

# Two Types of Possessor Passive in Japanese and the Inalienable Construction in English and French

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## 1. Introduction

This paper aims at suggesting two different ways in which the possessor argument is linked to the verb in Japanese possessor passive sentences. I do this by referring to the way in which the possessor argument is encoded in the inalienable construction in English and French.

## 2. Possessor Passive in Japanese

In Homma (1995) I proposed that the subject of a possessor passive sentence as exemplified in (1) is generated as an "outer object" of the verb as shown in (2) and is moved to its surface position:

- (1) *Ken-ga* Aya-niyotte atama-o tatak-are-ta  
Ken-Nom Aya-by head-Acc pat-Pass-Past<sup>1</sup>  
'Ken had his head patted by Aya'

- (2) [<sub>IP</sub> *e* [<sub>PP</sub> Aya-niyotte] [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> *Ken*] [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> atama] [<sub>V</sub> tatak]]-are]]-ta]

This analysis is empirically supported by the behavior of numeral quantifiers. The occurrence of numeral quantifiers is syntactically constrained by the following condition (Miyagawa (1989)):

- (3) A floating numeral quantifier and (the trace of) its host NP must c-command each other.

This condition can account for the fact that in the following direct passive the numeral quantifier *go-nin* within a VP can host the subject:

- (4) *gakusei-ga* otoko-niyotte kooen-de *go-nin* nagurareta  
student-Nom man-Dat park-Loc five-Cl hit-Pass-Past  
'Five students were hit in the park'

Sentence (4) is grammatical since the numeral quantifier *go-nin* and the trace of the subject *gakusei* c-command each other, as Miyagawa (1989) argues.

(5) *gakusei*<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> otoko-ni] [<sub>PP</sub> kooen-de] [<sub>VP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> *go-nin* nagu-rare]]-ta

Likewise the subject of a possessor passive can be associated to a VP-internal numeral quantifier:

(6) *gakusei*-ga [<sub>VP</sub> Ken-niyotte kooen-de *go-nin* atama-o tatak-are]-ta  
 student-Nom Ken-by park-Loc five-Cl head-Acc pat-Pass-Past  
 'Five students were patted on the head by Ken'

The grammaticality of this example can be accounted for if we assume that the subject DP *gakusei* is generated as an outer object within VP, as in (7), so that it has a mutual c-command relation with the numeral quantifier.

(7) [<sub>IP</sub> *gakusei*<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> otoko-ni] [<sub>PP</sub> kooen-de] [<sub>VP</sub> *t*<sub>i</sub> *go-nin* atama-o tatak-are]]]-ta

### 3. Two Types of Possessor Passive and the Inalienable Construction in English and French

Homma (1995) admits only one source of the surface subject of possessor passive: the surface subject is generated as an "outer object" and is assigned the thematic role Affectee. However, possessor passive sentences do not exhibit uniform behavior. Some verbs allow the agent-denoting PP to be headed by *kara* instead of *ni* or *niyotte*, as in (8), but others do not, as shown in (9):

(8) Group A

- a. Hanako-ga keizi-ni/-niyotte/-kara koodoo-o ayasim-are-ta  
 Hanako-Nom detective-by/-by/-from behavior-Acc suspect-Pass-Past  
 'Hanako had her behavior suspected by the detective'
- b. Taro-ga kanozkyo-ni/-niyotte/-kara inoti-o tasuker-are-ta  
 Taro-Nom her-by/-by/-from life-Acc save-Pass-Past  
 'Taro had his life saved by her'
- c. Taro-ga Ziroo-ni/-niyotte/-kara atama-o nagur-are-ta  
 Taro-Nom Jiro-by/-by/-from head-Acc hit-Pass-Past  
 'Taro had his head hit by Jiro'

(9) Group B

- a. Taroo-ga suri-ni/-niyotte/\*-kara sai-hu-o tor-are-ta  
Taro-Nom pickpocket-by/-by/from purse-Acc steal-Pass-Past  
'Taro had his purse stolen by a pickpocket'
- b. Ziroo-ga Saburoo-ni/-niyotte/\*-kara otooto-o nagur-are-ta  
Jiro-Nom Saburo-by/-by/-from brother-Acc hit-Pass-Past  
'Jiro had his brother hit by Saburo'
- c. Taroo-ga doroboo-ni/-niyotte/\*-kara ie-o aras-are-ta  
Taro-Nom burglar-by/-by/from house-Acc rob-Pass/Past  
'Taro had his house robbed by the burglar'

The observed grammatical difference between (8) and (9) seems to come from the semantics of the verbs involved in these examples. The Group A verbs in (8) exhibit the following entailment pattern while the Group B verbs in (9) do not:

(10) Group A: i) entails ii).

