Multiple Nominative Constructions in Japanese*

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1. Introduction

The multiple nominative construction (henceforth, MNC) in Japanese has been the focus of much argumentation in generative grammar because of the idiosyncratic 'ga', or nominative Case assignment to an underlyingly different Case assigned NP (cf. Fukui (to appear), Koizumi (1994), Kuno (1973), Nemoto (1993), Saito (1983, 1985), Takezawa (1987) and Ura (1993, 1994), among others). Since MNC involves nominative Case assignment, before examining the mechanism of MNC, let us consider how Case licensing is dealt with in Japanese.[1]

Recently, Case has been treated in terms of either Case assignment or Case-checking. In the case of the former notion with the VP Internal Subject Hypothesis, the configuration of Case assignment is obtained as below:

(1) $[_{IP}$ SU I $[_{VP}$ t$_{SU}$ $[_{V'}$ OB V $]]]$

An NP in [Spec, VP] at D-structure moves up to [Spec, IP] for the purpose of acquiring nominative Case. However, recently, Chomsky (1992, 1994, 1995) has adopted the agreement-based Case theory that is called Case-checking. Instead of configurational Case assignment, all Cases are licensed via Spec-Head Agreement:

(2) $[_{AGRsP}$ SU $[_{AGRs'}$ $[_{AGRs}$ $[_{AGRs}$ T$_i$ AGRs $]]$ $[_{TP}$ t$_i$ $[$t$_{SU}$ $[_{AGRoP}$ OB $[_{AGRo'}[_{AGRo}$ V AGRo]...$]]]]]]$
  $\llcorner$ Agreement $\lrcorner$ $\llcorner$ Agreement $\lrcorner$

It is important to note that nominative and accusative Case features are checked through AGR. With these two kinds of Case licensing in mind, I will examine previous analyses of MNC, and point out some problems in section 2. Moreover, I will give an alternative analysis for MNC there. In section 3, it will be reviewed.
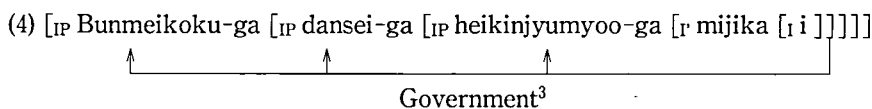
2. Multiple Nominative Sentences

2.1. Major Subjects

In this paper, I examine major subjects and nominative objects. To begin with, let us look at major subjects in examples like the following:[2]
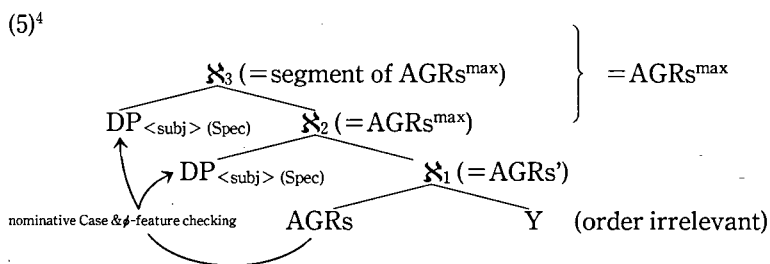
(3) a. Bunmeikoku-no dansei-no heikinjyumyoo-ga   mijika-i

     civilized country's   male's   average-life-span   short-is

     'The average life-span of males of civilized countries is short'

  b. Bunmeikoku-no dansei-ga heikinjyumyoo-ga mijika-i

  c. Bunmeikoku-ga dansei-ga heikinjyumyoo-ga mijika-i

'Bunmeikoku-ga' and 'dansei-ga' in (3c) are called major subjects. It is well known that major subjects have no direct thematic relations with the predicate, and that only the regular subject, 'heikinjyumyoo-ga,' bears on the predicate directly.

