

### An analysis of Inalienable possession constructions in Japanese

Inalienable possession constructions (1), which can be regarded as a sub-class of transitive-intransitive pairs such as (2), show interesting properties that are not observed in the transitive-intransitive pairs. First, in (1a), the subject can be interpreted as an inalienable possessor of the object. This is not observed in (2a). Second, when the subject is interpreted as an inalienable possessor of the object, the subject is interpreted as non-agent. That is, the subject is not the actual person who did the cutting. On the other hand, when the subject of (1a) is interpreted as agent, it loses the inalienable possessor status. Third, when a reflexive anaphor, *zibun*, appears as the possessor of the object as in (3a), the subject is interpreted only as agent just as (3b). Finally, when the object of (1a) is relativized as in (4a), the non-agent reading disappears whereas the sentence that relativizes the subject retains both readings as in (4b).

Hasegawa (2009) proposes that a little *v* has features of [ $\pm$ External Role (ER),  $\pm$ Object Case (OC)] and that derivations of the two readings in (1a) are (5ab). In (5a), the subject is base-generated as the possessor of the object in spec.DP and moves to spec.vP where it gets the agent role. She treats the subjects in both readings as agent extending the notion of agent to include an intentional entity. In (5b), the subject is base-generated in spec.vP. The derivation of (1b) is given in (5c) where the little *v* has [-ER, -OC]. Her analysis seems convincing in that it ensures the possessor status of the subject as well as its agent role. However, it raises some questions, one of which is what distinguishes the inalienable possession relation verbs in (1) from standard transitive-intransitive pairs such as (2).

Instead, I propose (6a) and (6b) for the two readings of (1a). In (6a), the subject is base-generated as the possessor of the object and moves to spec.vP where it gets an agent  $\theta$ -role. I assume that the agent role includes intentional entity following Hasegawa. Minimally different is the NP status of the object in (6a). Assuming DP licenses genitive Case (Miyagawa 1993), the possessor moves out of the NP object; otherwise, it would be Caseless. According to Vergnaud and Zubizarreta (1992), DP denotes a token while NP denotes a type. While tokens may be associated with objects in the world, a type is associated with an object in the world only by instantiation as a token. The NP status of the object in (6a) allows us to interpret the object as a type which in turn results in the non-agentive reading. On the other hand in (6b), the possessor of the object gets its Case checked in spec.DP. *Pro*, *Mary*, or *zibun* can appear in this position, and the subject is base-generated in spec.vP. Since the subject is not the possessor of the object, inalienable possession relation is not obtained. The DP object is a token which means that it is interpreted as a real object in the world, namely, '(someone's) hair.' This leads us to interpret the subject as the agent of the object. The contrast in relative clauses in (4) can be accounted for in terms of the NP/DP distinction as well. According to Kuno (1973), the gap in a relative clause is *pro*. If the gap is a *pro* coreferential with the relative head as in (7), the gap is likely to be DP since pronouns are generally assumed to be DP. When the verb selects NP as its object, this object cannot be a gap in a relative clause since it should be DP. Thus (5a) is not a possible candidate for a relative clause. On the other hand, (5b) is possible since the object is DP which can be a gap in a relative clause. As a result, (4a) has only an agentive reading. I assume that it is a special property of the transitive verbs with inalienable possession relations that optionally select NP. By allowing movement into a  $\theta$ -position (Hornstein 2001), this analysis can account for the two readings of (1a) as well as the data in (3) and (4).

Recall that I assume that the subject of (1a) is not an agent but an intentional entity. To support this assumption, I apply four tests: an adversity passive test, an imperative test, a potential test from Jacobsen (1992), and a *-ni iku* attachment test. First, the dative marked DPs of adversity passive sentences must be intentional entities as in (8). Second, imperatives require verbs to express some sort of activity under the volitional control of the addressee. Thus, (9a) is acceptable but (9b) is not. Third, a potential particle, *-rare/-e*, can attach to intentional verbs but not to non-intentional verbs as in (10). Finally, the expression, *-ni iku*, 'go to' can attach to an agentive verb but not to a non-agentive verb as in (11). When these tests are applied to the verb in (1a), they are all accepted with the non-agentive intentional reading as shown in (12)-(15).

