is a property of D-licensing. (8b), on the other hand, shows that the agreement appears on C, which is a property of C-licensing. Asarina and Hartman (2011) claim that the Uyghur genitive subject is uniformly licensed by D regardless of the placement of agreement either on a head noun (8a) or a verbal complex (8b). They assume the existence of a phonologically null N with D as a head noun when one does not explicitly appear, as shown in (9). The tree diagram in Figure 3 displays the D-licensing of the genitive subject, as described by Asarina and Hartman’s (2011).³

(9) Ötkür [Aygül -**nuŋ** ket -ken -(lik)] - \emptyset _N-i -ni di -d -i.

Ötkür Aygül-Gen leave-RAN-(LIQ) -3.Poss-Acc say-Pst-3

‘Ötkür said that Aygül left.’

(Asarina and Hartman 2011)

As illustrated in Figure 3, Asarina and Hartman (2011) propose that the genitive structure contains CP. Another piece of the evidence for the existence of CP in the genitive subject structure is that the Uyghur genitive subject can occur with a CP-level adverb (e.g., evaluative, evidential) (cf., Cinque 1999).

(10) [**xeqiqi** Aygül -**nuŋ** jaz - ʁan] kitiv -i -ni korset!

truly Aygül-Gen write-RAN book-3.Poss-Acc show

‘Show (me) the book that Aygül truly wrote!’

(Asarina and Hartman 2011)

³ As in Figure 3, the D-licensing of the genitive subject crosses a phase created by C, which induces a violation of Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC). To circumvent the issue with phasehood, Asarina and Hartman (2011) provide the following two assumptions.

(i) a. D is not a phase head. (e.g., Richards 2006)

b. A functional head below D (the phase head) licenses genitive. (Asarina 2011)

Under either of the above assumptions, the D-licensing of the genitive subject does not violate PIC.

In addition, the occurrence of genitive subjects in cleft constructions with the C head *-no* suggests that the genitive subject can appear in CP.

- (12) [Konoaida kodomotati-**ga/no** ason-da]-**no**-wa ano kooen-de da.
the.other.day children -Nom/Gen play-Pst -C -Top that park -at be.Prs
'It is at the park that the children played the other day.'

Second, the relative clauses (11) and cleft constructions (12) where the Japanese genitive subject can appear have an external D. As shown in (11), relative clauses in Japanese accompany a head noun that comes with D as DP. Therefore, a head noun of relative clauses can take a genitive modifier that is licensed by the D, as in (13a) (cf. Kuroda 1999). Like relative clauses, cleft constructions can also take a genitive modifier, which provides evidence for the existence of an external D.⁵

- (13) a. Shinzyuku-**no**, [keisatu-**ga/no** tukamae-ta] gootoo -wa gaikokujin da.
Shinjuku -Gen police -Nom/Gen catch -Pst burglar-Top foreigner be.Prs
'The burglar in Shinjuku who the police caught is a foreigner.'
b. Konoaida -**no**, [kodomotati-**ga/no** ason-da]-**no**-wa ano kooen-de da.
the.other.day-Gen children -Nom/Gen play-Pst -C-Top that park -at be.Prs
'It is at the park that the children played the other day'

This indicates that there is an external D head when we have the genitive subject in the relative clauses and clefts. As Hiraiwa (2005) pointed out, with the exception of the C head *-no*, overt C heads such as *-ka* or *-to* are not compatible with the genitive subject.⁶ This availability of types of C is, in fact, dependent on whether it can be selected by D or not.

- (14) a. Konoaida (-**no**.) kodomotati-**ga/no** ason-da-no-wa ano kooen-de da.

⁵ Hideki Kishimoto (p.c.) pointed out that some native speakers of Japanese have low acceptability of the genitive subject in clefts and those speakers do not allow the genitive modifier with the clefts either. This individual variation also supports the assumption here that there exists an external D head when the genitive subject is possible.

