On the Position of Quirky-Case-Marked Argument in Japanese*

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1. Introduction

The so-called dative constructions raise an interesting issue of order and constituency (Barss and Lasnik 1986, among others). As shown in (1) and (2), the two variants of the constructions both have the internal argument that linearly precedes the other argument hierarchically higher than the other.

(1) The to-Dative sentences

a. Mary showed John to himself/*Mary showed himself to John.
b. Mary sent every check to it’s owner/*Mary sent his paycheck to every worker.
c. Mary gave nothing to anyone/*Mary gave anything to no one.
d. John sent each girl to the other’s parents/*John sent the other’s daughter to each parent.

(2) The double object construction (DOC)

a. Mary showed John himself/*Mary showed himself John.
b. Mary sent every worker his paycheck/*Mary sent it’s owner every paycheck.
c. Mary gave no one anything/*Mary gave anyone nothing.
d. John sent each parent the other’s daughter/*John sent the other’s parent each daughter.

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Yet it has been argued elsewhere that the two variants of the dative constructions are derivationally related to each other (Larson 1988, among others), thus posing the challenge to the standard assumption that linear precedence in the narrow syntax is a reflex of hierarchical structures.

This paper is an extension of Lason and Harada (to appear), in which the Japanese ditransitive sentences are claimed to have the theme argument hierarchically higher than the goal argument at the initial point of a syntactic derivation, i.e., a view radically departs from the standard assumption that the language has a base goal > theme relation of the two internal arguments (Hoji 1985, among others). Building on Kaiser and Nakanishi’s (2001) pragmatic tests in which an asymmetry is observed in interpretation between the two internal arguments of the ditransitive verb, in this paper, I apply their pragmatic test to examine if the same asymmetry holds in other constructions in Japanese with a dative argument and a structurally Case-marked argument.

2. Information & Specificity (Kaiser & Nakanishi 2001)

Based on pragmatic considerations, Kaiser & Nakanishi (2001) have noticed the following characteristics of the DOC: Whereas the ACC-DAT is unrestricted in that either argument can be specific/non-specific or represent old or new information, the DAT-ACC order is constrained. Specifically the DAT argument must be specific or represent old information. Schematically, the tests Kaiser and Nakanishi used are represented as in (3), where DO refers to the direct object and IO refers to the indirect object.

(3) a. \textbf{DO-IO}: While I have heard [that S1 DO IO V], it seems [that S2 DO $\emptyset_{IO}$ V].

   b. \textbf{IO-DO}: While I have heard [that S1 IO DO V], it seems [that S2 $\emptyset_{IO}$ DO V].

(4) Kaiser and Nakanishi (2001):

   a. \textbf{DO-IO}

   Taroo-ga \textbf{Hanako-o} [Penn-no \textbf{gakusei}-ni] syookaïi-ta to kiita kedo
   Taro-NOM Hanako-ACC [Penn-GEN student]-DAT introduce-Past COMP heard while
   Jiroo-no \textbf{Hanako-o} $\emptyset_{IO}$ syookaisi-ta-rasiïyo.
   Jiro-too Hanako-ACC introduce-Past-seem
While (I) have heard that Taro introduced Hanako to a Penn student, it seems that Jiro introduced Hanako (to a Penn student), too.

\( O_\text{IO} \) could refer to the same Penn students or to different ones.

b. \( \text{IO-DO} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Taro}-\text{ga} & \quad \text{Penn-no gakusei]-ni} & \quad \text{Hanako-o} & \quad \text{syookaisi-ta} & \quad \text{to} & \quad \text{kiita kedo} \\
\text{Taro-NOM} & & \text{[Penn-GEN student]DAT} & \text{Hanako-ACC} & \text{introduce-Past} & \text{COMP} \quad \text{heard while} \\
\text{Jiro-mo} & & \text{\( O_\text{IO} \)} & \quad \text{Hanako-o} & \quad \text{syookaisi-ta-rasiiyo}. \\
\text{Jiro-too} & & \text{Hanako-ACC} & \quad \text{introduce-Past-seem}
\end{align*}
\]

‘While (I) have heard that Taro introduced to a Penn student Hanako, it seems that Jiro introduced (to a Penn student) Hanako, too.’

\( O_\text{IO} \) was overwhelmingly taken to refer to the same students.