With these points in mind, let us proceed to examine major subjects from the perspectives of Takezawa (1987), Ura (1993, 1994) and Fukui (to appear). Takezawa (1987) argues that nominative NPs can adjoin to IP in MNC. According to his proposal, each IP-adjoined NP can be assigned nominative Case by I. The configuration of (3c) would be as follows:

(4) [$_{IP}$ Bunmeikoku-ga [$_{IP}$ dansei-ga [$_{IP}$ heikinjyumyoo-ga [$_{I'}$ mijika [$_{I}$ i]]]]]

                                 Government[3]

This line of argumentation is partly reflected in Ura (1994: 45):

(5)[4]

$\aleph_3$ (=segment of AGRs^{max})   } =AGRs^{max}

DP$_{<subj>}$ (Spec) $\aleph_2$ (=AGRs^{max})

     DP$_{<subj>}$ (Spec) $\aleph_1$ (=AGRs')

nominative Case &φ-feature checking   AGRs   Y (order irrelevant)

Ura (1994), assuming Case-checking rather than Case-assignment, maintains that NPs (DPs in his terminology) can adjoin to AGRsPs, and are checked by T and AGR which can license

multiple Case-features and sets of ϕ-features in Japanese.

Fukui (to appear) treats the status of subject differently. Characterizing X-bar theory as 'relativized X-bar theory,'[5] he holds that a subject should be generated in [Spec, V']. (6) is Fukui's configuration of MNC:

$$(6)^6 \quad [_{T'} [_{V'} X^{max} [_{V'} X^{max} [_{V'} \ ... [_{V'} X^{max} [_{V'} \quad ... V^0]] ...]]] T^0]$$

Government
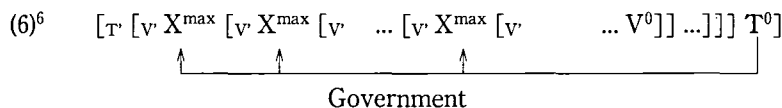
T can license each X^{max} through transparent V'.[7]

In the above analyses, however, it is unclear how to relate 'bunmeikoku' to 'dansei', and 'dansei' to 'heikinjyumyoo'. A natural and simple assumption is that (3c) originates from (3a), as suggested by Kuno. It is important to note that both 'bunmeikoku-no dansei-no' (civilized country-Gen male-Gen) and 'bunmeikoku-no dansei-no heikinjyumyoo-ga' (civilized country-Gen male-Gen average-life-span-Nom) compose constituents, as shown in the following structure underlying (3c):

(7)[8]

Bunmeikoku-no dansei-no heikinjyumyoo-ga
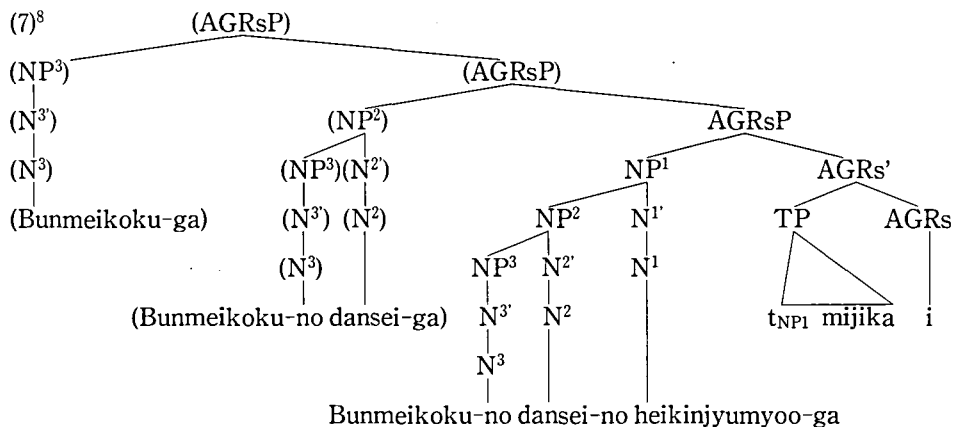
NP^3 and NP^2 are base-generated as specifiers of NP^2 and NP^1, respectively. This configuration accords well with Case theory. NP^2 and NP^3 are originally in [Spec, NP], so they are assumed to be assigned genitive Case.[9] As for the assumption that NP^2 and NP^3 adjoin to AGRsPs in MNC, it is driven by morphological necessity. If those NPs are base-generated as adjuncts of AGRsPs, it is unclear how NP^2 relates to NP^1, and NP^3 to NP^2. In addition, NP^3 and NP^2 cannot have θ-roles at adjoined positions. In the suggested analysis,

on the other hand, θ-roles are assigned at the specifiers of NPs. On the basis of these observations, the present analysis is preferred over the base-generation analysis.