⁶ Hiraiwa (2005) made the hypothesis 'Complementizer Blocking Effect', which prohibits the genitive subject when there is an overt C head. He argued that the complementizer *-no* is not an overt C but a morphophonological realization of genitive Case-checking on the head amalgamate. Thus, there is no blocking effect on the complementizer *-no*.

- the.other.day-Gen children -Nom/Gen play-Pst -C-Top that park -at be.Prs
 ‘It is at the park that the children played the other day’
- b. Konoaida (*-no,) kodomotati-**ga**/*no ason-da-ka-ga mondai da.
 the.other.day-Gen children -Nom/Gen play-Pst-C-Nom problem be.Prs
 ‘The issue is whether the children played the other day.’
- c. Naomi-wa konoaida (*-no,) kodomotati-**ga**/*no ason-da-to omot-tei -ru.
 Naomi-Top the.other.day-Gen children -Nom/Gen play-Pst-C think-Prog-Prs
 ‘Naomi thinks that the children played the other day.’

(14a) shows that the embedded clause with the C head *-no* as cleft can have the genitive subject and also the genitive modifier *konoaida-no*. On the other hand, the C heads *-ka* and *-to* in (14b) and (14c) cannot occur with the genitive subject and a genitive modifier. Therefore, the data indicate that the genitive subject can appear with an overt C head only when the embedded clause can be modified by an external genitive phrase. This fact supports the claim that the Japanese genitive subject appears in CP with an external D, as in the case of Uyghur.⁷

To summarize, the Japanese genitive subject is comparable to Uyghur, i.e., the genitive structure contains CP with an external D. Figure 4 presents example structures of what we observe in this section. Figure 4a is the relative clauses, and Figure 4b is the clefts. One might speculate that the cleft constructions in Japanese contain a phonologically null N head so that we do not need to postulate the structure in Figure 4b. However, it is unlikely that D selects NP that comes with the C head *-no*, because the C head *-no* cannot occur with an overt NP, as

⁷ There is another evidence for the existence of the external D with the genitive subject in Japanese. As introduced in Section 2, Hiraiwa’s (2005) C-licensing analysis discusses that the genitive subject appears with the predicate adnominal form as follows.

- (i) (= (5)) [John-ga/no suki-**na**] ongaku-wa blues da.
 John-Nom/Gen like-Adn music -Top blues be.Prs
 ‘The music that John likes is the Blues.’
- (ii) Matsuri-**ga**/no nigiyaka-**na** -no-wa 8-ji -kara da.
 festival-Nom/Gen lively -Adn-C -Top 8-o’clock-from be.Prs
 ‘It is from 8 o’clock that the festival is lively.’

As Hiraiwa (2006) admits, however, even the C-licensing approach might require the existence of the external D to prevent an overgeneration as follows.

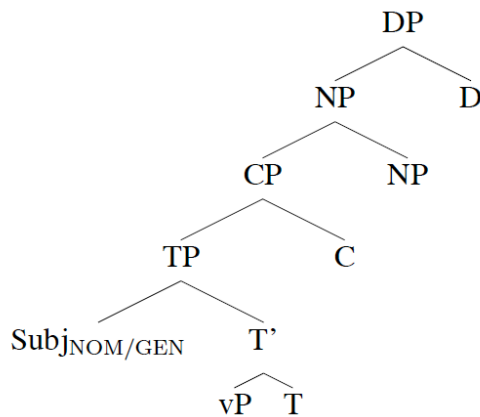
- (iii) Matsuri-ga/*no nigiyaka-**na** -no-da.
 festival-Nom/Gen lively -Adn-C -be.Prs
 ‘It is that the festival is lively.’

The example (iii) brings a problem to the C-licensing analysis because the genitive subject should be fine with the predicate that takes the adnominal form. Therefore, Hiraiwa (2006) suggests that the overgeneration as in (iii) can be avoided if we assume an external D that takes the clause that contains the genitive subject.

shown below (also see Hiraiwa and Ishihara 2002 for the derivation of cleft constructions).