\( \Rightarrow \) \( \text{IO} \) was judged to represent old information:

There is an asymmetry in the interpretation of the elided nominal in the examples in (4), which substantialize the schema in (3) with the elided IO. In (4a) with the DO-IO order of the internal arguments, the missing IO in the second clause have many interpretive options, whereas the elided IO in (4b) does not have such wider variations of interpretaion: The majority of the native speakers interpret it as being the same student as the one appearing in the first sentence.

To further verify the result of the above, test, let us consider the same examples with DO as the target of the ellipsis.

(5) a. \( \text{IO-DO} \): While I have heard [that S1 IO DO V], it seems [that S2 IO\( O_\text{IO} \) V].

b. \( \text{DO-IO} \): While I have heard [that S1 DO IO V], it seems [that S2 \( O_\text{IO} \) IO V].

(6) a. \( \text{IO-DO} \)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Taro-\text{ga}} & & \text{Hanako-ni} & & \text{[gengogaku-no hon]-o} & & \text{mise-ta} & & \text{to} & & \text{kiita kedo} \\
\text{Taro-NOM} & & \text{Hanako-DAT} & & \text{[linguistics-GEN book]ACC} & & \text{showed} & & \text{COMP} \quad \text{heard while} \\
\text{Jiro-mo} & & \text{Hanako-ni} & & \text{\( O_\text{IO} \)} & & \text{mise-ta-rasiiyo}. \\
\text{Jiro-too} & & \text{Hanako-DAT} & & \text{show-Past-seem}
\end{align*}
\]

‘While (I) have heard that Taro showed to Hanako a book on linguistics, it seems that Jiro showed to Hanako (a book on linguistics), too.’
b. DO-IO

Taro-гa [gengogaku-no hon]-o Hanako-ni mise-ta to kiita kedo
Taro-NOM [linguistics-GEN book]-ACC Hanako-DAT show-Past COMP heard
Jiro-mo ξ Hanako-ni miseta-rasiiyo.
while Jiro-too Hanako-DAT showed-seem

‘While (l) have heard that Taro showed a book on linguistics to Hanako, it seems
that Jiro showed (a book on linguistics) to Hanako, too.’

Between the two examples in (6), no clear contrast in interpretation is observed as
the one we’ve seen above in (4). The results of the above tests thus show that the
DO-IO (i.e., ACC-DAT) order is the informationally less restricted and pragmatically
more neutral order, suggesting that the IO-DO (i.e., DAT-ACC) order derives by
movement, in so far as it shows the same specificity and old-information effects as
those induced by scrambling and object shift.

Summarizing the entire section, it was shown that whenever we have a dative-
marked argument, its original position is lower than that of the theme, ξ-marked
argument. In Larson and Harada (to appear), we provided an analysis of those facts
by regarding –ni as ‘defective’ Case licensor, treating dative Case as ‘cordial’ and
regarding it be different from other canonical instances of structural Case such as
nominative or accusative. For fuller discussion, the reader is referred to Larson and
Harada (to appear).

3. Kaiser-Nakanishi Test Beyond Dative Constructions

The prediction along the lines of Larson and Harada (to appear) on the hierarchical
relation of two arguments is as follows: If one of the two arguments is dative-
marked, it should originate in a lower position than the other structural-Case-marked
argument, which is then raised over the other argument due to Case reasons. The
goal of this section is to examine if this prediction holds with the Kaiser-Nakanishi
test. Anticipating the results, it will be shown that the prediction is borne out in the
majority of the relevant cases.
3.1 Intransitive Locatives

First, let us consider the intransitive version of the locative sentences. In (7), the elided nominal is the dative-marked one.

(7) a. NP_{DAT} > NP_{NOM}  
    NP_{DAT} elided
    [Yooroppa-no mati]-ni takusan-no kooen-ga ar-u kedo,
    Europe-Gen city-Dat many-Gen park-Nom be-Pres although,
    \( \emptyset_{DAT} \) takusan-no bizyutukan-mo ar-u yo.
    many-Gen museum-also be-Pres SFP
    ‘In some European cities, there are many parks; (in some European cities), there are many museums as well.’

b. NP_{NOM} > NP_{DAT}  
    NP_{DAT} elided
    Takusan-no kooen-ga [Yooroppa-no mati]-ni ar-u kedo,
    many-Gen park-Nom Europe-Gen city-Dat be-Pres although,
    takusan-no bizyutukan-mo \( \emptyset_{DAT} \) ar-u yo.
    many-Gen museum-also be-Pres SFP
    ‘In some European cities, there are many parks;, there are many museums (in some European cities) as well.’