- a. i) keizi-ga Hanako-no koodoo-o ayasin-da  
detective-Nom Hanako-of behavior-Acc suspect-Past  
'The detective suspected Hanako's behavior'
- ii) keizi-ga Hanako-o ayasin-da  
detective-Nom Hanako-Acc suspect-Past  
'The detective suspected Hanako'
- b. i) kanozyo-ga Taroo-no inoti-o tasuke-ta  
she-Nom Taro-of life-Acc save-Past  
'She saved Taro's life'
- ii) kanozyo-ga Taroo-o tasuke-ta  
she-Nom Taro-Acc save-Past  
'She saved Taro'
- c. i) Ziroo-ga Taroo-no atama-o nagut-ta  
Jiro-Nom Taro-of head-Acc hit-Past  
'Jiro hit Taro's head'
- ii) Ziroo-ga Taroo-o nagut-ta  
Jiro-Nom Taro-Acc hit-Past  
'Jiro hit Taro'

(11) Group B: i) does not entail ii).

- a. i) suri-ga Taroo-no sai-hu-o tot-ta  
pickpocket-Nom Taro-of purse-Acc steal-Past  
'A pickpocket stole Taro's purse'

- ii) suri-ga            Taroo-o tot-ta  
pickpocket-Nom Taro-Acc steal-Past  
'A pickpocket stole Taro'
- b. i) Saburoo-ga    Ziroo-no ootoo-o    nagut-ta  
Saburo-Nom Jiro-of   brother-Acc hit-Past  
'Saburo hit Jiro's brother'
- ii) Saburoo-ga    Ziroo-o nagut-ta  
Saburo-Nom Jiro-Acc hit-Past  
'Saburo hit Jiro'
- c. i) doroboo-ga    Taroo-no ie-o        arasi-ta  
burglar-Nom Taro-of   house-Acc rob-Past  
'A burglar robbed Taro's house'
- ii) doroboo-ga    Taroo-o arasi-ta  
burglar-Nom Taro-Acc rob-Past  
'A burglar robbed Taro'

As we see, the i) sentences entail the ii) sentences in (10), which is not the case in (11). For instance, if the detective suspected Hanako's behavior, it must be the case that this detective suspected Hanako. On the other hand, if Saburo hit Jiro's brother, it does not follow that he hit Jiro.

Interestingly, this semantic property is shared by the verbs that appear in the English inalienable construction, as exemplified in (12):

- (12) a. John kissed the children on the cheek.
- b. John hit the children on the nose.
- c. Mary kicked the children on the foot.            (Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992))

As Vergnaud and Zubizarreta point out, these verbs exhibit the following entailment relation:<sup>2</sup>

- (13) i) entails ii).
- a. i) John kissed the children's cheeks.  
          ii) John kissed the children.
- b. i) John hit the children's noses.  
          ii) John hit the children.
- c. i) Mary kicked the children's feet.  
          ii) Mary kicked the children.            (ibid.)

On the other hand, such verbs as *raise*, *stretch* and *wash* do not exhibit this entailment relation and accordingly do not appear in the construction in (12):

(14) i) does not entail ii).

- a. i) John raised the children's hand(s).  
ii) John raised the children.
- b. i) John stretched the children's leg(s).  
ii) John stretched the children.
- c. i) John washed the children's face(s).  
ii) John washed the children. (ibid.)

- (15) a. \* John raised the children at the hand(s).
- b. \* John stretched the children on/at the leg(s).
- c. \* John washed the children on/at the face(s). (ibid.)

Furthermore, in French these two groups of verbs map their possessor argument in different ways, as observed in Guéron (1985, 2003) and Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992):

(16) Group A verbs (verbs that exhibit the entailment relation):

- a. Pierre a embrassé les enfants sur la joue.  
Pierre has kissed the children on the cheek  
'Pierre kissed the children on the cheek'
- b. Pierre a frappé les enfants sur le nez.  
Pierre has hit the children on the nose  
'Pierre hit the children on the nose'
- c. Pierre a chatouillé les enfants sur le pied.  
Pierre has tickled the children on the foot  
'Pierre tickled the children on the foot'

(17) Group B verbs (verbs that do not exhibit the entailment relation):

- a. \* Pierre a levé les enfants dans/sur le/au bras  
Pierre has raised the children in/on/at the arm  
'Pierre raised the children's arms'
- b. \* Pierre a lavé les enfants dans/sur/à la figure.  
Pierre has washed the children in/on/at the face  
'Pierre washed the children's faces'
- c. \* Pierre a examiné les enfants dans/sur le/au pied.  
Pierre has examined the children in/on/at the foot  
'Pierre examined the children's feet'

Group B verbs map the possessor as the object of a preposition:

- (18) a. Le médecin a examiné l'estomac aux enfants

the doctor has examined the-stomach to-the children

'The doctor examined the children's stomach'

(Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992))

b. On lui a coupe les cheveux

they to-him have cut the hair

'They cut his hair'

(Kayne (1975))

An important property common to both English and French is that the possessor argument of Group A verbs, which show the relevant entailment relation, is mapped onto the direct object position of the verb.

