

P a r t I

Articles

## Syntax of Possessor Passive in Japanese\*

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### 0. Introduction

This paper provides an optimal account of the syntactic derivation of the so called possessor passive construction in Japanese. I characterize the construction as a kind of "inalienable possession" construction as is found in such languages as Korean and Romance languages, and argue that the surface subject of the construction is in fact an argument having  $\theta$ -relation with the verb, not a "genitive possessor" in the object NP at D-Structure (henceforth, DS).

### 1. Passive Paradigm: Derivation of the Surface Subject

Terada (1990) and Kubo (1990) have pointed out syntactic differences between the direct passive and the possessive passive on one hand and the indirect passive on the other.<sup>1</sup> As one piece of such evidence, they have pointed out that the dative particle of the NP that is understood as the agent of the verb can alternate with a postposition *niyotte* 'by' or *kara* 'from' only in the direct and the possessive passive:

(1) Direct passive:

Emi-ga Ken-ni/-niyotte/-kara home-rare-ta  
Emi-NOM Ken-DAT/by/from praise-PASS-PAST  
'Emi was praised by Ken'

(2) Possessor passive:

Emi-ga Ken-ni/-niyotte/-kara kodomo-o home-rare-ta  
Emi-NOM Ken-DAT/by/from child-ACC praise-PASS-PAST  
'Emi had her child praised by Ken'

(3) Indirect passive:

Emi-ga Ken-ni/\*-niyotte/\*-kara deteik-are-ta  
Emi-NOM Ken-DAT/by/from go out-PASS-PAST  
'Emi had Ken go out'

We find another respect in which the above classification is motivated. N. McCawley (1972) and Kuno (1973) observe that the agent-denoting NP-*ni* can be the antecedent of *zibun* 'self' in the indirect passive, but not in the direct passive:

(4) Direct passive:

Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga Ken<sub>j</sub>-ni zibun<sub>i/+j</sub>-no heya-de home-rare-ta  
 Emi-NOM Ken-DAT self-of room-LOC praise-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi was praised by Ken in the room of self'

(5) Indirect passive:

Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga Ken<sub>j</sub>-ni zibun<sub>i/j</sub>-no heya-kara deteik-are-ta  
 Emi-NOM Ken-DAT self-of room-from go out-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi had Ken go out of the room of self'

Terada (1990) employs this property to argue for her proposed syntactic structure of the possessor passive. As we see in (6), *zibun* cannot take NP-*ni* as its antecedent, on a par with NP-*ni* in the direct passive:

(6) Possessor passive:

Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga Ken<sub>j</sub>-ni zibun<sub>i/+j</sub>-no heya-de kodomo-o  
 Emi-NOM Ken-DAT self-of room-LOC child-ACC  
 home-rare-ta  
 praise-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi had her child praised by Ken in SELF's room'

It seems to be agreed by a number of Japanese linguists that the surface subject of the direct passive is derived via NP-movement from a VP-internal position ((7)), on a par with the English passive as in (8), while the subject of the indirect passive is base-generated in its surface-position ((9)).<sup>2</sup>

(7) Direct passive:

[<sub>IP</sub> Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> Ken-*ni*] [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> home-rare]]-ta]

(8) English passive (*Mary was praised by John.*):

[<sub>IP</sub> Mary<sub>i</sub> was [<sub>VP</sub> praised t<sub>i</sub>] by John]

- (9) Indirect passive:  
 [IP Emi-ga [Ken-ni [(PRO) deteik-are]]-ta]

Miyagawa (1989) provides a piece of empirical support for the derivational difference between the direct passive ((7)) and the indirect passive ((9)). As he claims, the distribution of floating numeral quantifiers in Japanese is subject to the following constraint:

- (10) A floating numeral quantifier and (the trace of) its host NP must c-command each other.