2.2 Nominative Objects

Next, let us consider nominative objects which can cooccur with certain stative predicates, as shown in the following:[10]

(8)[11]   Simple [-stative] predicates

   a. John-ga　　　piza-o　　　tabe-ru

     John-Nom　Pizza-Acc　eat-Pres

     'John eats pizza.'

   b. *John-ga　　　piza-ga　　　tabe-ru

     John-Nom　Pizza-Nom　eat-Pres

     Simple [+stative] predicates

   c. *John-ga　huransugo-o　deki-ru

     John-Nom　French-Acc　capable-Pres

     'John is capable of French. (John speaks French)'

   d. John-ga huransugo-ga　　deki-ru

     John-Nom　French-Nom　capable-Pres

     Complex predicate: [-stative] + [+stative]

   e. John-ga　　　huransugo-o hanas-e-ru

     John-Nom　French-Acc speak-can-Pres

     'John can speak French.'

   f. John-ga huransugo-ga　　hanas-e-ru

     John-Nom　French-Nom speak-can-Pres

I will now examine nominative objects from the viewpoints of Koizumi (1994) and Nemoto (1993). Koizumi (1994) claims that a nominative object occurs in a position hierarchically different from that of an accusative object:

(9) [12][$_{AGRsP}$ MS-Nom [$_{AGRsP}$ SU-Nom [$_{TP}$ OB-Nom [$_{NegP (or AP)}$ [$_{AGRoP}$ OB-Acc [$_{VP}$ …]]]]]][13]

A nominative Case feature of NP has to be checked off by the feature of T. The checking, however, is done through the medium of AGR. An amalgamating constituent, [$_{AGR}$ T AGR], checks off nominative features of NP and T. Under such a minimalist approach, a nominative object must move to a position higher or lower than TP. Furthermore, nominative objects have to be distinguished from major subjects.[14] Thus it follows that a nominative object should be somewhere in AGRoP.

Nemoto (1993) advances a different analysis of nominative objects. Assuming that the presence of a few hierarchically different AGRoPs can account for nominative objects, and that a nominative Case licensing in nominative object construction relies on the stativity of a verb, Nemoto (1993) suggests that a nominative object should be in the specifier of AGRoP right above a stative VP, as shown in the following configuration slightly modified for explanatory convenience:

(10) [... [$_{AGRoP}$ OB-Nom [$_{AGRo'}$ AGRo [$_{VP[+stative]}$ [$_{v'}$ V... [$_{AGRoP}$ [$_{AGRo'}$ AGRo [$_{VP[-stative]}$ ...]]]]]]]]

Her suggestion is tenable since [Spec, TP] cannot be utilized for nominative Case-checking under a minimalist approach, and since nominative objects, which should be distinguished from major subjects, cannot move into AGRsP.
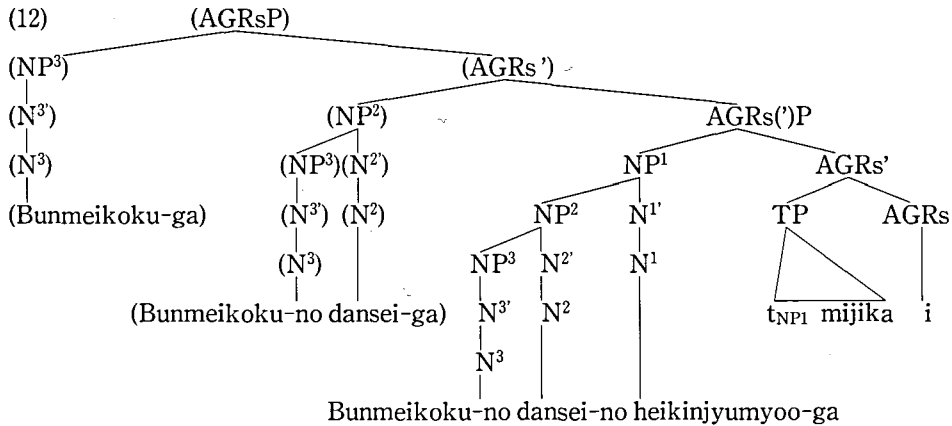
3. Problems and an Alternative Analysis