- (15) [Konoaida kodomotati-**ga/no** ason-da]-no (*basyo)-wa ano kooen-de da.
 the.other.day children -Nom/Gen play-Pst -C place -Top that park -at be.Prs
 ‘It is at the park that the children played the other day.’

a. Relative clause



b. Cleft

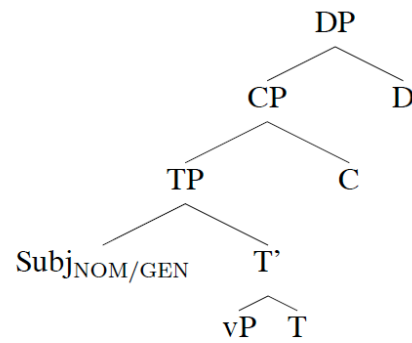


Figure 4: Relative clause and cleft structures that allow the genitive subject

These examples raise a question whether this *-no* is a C or N that selects CP because it cannot cooccur with a head noun as shown above. The syntactic category of *-no* and its historical development have been studied together with the genitive marker *-no* and a pronominal use of *no* (e.g., Simpson and Wu 2001, Nishina and Yoshimura 2005). In this paper, I presume that *-no* in cleft constructions is C but not N, following Hiraiwa and Ishihara (2002) and Hiraiwa (2005) (for a counter-argument, see Murasugi 1991 and Maki and Uchibori 2008). The evidence for this assumption is that the complementizer *-no* in clefts cannot be replaced with a head noun.

- (16) [Konoaida kodomotati-**ga/no** ason-da]-**no**/*basyo-wa ano kooen-de da.
 the.other.day children -Nom/Gen play-Pst -C/place -Top that park-at be.Prs
 ‘It is at the park that the children played the other day.’

5. Genitive Subject Licensing and Locus of Variation

In the last section, I posit that the Japanese genitive subject appears in CP with an external D, which indicates that the nominative and genitive subject structures are identical. In this section, I would like to examine the possibility of the D-/C-licensing hypothesis to the Japanese genitive subject, compared to the D-licensing analysis of the Uyghur genitive

subject proposed by Asarina and Hartman (2011). In addition, I aim to address a question about the locus of the variation, i.e., how the alternation between nominative and genitive on a subject is generated in the grammar. Since the nominative and genitive subject structures are identical, there should exist optionality on a syntactic operation such as movement or on a property of a syntactic category such as D, C, or *v* in order to generate the variation (either nominative or genitive). First, from a perspective of D-licensing, I compare properties of D in Uyghur and Japanese in order to consider whether D in Japanese is the locus of the variation, as in the case of Uyghur. I further investigate the possibility of a D-licensing account for the Japanese genitive subject with the assumption of optional defectivity of C. Second, I examine Hiraiwa's (2005) C-licensing hypothesis with the data provided in this paper.

Under the D-licensing assumption, Asarina and Hartman (2011) attribute the locus of the variation to the optionality of a case licensing property of an external D. One concern arises when we extend the idea of the optional D-licensing in Uyghur to Japanese. Contrary to D in Japanese, D in Uyghur cannot license more than one genitive DP, as shown below.

- (17) a. Two meanings for possessors in Uyghur (Asarina and Hartman 2011)
 Ajgöl-nuñ resim -i
 Aygöl-Gen picture-3.Poss
 'picture that belongs to Aygöl' or 'picture that depicts Aygöl'
- b. No double possessors:
 *Ötkür-nuñ Ajül -nuñ resim -i
 Ötkür-Gen Aygöl-Gen picture-3.Pos
 intended: 'picture that depicts Aygöl and belongs to Ötkür'

The example (17b) shows that D in Uyghur cannot license genitive DPs multiply. In addition, Asarina and Hartman (2011) show that the licensing of the genitive subject is subject to this restriction.

- (18) Possessed head noun relative clause subject must be unmarked (= nominative):
 [Ötkür(*-nuñ) oqu -kan] Ajül -nuñ kitav-i uzun
 Ötkür -Gen read-RAN Aygöl-Gen book-3.Poss long
 'Aygöl's book that Ötkür read is long.' (Asarina and Hartman 2011)

D in Japanese, on the other hand, can license the genitive DPs multiply. (19a) is an example of multiple genitive modifiers. Compared to (17b), and (19b) shows that the

Japanese genitive subject can appear even when the relative clause has a genitive modifier.