Assuming the constraint in (10) and the derivational difference between (7) and (9) allows us to account for the difference in grammaticality between (11) and (12):

- (11) *gakusei*<sub>i</sub>-ga [VP [PP *otoko*-ni] [PP *kooen*-de] [VP *ti*  
 student-NOM man-DAT park-LOC  
*go-nin* *nagu-rare*]]-ta  
 five-CL hit-PASS-PAST  
 'Five students were hit in the park'
- (12) \**gakusei*-ga [VP [PP *onna*-ni] [PP *kooen*-de] [VP *go-nin*  
 student-NOM woman-DAT park-LOC 5-CL  
*nak-are*]]-ta  
 cry-PASS-PAST  
 'Five students had a woman cry in the park'

In (11), the numeral quantifier *go-nin* c-commands, and is c-commanded by, the NP-trace left by the movement of the surface subject *gakusei*, while in (12) there is no such trace as is in a mutual c-command relation with the numeral quantifier. The numeral quantifier does not c-command the surface subject that is intended to be construed with the numeral.

This test allows us to determine whether the surface subject of the possessor passive is derived from a VP-internal position or not. Consider:

- (13) a. *gakusei-ga Ken-niyotte kooen-de go-nin atama-o*  
 student-NOM Ken-by park-LOC five-CL head-ACC  
*tatak-are]]-ta*  
 pat-PASS-PAST  
 'Five students were patted on the head by Ken'
- b. *hahaoya-ga Yamada-sensei-niyotte gakkoo-de san-nin*  
 mother-NOM Yamada-teacher-by school-LOC three-CL  
*kodomo-o home-rare-ta*  
 child-ACC praise-PASS-PAST  
 'Three mothers had their children praised by Prof. Yamada'

As we see from the grammaticality of the sentences in (13), there must be a trace of the surface subject in VP in the possessive passive construction. The structure of (13a), for example, is represented as in (14):

- (14) [<sub>IP</sub> *gakusei<sub>i</sub>-ga* [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> *otoko-ni*] [<sub>PP</sub> *kooen-de*] [<sub>VP</sub> *t<sub>i</sub>*  
*go-nin atama-o tatak-are]]-ta]*

Thus we can conclude that the possessor passive forms a natural class with the direct passive in the derivational respect as well, in the sense that the surface subject is derived via NP-movement from a VP-internal position.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. "Possessor Raising" Analysis and Its Problems

We have argued in the last section that the surface subject of a possessor passive sentence is derived via NP-movement from a VP-internal position. However, this alone does not tell us at all where in VP the subject is generated at DS. There are two different approaches coming at hand. In one approach, which has been made by Kubo (1990) and Terada (1990), the surface subject moves from within the object NP denoting a possession of the person denoted by the subject. The other approach may have it that the surface subject is an independent argument of the verb base-generated in VP and moves to its surface position. These two different approaches are schematically shown as (15a) and (15b):

- (15) a. [<sub>IP</sub> *Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga* [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>NP</sub> *t<sub>i</sub> atama*]-o *tatak-are*]-ta]  
 b. [<sub>IP</sub> *Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga* [<sub>VP</sub> *t<sub>i</sub>* [<sub>NP</sub> *atama*]-o *tatak-are*]-ta]

In this section we point out some empirical problems with the former analysis. We argue for the latter analysis in Section 3.

## 2.1 Possessor Raising Analysis

Kubo (1990) and Terada (1990) try to relate derivationally the possessor passive sentence in (16a), its direct passive counterpart in (16b), and its active counterpart in (16c), by assuming the DS in (17) for (16a):

- (16) a. Ken-ga Aya-niyotte atama-o tatak-are-ta  
 Ken-NOM Aya-by head-ACC pat-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken had his head patted by Aya'
- b. Ken-no atama-ga Aya-niyotte tatak-are-ta  
 Ken-of head-NOM Aya-by pat-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken's head was patted by Aya'
- c. Aya-ga Ken-no atama-o tatak-ta  
 Aya-NOM Ken-of head-ACC pat-PAST  
 'Aya patted Ken's head'

- (17) The DS of (16a):  
 [IP e [VP [PP Aya-niyotte] [VP [NP Ken(-no) [N' atama]]  
 tatak-are]]-ta

As we see from (17), the surface subject NP *Ken* is generated in the possessor position in the NP denoting a possession of Ken. If the genitive Case is not assigned to this position (for whatever reason), the NP moves to the subject position to get Nominative Case. This process is illustrated in (18):

- (18) [IP Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga [VP [PP Aya-niyotte] [VP [NP t<sub>i</sub> [N' atama]]]-o  
 tatak-are]]-ta

If the structure does not have the passive morpheme *rare* so that neither the Case absorption nor the Agent absorption takes place, the derivation yields sentence (16c). If the passive particle absorbs the Agent role and the Accusative Case, (16b) is derived.