I have assumed that major subjects in (7) can adjoin to AGRsPs. Each of them is licensed as a subject at a broadly L-related position. Although this assumption seems plausible, there are two problems connected with it. First of all, NP[2] and NP[3] are moved out of subjects NP[1] and NP[2], respectively, violating the Subject Condition, which prohibits extraction from inside a subject. However, there seems to be no such condition in Japanese, as noted by Fukui (to appear).[15] Consider the following examples:

(11) a. Bill-niyotte   dare-ga   toosen-suru   toiyu
       Bill-by   who-Nom   win the election   that

       yosoo-ga   hitei-sare-ta   no
       the prediction-Nom   deny-Pass-Past   Q

       'The prediction that who wins the election is denied by Bill'

b. ?dare-ga   Bill-niyotte   toosen-suru   toiyu

   who-Nom Bill-by   win the election   that

   yosoo-ga   hitei-sare-ta   no

   the prediction-Nom   deny-Pass-Past   Q

c. Hillary-niyotte   Bill-ga   nani-o   kaku   toiyu   jijitu-ga

   Hillary-by   Bill-Nom   what-Acc   write   that   the fact-Nom

   hitei-sare-ta   no

   deny-Pass-Past   Q

   'The fact that Bill writes what is denied by Hillary'

d. ??nani-o   Hillary-niyotte   Bill-ga   kaku   toiyu   jijitu-ga

   what-Acc   Hillary-by   Bill-Nom   write   that   the fact-Nom

   hitei-sare-ta   no

   deny-Pass-Past   Q

Although English does not permit a constituent to be extracted out of a subject, Japanese seems to allow the extraction of a constituent out of a subject. Notice that in spite of the fact that 'dare-ga' and 'nani-o' in (11b, d) are moved out of subjects, the sentences are not totally ungrammatical, indicating that Japanese is not subject to the Subject Condition. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a WH-phrase in (11b), which is a subject, is not L-marked, while a WH-phrase in (11d), which is an object, is L-marked. Subject NP being a barrier,[16] the trace of 'dare-ga' is not antecedent-governed: nor is it θ-governed. The Empty Category Principle, which requires that a nonpronominal empty category must be θ-governed or antecedent-governed, wrongly predicts that (11b) should be an ill-formed sentence. If sentences (11b, d) are acceptable, it follows that subject NP, not being L-marked, is not a barrier in Japanese, and that NP^2 and NP^3 can be moved out of NP^1 and NP^2, respectively.

Secondly, if nominative Case and ϕ-feature checking occur at AGRsP adjoined positions, how can we differentiate between scrambling and checking? Supposing that scrambling is an adjunction to S (cf. Lasnik and Saito 1992), scrambled constituents are licensed as subjects. This leads to Case conflict. To avoid such an undesirable result, major subjects must adjoin to single-bar categories, following Chomsky's (1994) multiple specifier structure:[17]

(12)　　　　　(AGRsP)

(NP³)　　　　　　　　　　　　(AGRs')

(N³)　　　　　(NP²)　　　　　　　　　　　　　AGRs(')P

(N³)　　　　(NP³)(N²')　　　　　　　　NP¹　　　AGRs'

(Bunmeikoku-ga)　(N³') (N²)　　　　NP²　N¹'　　TP　　AGRs

　　　　　　　　(N³)　　　NP³　N²'　N¹

　　　　(Bunmeikoku-no dansei-ga)　N³'　N²　　　　　tNP1 mijika　i

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　N³

　　　　　Bunmeikoku-no dansei-no heikinjyumyoo-ga

NPs in specifier positions of AGRsPs are in the checking domain of AGRs. The nominative Case features are therefore properly checked off by T via AGR. Thus we see that the additional advantage of the adjunction analysis of MNC is that it enables us to distinguish major subjects from scrambled constituents.

