COMMENTS ON KANEKO’S AND FUKUI’S PAPERS

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1. INTRODUCTION. Over the past twenty-five years, the study of the Japanese language within the framework of generative transformational theory has developed slowly but steadily. Since the advent of Government and Binding Theory, Japanese has been attracting more attention than ever. This is because in order to develop universal grammar as a theory of general abstract properties of language, it is necessary to examine a much broader domain of evidence, especially evidence from typologically different languages. Japanese offers great insight to the theory of grammar and language typology because of its characteristic behavior with respect to various grammatical phenomena. There are many problems which were seemingly unique to Japanese but have turned out to be parametrically very important: to mention just a few, relations of grammatical case particles and abstract Cases, ‘multiple subject’ constructions, ‘scrambling’ phenomena, lack of syntactic wh-movement, ‘indirect’ passives, binding properties of the three Japanese anaphors, zibun (self), zibun-zisin (self-SELF), and kare-zisin (himself) (throughout this paper we will use this form as representative of reflexive forms such as kanozyo-zisin (herself), karera-zisin (themselves), etc), and so forth).

The symposium ‘Toward Universal Grammar: Approaches from Japanese’ in the Fifth National Conference of the English Linguistic Society of Japan held at Nagoya University in November 1987 aimed to contribute to the study of universal grammar by answering some of these problems in Japanese in the principles-and-parameters framework.

2. ON KANEKO’S AND FUKUI’S PAPERS. Case marking in Japanese has been studied extensively in the generative framework and a number of interesting generalizations have been discovered. Some problems with Case marking in Japanese are how to assign Nominative Case marker -ga and Accusative Case marker -o and whether there is a correlation be-
between these case markers and abstract Cases (see Saito (1982)). Some other problem with Case is concerning the exceptional Case-marking phenomena, which are dealt with in Kaneko’s paper. Kaneko proposes the CP-ECM analysis which claims that the exceptional Case-marking is done to the specifier position of CP in Japanese, but not to the specifier position of IP, as is generally assumed. He also discusses two parameters which are relevant to the differences in ECM between Japanese and English. This paper shows that just a small difference between languages provides us with many interesting problems.

In his paper ‘Deriving the Differences between English and Japanese: A Case Study in Parametric Syntax’, Fukui tries to explain some of the differences between English and Japanese mentioned above, such as the presence or absence of syntactic wh-movement, of multiple subject constructions, of scrambling phenomena, and so on, under the parametric approach, on the basis of the relativized X’ theory which is extensively discussed in his dissertation ‘A Theory of Category Projection and its Applications’. He argues that it is possible to derive these differences from a parameter for agreement-inducing functional categories: English has such categories but Japanese has none. This paper is a good example of comparative study in the principles-and-parameters framework.

3. OTHER PROBLEMS. I would like to talk a little about the rest of the problems mentioned above. It is well-known that in Japanese intransitive verbs are passivized as in 1a and transitive verbs are passivized with their objects in their original object position as in 2a. These passives are called ‘indirect’ passive. Note that 2a is evidence against the from-left-to-right part of Burzio’s generalization, which says that a verb (with an object) Case-marks its object if and only if it theta-marks its subject.

(1) a. Hanako-ga akanboo-ni naka-re-ta.
   Hanako-NOM baby-by cry-passive-past
   ‘Hanako was subjected to her baby crying.’

   b. *Akanboo-ga Hanako-o nai-ta.

(2) a. Taroo-ga Ziroo-ni titi-o buzyokus-are-ta.
   Taroo-NOM Ziroo-by father-ACC insult-passive-past
   ‘Taroo was subjected to Ziroo insulting his father.’