Kubo tries to support her analysis by focusing on the presence of an NP-trace in the NP denoting a possession. She points out the contrast between the (b) and the (c) sentence in the following:

- (19) a. Ken-ga kuruma-ni inu-o hane-rare-ta  
 Ken-NOM car-DAT dog-ACC hit-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken had his dog hit by a car'  
 b. inu-o Ken-ga kuruma-ni hane-rare-ta  
 c. \*inu-wa Ken-ga kuruma-ni hane-rare-ta
- (20) a. Aya-ga kyoozyu-ni term paper-o nakus-are-ta  
 Aya-NOM professor-DAT term paper-ACC lose-PASS-PAST  
 'Aya had her term paper lost by her professor'  
 b. term paper-o Aya-ga kyoozyu-ni nakus-are-ta  
 c. \*term paper-wa Aya-ga kyoozyu-ni nakus-are-ta  
 (Kubo (1990))

In the (b) sentences the object possession NP has been scrambled to the sentence initial position, while the NP in the (c) sentences is the topic of the sentence. The structures of (19b) and (19c) are given as follows:

- (21) a. (structure of (19b))  
 [IP [NP  $t_i$  inu]-o<sub>j</sub> [IP Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga [VP kuruma-ni  $t_j$  hane-rare]-ta]]]
- b. (structure of (19c))  
 \*[[NP  $t_i$  inu]-wa<sub>j</sub> [IP Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga [VP kuruma-ni pro<sub>j</sub> hane-rare]-ta]]]

Kubo appeals to the difference in the derivation of a scrambled NP and a topic NP in accounting for the contrast. Although the trace  $t_i$  in (21a) is not c-commanded by the subject NP at S-Structure (henceforth, SS), the possession NP will undergo the LF operation that moves it back to its DS position (Reconstruction). Then the trace will be c-commanded by its antecedent subject NP at LF. In contrast, such an operation could not apply to the topic NP in (21b) since the topic NP must be base-generated in its surface position, as Kuno (1973) and Hoji (1985) argue. Thus the structure in (21b) will violate the Proper Binding Condition (henceforth, PBC) (Fiengo (1977))

since the NP trace  $t_i$  will not be c-commanded by its antecedent at any level of representation.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 Problems of the "Possessor Raising" Analysis

Although the analysis of the possessor passive that crucially exploits the "possessor raising" (henceforth, PR) may have an appeal in its elegance in derivationally relating it to its active counterpart and in its empirical adequacy of being able to account for the contrast in (19) and (20), there are several reasons for us to seek an alternative analysis. The argument that follows centers around the alleged presence of an NP-trace inside the possession NP.

### 2.2.1 Overt Possessor

As (22) shows, an NP-trace cannot alternate with an overt reflexive:

- (22) Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga Aya-niyotte (\*zibun<sub>i</sub>-o/\*zibun-zisin<sub>i</sub>-o)  
 Ken-NOM Aya-by self-ACC/self-self-ACC  
 tatak-are-ta  
 pat-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken was patted by Aya'

However, the following possessor passive sentence with an overt reflexive is acceptable:

- (23) a. Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga sensei-niyotte (?zibun<sub>i</sub>-no) seiseki-o  
 Emi-NOM teacher-by (self-of) grade-ACC  
 home-rare-ta  
 praise-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi had her grade praised by her teacher'  
 b. Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga Ken-niyotte (?zibun<sub>i</sub>-no) omotya-o  
 Emi-NOM Ken-by (self-of) toy-ACC  
 kowas-are-ta  
 break-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi had her toys broken by Ken'



If the possession NP contained an A-bound trace in it, it would remain unclear why the sentences in (23) are grammatical with an overt reflexive.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2.2 Unbound Trace?