4. Conclusion

To summarize, I have argued that a major subject should be in a specifer of AGRsP, not in an AGRsP adjoined position, so as to distinguish it from a scrambled constituent, and that a major subject is moved out of a subject rather than base-generated in situ.[18] Although this movement violates the Subject Condition in English, I have argued, following Fukui, that Japanese does not obey this condition. Furthermore, the present approach depends on Nemoto's suggestion that a nominative object fills in a specifier of AGRoP right above a stative verb. If the preceding argumentation is on the right track, it follows that the suggested analysis of multiple nominative constructions in Japanese provides support for Chomsky's multiple specifier structure.

Notes

like to thank the audience there for their useful comments. Needless to say, responsibility for the present contents is entirely my own.

1. In this paper, we assume that nominative Case licensing involves either Case assignment or Case-checking. In this sense, I do not adopt the assumption that nominative Case is inherent, as in Fukui (1986, to appear), Fukui and Nishigauchi (1992), and Saito (1983, 1985).

2. Examples (3a-c) are adapted from Kuno (1973: 34).

3. Takezawa (1987) defines "government" and "c-command" as in (i) and (ii), respectively:

(i) Government

α governs γ in $[\beta...\gamma...\alpha...\gamma...]$, where

(a) $\alpha = X^0$

(b) where ϕ is a maximal projection, if ϕ dominates γ then ϕ dominates ϕ.

(c) α c-commands γ.

(ii) α c-commands β if and only if

suppose that $\gamma_1, ..., \gamma_n$ is the maximal sequence such that

(1) $\gamma_n = \alpha$

(2) $\gamma_i = \alpha^j$

(3) γ_i immediately dominates γ_{i+1}.

Then if γ_i dominates α, then either (I) δ dominates β, or (II) $\delta = \gamma_i$ and γ_i dominates β.

4. Ura suggests that a broadly L-related position, an A'-position, can become an A-position in Japanese. According to his suggestion, the outer DP in (5) is licensed as a subject.

5. According to his theory, functional categories can project themselves to XPs in languages where Spec-Head Agreement exists. So, in languages like Japanese and Korean, where Spec-Head Agreement does not exist, functional categories project themselves only to X'. On the other hand, lexical categories are uniformly X'. See further details in Fukui (to appear).

6. This configuration is adapted from Fukui (to appear: 45).

7. Not being a maximal projection, V' circumvents barrierhood.

8. Ura (1993: 391−392) regards a major subject as an adjunction to AGRsP at LF, covert syntax:

(i) a. [$_{AGRsP}$ [$_{DP}$ Bunmeikoku-no heikinjyumyoo]-ga AGRs [$_{TP}$ T [$_{AP}$ nagai]]]

　b. [$_{AGRsP}$ [$_{DP}$ Bunmeikoku-ga heikinjyumyoo]-ga AGRs [$_{TP}$ T [$_{AP}$ nagai]]]

    c. [$_{AGRsP}$ Bunmeikoku-ga$_i$ [$_{AGRsP}$ [$_{DP}$ t$_i$ heikinjyumyoo]] –ga AGRs-T$_T$ [$_{TP}$ t$_T$ [$_{AP}$ nagai]]]]

    (LF representation of (b))

Since LF movement is less costly than overt movement, under the minimalist approach suggested by Chomsky (1992, 1995), major subjects might not be moved until LF.   I leave it to future investigation whether (7) is a configuration within overt or covert syntax.

