

Revisiting Multiple Nominative Constructions in Japanese

Nobu Goto & Toru Ishii

(Toyo University & Meiji University)

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Proposal

There are two types of multiple nominative constructions (MNCs) in Japanese: possessive MNC (1) (Kuno 1973) and adjunct MNC (2) (Tateishi 1991):

(1) Bunmeikoku-ga dansei-ga heikin-zyumyoo-ga mizikai.
Civilized.countries-Nom male-Nom average-life.span-Nom be.short
Lit. 'Civilized countries' male's average lifespan is short.'

(2) Ano-ziko-ga takusan-no nihonjin-ga sinda.
that accident-Nom many-Gen Japanese-Nom died
'In that accident, many Japanese died.'

Multiple nominative (MN) phrases in both possessive and adjunct MNCs have been analyzed as occupying multiple specifiers or adjoined positions (3):

(3) [NP-ga (Nom) [NP-ga (Nom) [NP-ga (Nom) [H ...]]]]

We discuss adjunct MNCs, proposing an unstructured sequence analysis. We argue that unlike those in possessive MNCs, the MN phrases in adjunct MNCs form a sequence (4) generated by *Form Sequence* (Chomsky 2021). Within a sequence, (i) the left-to-right order is imposed on its members, and (ii) there is no c-command relation among its members:

(4) [<NP-ga (Nom), NP-ga (Nom), NP-ga (Nom)...>, [...]]

Evidence

The first evidence comes from the fact that the order of MN phrases is free in possessive MNCs (5) but not in adjunct MNCs (6):

(5) a. Bunmeikoku-**ga** dansei-**ga** heikin-zyumyoo-**ga** mizikai. (= (1))

Civilized.countries-**Nom** male-**Nom** average-life.span-**Nom** be.short

b. Bunmeikoku-**ga** heikin-zyumyoo-**ga** dansei-**ga** mizikai.

c. Dansei-**ga** bunmeikoku-**ga** heikin-zyumyoo-**ga** mizikai.

(6) a. Ano-ziko-**ga** takusan-no-nihonjin-**ga** sinda. (= (2))

that-accident-**Nom** many-Gen-Japanese-**Nom** died

b. *Takusan-no-nihonjin-**ga** ano-ziko-**ga** sinda.

In adjunct MNCs, an adjunct nominative phrase must precede an argument nominative phrase (6a), and the order cannot be reversed (6b). This order restriction follows from our sequence analysis of adjunct MNCs.

The second evidence comes from the anti-c-command requirement on WH-*sika* NPI; WH must not be c-commanded by *sika*-NPI (Aoyagi and Ishii 1994):

(7) a. *Gakusei-**ga** yonensei-sika dono-jugyo-no-kesseki-**ga** ooku-na-i-no?

students-**Nom** senior-only which-class-Gen-absence-**Nom** many-Negation-Present-Q

Lit. 'Among students, which classes do only seniors miss a lot?'

b. Dono-gakusei-**ga** kesseki-**ga** ano-jugyo-sika ooku-na-i-no?

which-student-**Nom** absence-**Nom** that-class-only many-Neg-Present-Q

Lit. 'Among classes, which students miss only that class a lot?'

(8) a. Huru-honya-**ga** kono-tenpo-sika dono-gakusei-**ga** hon-o

secondhand.bookstore-**Nom** this-shop-only which-student-**Nom** book-Acc

kaw-ana-i-no?

buy-Negation-Present-Q

Lit. 'At only this shop among secondhand bookstores, which students buy books?'

Lit. 'At which secondhand bookstore, only that student among customers buy books?'

The possessive MNC (7a), where the *wh*-phrase is c-commanded by the *sika*-NPI, violates the anti-c-command requirement, whereas (7b), where the *wh*-phrase c-commands the *sika*-NPI, is acceptable. The adjunct MNCs (8a-b) are both acceptable, since there is no c-command relation within a sequence, voiding the anti-c-command requirement.

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