As we reviewed in an earlier section, Kubo (1990) accounts for the contrast between the following examples by making crucial reference to the NP-trace inside the possession NP:

- (24) a. (= (19b))  
           [<sub>NP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> inu]-o<sub>j</sub> Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga kuruma-ni t<sub>j</sub> hane-rare-ta  
                           dog-ACC Ken-NOM car-DAT hit-PASS-PAST
- b. (= (19c))  
       \* [<sub>NP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> inu]<sub>j</sub>-wa Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga kuruma-ni pro<sub>j</sub> hane-rare-ta

The scrambled NP in (24a), although it is not properly bound at SS, will be reconstructed to its DS position at LF, so that the trace in it will be c-commanded by its antecedent at that level, avoiding a violation of the PBC, while the topic NP in (24b) will not be so moved back since it is base-generated in its SS position.

However, as Hoji, Miyagawa, and Tada (1989) show, an NP-trace will violate the PBC if it is not c-commanded by its antecedent at SS. Consider:

- (25) a. *gakusei*<sub>i</sub>-ga [<sub>VP</sub> UBC-ni t<sub>i</sub> 3-nin hairi]-sae sita  
           student-NOM UBC-DAT 3-CL enter-even do-PAST  
           'Three students even entered UBC'
- b. \* [<sub>VP</sub> UBC-ni t<sub>i</sub> 3-nin hairi]-sae<sub>j</sub> *gakusei*<sub>i</sub>-ga t<sub>j</sub> sita
- (26) a. John-ga [<sub>VP</sub> susi-o tabe]-sae sita  
           John-NOM sushi-ACC eat-even do-PAST  
           'John even ate sushi'
- b. [<sub>VP</sub> susi-o tabe]-sae<sub>j</sub> John-ga t<sub>j</sub> sita

In the ergative construction in (25b), the VP containing the NP-trace left by A-movement of *gakusei-ga* is scrambled to the sentence initial position. The trace, then, is not c-commanded by its antecedent, violating the PBC. This violation does not occur in (26b) since the scrambled VP does not contain a trace of the subject.

If SS is a level where the PBC applies, as the ungrammaticality of (25b) tells us, then it is not clear why the same is not true of (24a): (24a) should be ruled out if the scrambled NP contains an NP-trace.

Furthermore, the sentences with the possession NP in the topic position as in (24b) will show a significant improvement in grammaticality if we put them into generic sentences. Consider:

- (27) a. ?inu-wa hutyuui-na hito-ga kuruma-niyotte  
 dog-TOP careless-COP person-NOM car-by  
 hane-rare-ru  
 hit-PASS-PRES  
 'As for dogs, careless people have them hit by cars'
- b. term-paper-wa dekinowarui gakusei-ga tokidoki  
 term paper-TOP dull student-NOM sometimes  
 kyoozyu-niyotte nakus-are-ru  
 professor-by lose-PASS-PRES  
 'As for term papers, underachievers sometimes have them lost by their professors'

More examples show us that the contrast between possessor passive sentences with past tense and those with simple present (generic) tense is systematically clear:

- (28) a. \*atama-wa Ken-ga Aya-niyotte tatak-rare-ta  
 head-TOP Ken-NOM Aya-by pat-PASS-PAST  
 'As for the head, Ken had it patted by Aya'
- b. atama-wa dekinowarui seito-ga yoku  
 head-TOP dull pupil-NOM often  
 sensei-niyotte tatak-are-ru  
 teacher-by hit-PASS-PAST  
 'As for the head, dull pupils often have it hit by their teachers'
- (29) a. \*kodomo-wa Emi-ga Aya-niyotte home-rare-ta  
 child-TOP Emi-NOM Aya-by/-from praise-PASS-PAST  
 'As for the child, Emi had him/her praised by Aya'

- b. kodomo-wa yoi hahaoya-ga yoku sensei-niyotte  
 child-TOP good mother-NOM often teacher-by  
 home-rare-ru  
 praise-PASS-PRES  
 'As for the child, good mothers often have them  
 praised by teachers'

These examples show that if the topic NP in the (b) sentences contains an NP-trace, there seems no way to account for their acceptability: the (b) sentences should be as bad as the (a) sentences.

### 2.2.3 Lack of Bijectivity

As is well established, there must be a one-to-one correspondence between a trace and its antecedent. Thus the following is ill-formed since the antecedent has two traces corresponding to it:

- (30) \*John<sub>i</sub> was shown t<sub>i</sub> to t<sub>i</sub>.  
 (with the intended reading *John was shown to himself.*)

One exception to this constraint is the multiple occurrence of traces in an "Across-the-Board" environment such as the following:

- (31) John<sub>i</sub> was [vp<sub>1</sub> hit t<sub>i</sub>] and [vp<sub>2</sub> arrested t<sub>i</sub>].