- (19) a. Ken-**no** Naomi-**no** syasin
Ken-Gen Naomi-Gen picture
'picture that depicts Naomi and belongs to Ken' or
'picture of Naomi who is related to Ken'
- b. [Keisatu-**ga/no** tukamae-ta] Shinzyuku-**no** gootoo -wa gaikokujin da.
police -Nom/Gen catch -Pst Shinjuku -Gen burglar-Top foreigner be.Prs
'The burglar in Shinjuku who the police caught is a foreigner.'

Since the above data show that the Japanese D and Uyghur D are different in terms of genitive case licensing, I argue that the variability is not located on the external D. One way to approach the nominative and genitive alternation in Japanese with the D-licensing analysis is defectivity of C. Defective phasal categories are transparent for locality of Agreement (or case licensing) and movement (cf., Gallego 2010). When C is defective, the external D above CP can license the genitive subject without violating the Phase Impenetrability Condition (PIC) (Chomsky 2001). In addition, T selected by the defective C is not able to assign nominative Case to the subject under the assumption of feature inheritance from C to T (e.g., Chomsky 2005, 2006). Therefore, when C is defective, the available Case for the subject is genitive from the external D. Furthermore, the defectivity of C is considered to be optional because the subject in question can be either nominative or genitive. When C is not defective, the subject gets nominative from T and the C as a phase blocks D-licensing due to PIC. Thus, this hypothesis regards the optional defectivity of C as the locus of the variation (nominative *-ga* vs. genitive *-no*). Figure 5 displays an example of relative clauses with the genitive and nominative subjects under this current assumption.

This hypothesis covers the data given thus far, but is limited because further research is needed in order to provide evidence for defectivity of C. The assumption here is only supported by the availability of case licensing from outside CP as a property of defectivity.

Let us now consider the data presented in this paper with the C-licensing account. As described in Section 2, Hiraiwa (2005)'s C-licensing analysis assumes that the genitive subject can appear when C has [+N]. In addition, the analysis attributes the variability to the free interchangeability of the abstract nominative and genitive Cases at Transfer. Based on the observations in the last section, one aspect of Hiraiwa's (2005) C-licensing analysis needs to be revised. The data in this paper show that the genitive subject can appear only when there is an external D. Therefore, the [+N] feature on C as the condition for the genitive subject only appears under an external D. In fact, this revision is suggested by Hiraiwa (2006) as a variant

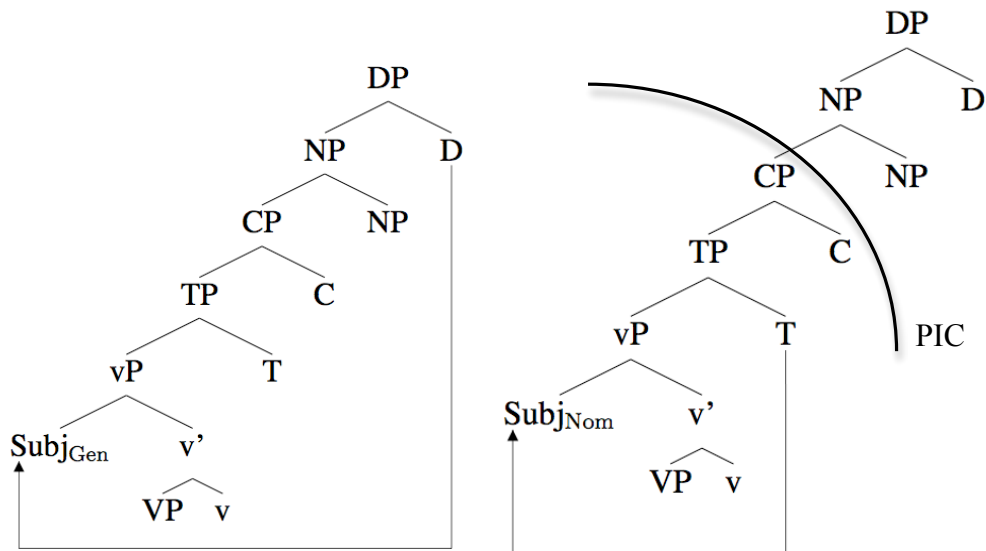
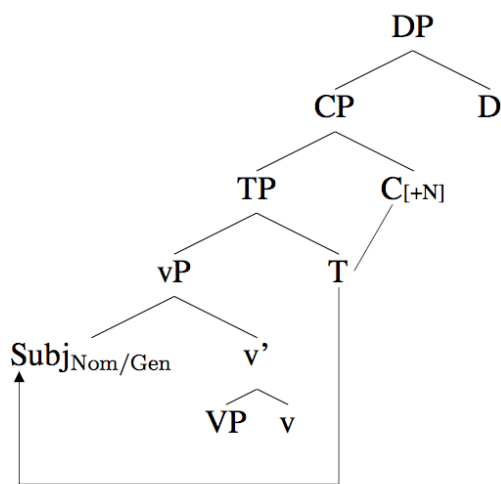