#### 4. Direct Objecthood of the Possessor Argument in Japanese

This leads us to expect that the surface subject of Japanese possessor passive involving a Group A verb, a verb that shows the relevant entailment relation, is mapped as the direct object of the verb, not the outer object as proposed in Homma (1995).

This prediction is not easily borne out since with neither of the two classes of verb in the active voice does the possessor argument appear as the direct, accusative object:

##### (19) Group A

a. \* keizi-ga Hanako-o koodoo-o ayasin-da  
detective-Nom Hanako-Acc behavior-Acc suspect-Past

'A detective suspected Hanako's behavior'

b. \* kanozyo-ga Taroo-o inoti-o tasuke-ta  
she-Nom Taro-Acc life-Acc save

'She saved Taro's life'

c. \* Ziroo-ga Taroo-o atama-o nagut-ta  
Jiro-Nom Taro-Acc head-Acc hit-Past

'Jiro hit Taro's head'

##### (20) Group B

a. \* suri-ga Taroo-o saihu-o tot-ta  
pickpocket-Nom Taro-Acc purse-Acc steal-Past

'A pickpocket stole Taro's purse'

b. \* Saburoo-ga Ziroo-o ototoo-o nagut-ta  
Saburo-Nom Jiro-Acc brother-Acc hit-Past

'Saburo hit Jiro's brother'

c. \* doroboo-ga Taroo-o ie-o arasi-ta  
burglar-Nom Taro-Acc house-Acc rob-Past

'A burglar robbed Taro's house'

The ungrammaticality of these examples may be ascribed to the Double *o* Constraint (Harada (1973)), which prohibits multiple occurrences of the Accusative object in a single clause. However, the effect of this constraint is somehow weakened by clefting one of the accusative objects so as to separate it from the other accusative object. Importantly, this relaxing effect is observed with the examples with Group A verbs, but not with Group B verbs, as we see in (21-22):

(21) Group A:

- a. i) keizi-ga koodoo-o ayasin-da-no-wa Hanako-o da  
detective-Nom behavior-Acc suspect-Past-fact-Top Hanako-Acc is  
'It is Hanako who the detective suspected the behavior of'
- ii) keizi-ga Hanako-o ayasin-da-no-wa koodoo-o da  
'It is the behavior that the detective suspected Hanako about'
- b. i) kanozyo-ga inoti-o tasuke-ta-no-wa Taroo-o da  
she-Nom life-Acc save-Past-fact-wa Taro-Acc is  
'It is Taro who she saved the life of'
- ii) kanozyo-ga Taroo-o tasuke-ta-no-wa inoti-o da  
'lit. It is the life that she saved Taro'

(22) Group B

- a. i) \* suri-ga saihu-o tot-ta-no-wa Taroo-o da  
pickpocket-Nom purse-Acc steal-Past-fact-Top Taro-Acc is  
'It is Taro who the pickpocket stole a purse of'
- ii) \* suri-ga Taroo-o tot-ta-no-wa saihu-o da  
'It is a purse that the pickpocket stole from Taro'
- b. i) \* Saburoo-ga ootoo-o nagut-ta-no-wa Ziroo-o da  
Saburo-Nom brother-Acc hit-Past-fact-Top Jiro-Acc is  
'It is Jiro who Saburo hit a brother of'
- ii) \* Saburoo-ga Ziroo-o nagut-ta-no-wa ootoo-o da  
'lit. It is his brother who Saburo hit Jiro'

The point is that the possessor argument can have the direct objecthood with Group A verbs, but not with Group B verbs. If so, the surface subject of possessor passive in Japanese is classified into two different kinds: the possessor argument of Group A verbs is a direct argument of the verb, while that of Group B verbs is an "outer object."

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has argued that there are two different sources for the surface subject of possessor passive in Japanese. This point is suggested by the cross-linguistic consideration

of the inalienable construction in English and French, and the (im)possibility of Accusative Case-marker on the relevant argument.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> List of abbreviations: Acc - Accusative, Cl - Classifier, Dat - Dative, Loc - Locative, Nom - Nominative, Pass - Passive, Past - Past Tense

<sup>2</sup> The propositions in ii) of (13) are also entailed by the sentences in (12).

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