    9. Kajiwara (personal communication) pointed out to me that it is unclear how the visibility condition is met.   Since NP^2 and NP^3 are originally positioned in specifiers of NPs, they can receive θ-roles.   As a result, NP^2 and NP^3 are not in contravention of the visibility condition.

    10. It is well known that only a certain set of lexical items can occur with nominative objects: they include 'suki/ kirai' (like/ dislike), '-hosii/ -sitai' (want/ want to), 'wakaru' (understandable), 'dekiru' (capable), 'kowai' (be frightened with) and 'V + -reru' (can V). See Kuno (1973) for further details.

    11. Examples (8a–f) are from Koizumi (1994: 213–214).

    12. The configuration in (9) is adapted from Koizumi (1994: 223).

    13. With regard to the scope relation amongst an accusative object, a nominative object and a negative phrase, Koizumi (1994: 221–222) states that a nominative object should be in a position higher than a negative phrase, whereas an accusative object should be lower than that:

(i) a. John-ga   migime-dake-o   tumur-e-na-i   (koto)

       John-Nom   right. eye-only-Acc   close-can-Neg-Pres (the fact)

       '(the fact that) John cannot close only his right eye.'

       Neg > can > only (John cannot wink is right eye.)

   b. John-ga   migime-dake-ga   tumur-e-na-i   (koto)

       John-Nom   right. eye-only-Nom   close-can-Neg-Pres (the fact)

       only > Neg > can   (It is only the right eye that he cannot close.)

    14. One of the reasons for the discrimination is, as shown in Nemoto (1993), that a nominative object, unlike a major subject, cannot be the antecedent of 'jibun' (oneself).   See details in Nemoto (1993)

    15. Fukui (to appear: 53) notes that Japanese is not subject to the Subject Condition, providing the following examples:

(i) a. [pictures of Bill] pleased John

b. *? who$_i$ did [pictures of t$_i$] please John

c. [that John will win the race] is likely

d. *? which race$_i$ is [that John will win t$_i$] likely

e. John   -ga [[Mary-ga nani-o   katta   koto]-ga mondai-da to]   omotteru no

        -Nom   what-Acc bought fact   problem-is 'that' think   Q

   'John thinks that [the fact that Mary bought what] is a problem'

f. ?nani-o$_i$ John -ga [[Mary-ga   t$_i$ katta koto] -ga mondai-da to] omotteru no

   'what$_i$, John thinks that [the fact that Mary bought t$_i$] is a problem'

In (if), the extraction of 'nani-o' out of the subject does not induce severe ungrammaticality.

16. Chomsky (1986) defines barrier as follows:

(i) γ is a barrier for β iff (a) or (b):

    a. γ immediately dominates δ, δ a BC for β;

    b. γ is a BC for β, $\gamma \neq$ IP

The relevant notions follow:

(ii) γ is a BC for β iff γ is not L-marked and dominates β.

(iii) α L-marks β iff α is a lexical category that θ-governs β.

17. Chomsky (1994: 41) provides the following multiple specifier configuration:

(i)
```
        XP
      /    \
  SPEC1    X'
         /    \
     SPEC2    X'
            /    \
           H    Complement
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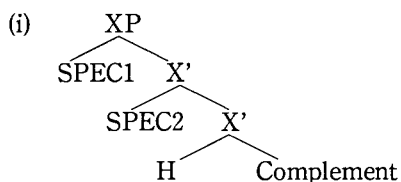
Chomsky states that if a language allows (i), (i) can permit multiple licensing of Case and agreement from H.   However, Chomsky (1994) suggests that some element could covertly fill SPEC1 for the same Case-checking as SPEC 2.   Slightly extending this assumption, I assume that SPEC1 can be overtly filled for Case-checking.

18. One might suppose that NP^2 and NP^3 need not move out of the subject, but that the nominative features of the NPs can be checked within NP^1.   This Case-checking is guaranteed in Chomsky (1992) because elements within the specifier of AGRsP are considered to be in the checking domain of AGRs.   If this assumption is correct, a major subject does not necessarily move, but I do not adopt the assumption in this paper.

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