Figure 5: Optional defectivity of C and the nominative/genitive structures in D-licensing

of C-licensing hypothesis (see footnote 7). The following are examples of the revised version of nominative/genitive subject structures in the C-licensing account.

a. Nom/Gen subject in clefts



b. Nom/Gen subject in complex NPs

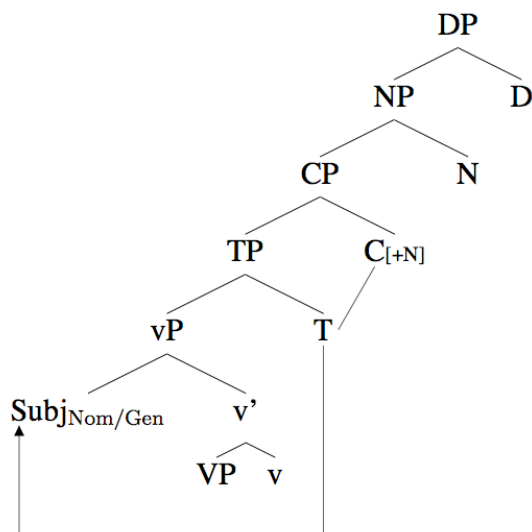


Figure 6: Revised version of nominative/genitive subject structures in C-licensing, modified (Hiraiwa 2006: 333)

This revision of syntactic conditions on the genitive subject is important because Hiraiwa's (2005) account does not explain when C has the [+N] feature. Since our revised version in Figure 6 shows that the genitive subject can only appear within an embedded CP clause with an external D, we can assume that the source of the [+N] feature on C is the

nominal feature on D.⁸ However, one concern is that when the genitive subject appears in complex NP clauses as in Figure 6b there is an intervening N between C and D in order to hand over the [+N] feature from D to C.

5. Remarks and Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that the Japanese genitive subject appears in CP with an external D, as in the case of the Uyghur genitive subject proposed by Asarina and Hartman (2011). In addition, the observations in this paper indicate that the nominative and genitive subjects appear in identical syntactic structures. Therefore, in order to generate the case alternation between nominative and genitive, we need to consider the locus of variation somewhere other than syntactic structures. I examined the possibility of D- and C-licensing hypotheses to the data provided in this paper. From a perspective of D-licensing, I proposed defective C as the locus of variation, as compared to the optional D-licensing of the genitive subject in Uyghur. On the contrary, under the assumption of C-licensing, Hiraiwa (2005) proposed free interchangeability of nominative Case and genitive Case at Transfer as the locus of variation. With the empirical data given in this paper, I presented a revised version of nominative/genitive structures that contains CP with an external D, as suggested by Hiraiwa (2006).

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⁸ Hiraiwa (2006) presented a tree diagram that implies the external D creates some relationship with C and T, and the [+N] feature derives from D and is handed over to C.

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