Between the two examples in (7), (7b) prefers the ‘same city’, i.e., specific interpretation. This is a desirable result, since the nominative-marked argument corresponds to the accusative-marked argument in the examples in Section 2: Although the phonetic content may differ, both nominative and accusative are structural Case, thereby distinguishing themselves from the concordial/defective, i.e., dative Case. However, note that the constraint between (7a) and (7b) is not so remarkable.

Next, let us consider the cases where the elided nominal corresponds to NP-{ga}.

(8) a. NP_{DAT} > NP_{NOM}  
    NP_{NOM} elided
    Tokyo-ni(wa) takusan-no mondai-ga ar-u kedo,
    Tokyo-Dat many-Gen problem-Gen be-Pres although,
\(\emptyset_{\text{Nom}}\) Nagoya-ni-mo ar-u yo.
Nagoya-Dat-also be-Pres SFP
‘In Tokyo, there are many problems; there are (many problems) in Nagoya as well.’

b. NP\textsuperscript{Nom} > NP\textsuperscript{Dat} NP\textsuperscript{Nom} elided
Takusan-no mondai-ga Tokyo-ni ar-u kedo,
many-Gen problem-Gen Tokyo-Dat be-Pres although,
\(\emptyset_{\text{Nom}}\) Nagoya-ni-mo ar-u yo.
Nagoya-Dat-also be-Pres SFP
‘In Tokyo, there are many problems; there are (many problems) in Nagoya as well.’

Though judgments may vary, I do get the specific interpretation for the elided structural-Case-marked nominal in (8b), where there is no such strong preference for the specific interpretation in (8a).

3.2. Possessives

Next, let us consider the possessive sentences, which also involves a dative and a nominative argument.

(9) a. NP\textsuperscript{Dat} > NP\textsuperscript{Nom} NP\textsuperscript{Nom} elided
Taroo-\text{ni} [takusan-no gengogaku-nohon]-g\text{a} ar-u kedo,
Taro-Dat many-Gen linguistic-Genbook-Nom be-Pres although,
Ziroo-ni-mo \(\emptyset_{\text{Nom}}\) ar-u yo.
Jiro-Dat-also be-Pres SFP\textsuperscript{1}
‘Taro has many linguistic books; Jiro also has (many linguistic books).’

b. NP\textsuperscript{Nom} > NP\textsuperscript{Dat} NP\textsuperscript{Nom} elided
[Takusan-no gengogaku-nohon]-g\text{a} Taroo-ni ar-u kedo,
many-Gen linguistic-Genbook-Nom Taro-Dat be-Pres although,

\textsuperscript{1} SFP refers to Sentence-final particles.
\( \emptyset_{\text{nom}} \) Ziroo-ni-mo ar-u yo.

Jiro-Dat-also be-Pres SFP

‘Taro has many linguistic books; Ziro also has (many linguistic books).’

On a par with the examples in the previous subsection, (9b) with the fronted nominative and elided nominative arguments slightly favor the specific (‘same collection of books’) interpretation, but the contrast between the two examples are not so striking.

With dative-marked arguments elided, again, the examples with preceded NP-\textit{ga} receives a clear specific interpretation: (10b).

(10) a. \( \text{NP}_{\text{dat}} \succ \text{NP}_{\text{nom}} \) \( \text{NP}_{\text{dat}} \) elided

Toodai-no gakusei-ni(-wa) \[\text{takusan-no gengogaku-no hon]-ga ar-u U.Tokyo-Gen students-Dat-(Top) many-Gen linguistic-Genbook-Nombe-Pres kedo, \( \emptyset_{\text{dat}} \) tetugaku-no hon-mo ar-u yo.

although, philosophy-Gen book-also be-Pres SFP

‘Students of the University of Tokyo have a lot of linguistics books; (students of the University of Tokyo have philosophy books as well.’

b. \( \text{NP}_{\text{nom}} \succ \text{NP}_{\text{dat}} \) \( \text{NP}_{\text{dat}} \) elided

[Takusan-no gengogaku-nohon]-ga Toodai-no gakusei-ni(-wa) ar-u many-Gen linguistic-Genbook-Nom U.Tokyo-Gen student-Dat-(Top) be-Pres kedo, tetugaku-no hon-mo \( \emptyset_{\text{dat}} \) ar-u yo.

although philosophy-Gen book-also be-Pres SFP

‘Students of the University of Tokyo have a lot of linguistics books; (students of the University of Tokyo have philosophy books as well.’