What is characteristic of indirect passives is that they have no active counterparts, as the ungrammaticality of 1b and 2b indicates. This means that Hanako in 1a and Taroo in 2a are ‘extra’ subjects in multiple
subject constructions. These indirect passives cannot be accounted for if the passive morpheme -rare consists of the two properties, external theta-role absorption and Case absorption, as the passive morpheme in English does, because in 1a there is no Case to absorb and in 2a the accusative Case is not absorbed. We can account for these indirect passives as well as direct passives in a uniform way by proposing that the Japanese passive morpheme has the following two properties, of which Case absorption is optional.

(3) rare: theta-role absorption

(Case absorption)

This lexical specification predicts the following three cases.

(4) a. There is no Case to absorb and only the external theta-role is absorbed.

b. There is a Case to absorb, but it is not absorbed. Only the external theta-role is absorbed.

c. Both a theta-role and a Case are absorbed.

Japanese actually has these three types of passives. The first two types are indirect passive, exemplified as in 1a and 2a, respectively, and the last one is direct passive. If this characterization of Japanese passive is correct, it implies that theta-role absorption is the defining property of passivization and that Case absorption should be parameterized. It also implies that direct and indirect passives in Japanese are essentially the same. (See Nakamura 1988 for detailed discussion.)

Huang 1983 points out many problems with Chomsky’s definition of governing categories in LGB and proposes the following parameterized definition of governing categories.

(5) X is a governing category for Y iff X is a minimal category containing Y, a governor of Y, and its SUBJECT a ACCESSIBLE to Y. (a = + or -)

In this definition accessibility is parameterized. a is specified + for anaphors and - for pronouns in English.

Now consider the notion SUBJECT. A SUBJECT is any of the following.

(6) a. AGR

b. subject in an ordinary sense:

(i) the subject of a finite clause

(ii) PRO subject of an infinitive clause

(iii) the subject of an NP

We can define the SUBJECT Parameter as in 7: a SUBJECT is counted
as either or both of AGR and a subject. Then there are four possibilities illustrated in 8.

(7) A SUBJECT is $\alpha$ AGR and $\beta$ subject. ($\alpha$, $\beta = +$ or $-$)

(8) AGR subject

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AGR</th>
<th>subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>-</td>
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In English each parameter is fixed in the following way.

(9) Anaphors Pronouns

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<th></th>
<th>Anaphors</th>
<th>Pronouns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Acc P</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>SUB P</td>
<td>AGR, subject AGR, subject</td>
</tr>
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The Japanese reflexive kare-zisin has much the same distribution as the English reflexive *himself*. They both must be bound in the minimal NP or S containing them and have no subject-orientation. Another Japanese reflexive zibun-zisin is also bound in the same domain as kare-zisin, but unlike kare-zisin, it is subject-oriented.

(10) John$_i$-ga [S Peter$_j$-ga kare-zisin/zibun-zisin$_j$, *i-o hihan-site-iru to it-ta.

‘John$_i$ said that Peter$_j$ was criticizing himself$_j$, *i.’

Like English reflexives, Japanese reflexives are subject to the accessibility requirement. This means that they are not self-accessible. This is shown in the following sentence.


‘John said that a picture of SELF hung in the office.’

Let us turn to zibun. Zibun has two interesting properties. One is that it is subject-oriented and the other is that it allows long distance binding quite regularly. Both of these properties are observed in the following sentences.


‘John was surprised to find that Mary was studying in self’s room.’

We can schematically summarize the properties of the three bound expressions in Japanese, which can be accounted for by fixing the parameters in the following way.
The following diagram may be of assistance in providing an alternative perspective on this paradigm.

Note that there are some clear correlations between morphology and binding relation. The column A containing pronouns (i.e. kare) has no orientation, while the column B containing zibun meaning ‘SELF’ does. The row D containing zisin shares the minimal domain defined by subject. Zibun-zisin shows the dual character of zibun and kare-zisin in determining its domain and subject orientation: the morpheme zibun determines its subject-orientation and the morpheme zisin determines its minimal domain. This is an example of parameterized extension of binding theory based on the data from Japanese. (See Nakamura 1987.)

REFERENCES