- |        |          |                                     |            |    |          |                         |           |
|--------|----------|-------------------------------------|------------|----|----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| (1) a. | Taroo-ga | kami-o                              | kit-ta.    | b. | Taroo-no | kami-ga                 | kire-ta.  |
|        | T-nom    | hair-acc                            | cut-past   |    | T-gen    | hair-nom                | cut-past  |
|        |          | 'Taroo got a haircut/cut the hair.' |            |    |          | 'Taroo's hair snapped.' |           |
| (2) a. | Taroo-ga | kabin-o                             | kowashi-ta | b. | Taroo-no | kabin-ga                | koware-ta |

- T-nom base-acc break-past T-gen base-nom break-past  
 ‘Taroo broke the base.’ ‘Taroo’s base broke.’
- (3) a. Taroo-ga zibun-no kami-o kit-ta. b. Taroo-ga Hanako-no kami-o kit-ta.  
 T-nom self-gen hair-acc cut-past T-nom H-gen hair-acc cut-past  
 ‘Taroo cut his own hair.’ ‘Taroo cut Hanako’s hair.’
- (4) a. Taroo-ga kitta kami  
 T-nom cut hair  
 ‘The hair that Taroo cut’  
 b. kami-o kitta Taroo  
 hair-acc cut T  
 ‘Taroo who got a haircut/cut the hair’
- (5) a. [TP Taroo<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> [VP [DP t<sub>i</sub> hair]-acc cut ] v<sup>0</sup><sub>[-ER, +OC] ] T<sup>0</sup> ] non-agent reading  
 b. [TP Taroo<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> [VP [DP e<sub>i</sub> hair]-acc cut ] v<sup>0</sup><sub>[+ER, +OC] ] T<sup>0</sup> ] agent reading  
 c. [TP [DP Taroo’s hair]<sub>i</sub> [VP [VP t<sub>i</sub> cut ] v<sup>0</sup><sub>[-ER, -OC] ] T<sup>0</sup> ]</sub></sub></sub>
- (6) a. [TP Taroo<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> [VP [NP t<sub>i</sub> hair]-acc cut ] v<sup>0</sup><sub>[+ER, +OC] ] T<sup>0</sup> ] non-agent reading  
 b. [TP Taroo<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> [VP [DP pro/zibun/Hanako hair]-acc cut ] v<sup>0</sup><sub>[+ER, +OC] ] T<sup>0</sup> ] agent reading</sub></sub>
- (7) [TP Taroo-nom pro<sub>i</sub> cut ] hair<sub>i</sub>
- (8) a. Taroo-ga doroboo-ni saifu-o nusum-are-ta.  
 T-nom thief-dat wallet-acc steal-pass-past  
 ‘Taroo was (adversely) affected by a thief’s stealing the wallet.’  
 b. \*Taroo-ga denki-ni tsuk-are-ta.  
 T-nom lights-dat go.on-pass-past  
 ‘Taroo was (adversely) affected by lights’ going on.’
- (9) a. Isoide gohan-o tabe-ro. b. \*Denki-yo tsu-ke.  
 hurry-ger meal-acc eat-imp lights-voc go.on-imp  
 ‘Eat meal quickly!’ ‘Lights, go on!’
- (10) a. Taroo-ga karee-raisu-ga/o umaku tsukur-e-ru.  
 T-nom curry-rice-nom/acc well make-pot-pres.  
 ‘Taroo can cook curry rice well.’  
 b. \*Taroo-ga chichioya-ni ni-rare-ru.  
 T-nom father-dat resemble ‘Taroo can resemble his father.’
- (11) a. Taroo-ga hashiri-ni it-ta. b. \*Taroo-ga Hanako-ni ni-ni it-ta.  
 T-nom run-NI go-past T-nom H-dat resemble-NI go-past  
 ‘Taroo went to run.’ ‘Taroo went to resemble Hanako’
- (12) Taroo-ga Hanako-ni kami-o kir-are-ta.  
 T-nom H-dat hair-acc cut-pass-past  
 ‘Taroo was affected by Hanako’s getting a haircut.’
- (13) Kami-o kir-e.  
 hair-acc cut-imp ‘Get a haircut!’
- (14) Taroo-ga sono biyoo-in-de kami-ga/o kir-e-ru.  
 T-nom the hair.salon-at hair-nom/acc cut-pot-pres  
 ‘Taroo can get a haircut at the hair salon.’
- (15) Taroo-ga kami-o kiri-ni it-ta.  
 T-nom hair-acc cut-NI go-past ‘Taroo went to get a haircut.’

## References

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