3.3. **Transitive Locatives**

The transitive locatives also exhibit the similar pattern; among the four examples shown below, (12b) has the most salient specific interpretation, thereby leading to pragmatically odd reading where the same car is first loaded by Japan Express and then later loaded off from the ferry by Yamato Transport Co.
(11) a. \(NP_{ACC} > NP_{DAT}\) \(NP_{DAT}\) elided

Nihon-Tuuun-ga [Honda-no kuruma]-o ferii-ni tun-da to kii-ta kedo,
Japan-Express-Nom Honda-Gen car-Acc ferry-onto load-Past C hear-Past although
Yamato-Unyu-mo [Honda-no kuruma]-o \(\emptyset_{DAT}\) tun-da rasi-i yo.
Yamato-Transport-also Honda-Gen car-Acc load-Pres appear-Pres SFP

‘While (I) have heard that Japan Express loaded Honda cars onto a ferry, it seems
that Yamato Transport Co. also loaded Honda cars (onto a ferry).’

b. \(NP_{DAT} > NP_{ACC}\) \(NP_{DAT}\) elided

Nihon-Tuuun-ga ferii-ni [Honda-no kuruma]-o tun-da to kii-ta kedo,
Japan-Express-Nom ferry-onto Honda-Gen car-Acc load-Past C hear-Past although
Yamato-Unyu-mo \(\emptyset_{DAT}\) [Honda-no kuruma]-o tun-da rasi-i yo.
Yamato-Transport-also Honda-Gen car-Acc load-Pres appear-Pres SFP

‘While (I) have heard that Japan Express loaded onto a ferry Honda cars, it seems
that Yamato Transport Co. also loaded (onto a ferry) Honda cars.’

(12) a. \(NP_{DAT} > NP_{ACC}\) \(NP_{ACC}\) elided

Nihon-Tuuun-ga ferii-ni [Honda-no kuruma]-o tun-da to kii-ta kedo,
Japan-Express-Nom ferry-onto Honda-Gen car-Acc load-Past C hear-Past although
Yamato-Unyu-mo ferii-ni \(\emptyset_{ACC}\) tun-da rasi-i yo.
Yamato-Transport-also ferry-onto load-Pres appear-Pres SFP

‘While (I) have heard that Japan Express loaded onto the ferry Honda cars, it
seems that Yamato Transport Co. also loaded onto the ferry (Honda cars).’

b. \(NP_{ACC} > NP_{DAT}\) \(NP_{ACC}\) elided

Nihon-Tuuun-ga [Honda-no kuruma]-o ferii-ni tun-da to kii-ta kedo,
Japan-Express-Nom Honda-Gen car-Acc ferry-onto load-Past C hear-Past although
Yamato-Unyu-mo \(\emptyset_{ACC}\) ferii-ni tun-da rasi-i yo.
Yamato-Transport-also ferry-onto load-Pres appear-Pres SFP

‘While (I) have heard that Japan Express loaded Honda cars onto the ferry, it
seems that Yamato Transport Co. also loaded (Honda cars) onto the ferry.’

Summarizing the entire section, the constructions other than ditransitive sentences
with a dative-marked argument and a structural-Case-marked argument exhibit the
same interpretive characteristic as the ditransitive sentences, which suggests that the
dative, quirky-marked argument originates in a low position at the initial point of a
syntactic derivation.

4. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, it was shown, using the Kaiser-Nakanishi test, that in a sentence with a
dative-marked argument and another, structurally marked argument, it is the dative-
marked argument that originates in a structurally low position. This result conforms
to the proposal by Larson and Harada (to appear), thus leading to a unified account of
the constructions with a dative, quirky marked argument in the language and possibly
of the languages across the world.

References

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