Then consider the following:

- (32) Ken-ga Aya-niyotte asi-ni ude-o sibarituke-rare-ta  
 Ken-NOM Aya-by leg-DAT arm-ACC tie-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken had his arms tied to his legs by Aya'

The most natural interpretation of this example is to take both *asi* 'leg' and *ude* 'arm' as the (inalienable) possessions of *Ken*. Then the SS representation along the lines of the PR analysis would have to be something like the following:

- (33) Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga Aya-niyotte [vp [NP t<sub>i</sub> asi]-ni [NP t<sub>i</sub> ude]-o  
 sibarituke-rare]-ta

Thus there would have to be a one-to-two relation between the subject and its two NP-traces. Notice that the two traces are not in an Across the Board environment, since the two containing NPs [*NP t<sub>i</sub> asi*]-*ni* and [*NP t<sub>i</sub> ude*]-*o* are not conjoined. Moreover, neither of the two traces could be analyzed as a parasitic gap, since A-movement cannot license a parasitic gap:

(34) Which book<sub>*i*</sub> did you file *t<sub>i</sub>* without reading *e<sub>i</sub>*?

(35) \*The book was filed *t<sub>i</sub>* without reading *e<sub>i</sub>*.

Thus the PR analysis again faces a problem.

#### 2.2.4 Lack of Locality

Consider the following examples:

- (36) a. Ken<sub>*i*</sub>-ga kyoozyu-niyotte [[*e<sub>i</sub>* itiban kuroo  
 Ken-NOM professor-by most hardship  
 si-te kak-ta] repooto]-o nakus-are-ta  
 doing write-PAST term paper-ACC lose-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken had the term paper that he had made his best  
 efforts in lost by his professor'
- b. Aya<sub>*i*</sub>-ga sensei-niyotte [[*e<sub>i</sub>* itiban kawaigar-te  
 Aya-NOM teacher-by most love  
 i-ta] kodomo]-o home-rare-ta  
 be-PAST child-ACC praise-PASS-PAST  
 'Aya had her child who she loved most praised by  
 the teacher'

These examples are not cases of indirect passive, since the agent of the sentences is expressed in the form of NP-*niyotte*. The question we want to raise concerns the lack of locality that should have held between the subject NP and its corresponding gap. As we see from (36), the alleged NP traces lie deep inside the possession NPs: they both occupy the subject position of the finite relative clause headed by the possession noun. If the subject NP were to derive right from that position, A-movement of the subject NP in the possessor passive should be permitted to violate the Subjacency Condition, since the subject NP would have to be extracted out of a complex NP. This

state of affairs is highly unlikely, since movement to an A-position is even more heavily constrained than A'-movement: A-movement is even impossible from a finite complement clause:

- (37) \**Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga Ken-niyotte [Aya-ga t<sub>i</sub> sonkeisi-te iru-to]*  
 Emi-NOM Ken-by Aya-NOM respect be-COMP  
 iw-are-ta  
 say-PASS-PAST  
 '\**Emi<sub>i</sub> was said that Aya respects t<sub>i</sub> by Ken*'

One might argue that the locality constraint is indeed observed in (38a) since it could be derivationally related to (38b):

- (38) a. *Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga doroboo-niyotte [e<sub>i</sub> nor-te i-ta kuruma]-o*  
 Emi-NOM thief-by drive was car-ACC  
 nusum-are-ta  
 steal-PASS-PAST  
 '*Emi had the car she drove stolen by a thief*'  
 b. *doroboo-ga [Emi-no [e nor-te i-ta] kuruma]-o nusum-da*  
 thief-NOM Emi-of drive was PAST-ACC stole  
 '*A thief stole the car that Emi drove*'

In (38b) the subject of the verb *nor* 'drive' is assigned the genitive Case-marker *no* instead of the nominative *ga*. Bedell (1972) and Saito (1982) propose that this "restructured" subject is syntactically outside the relative clause, where it is assigned the genitive Case. Now that extraction out of a relative clause is impossible, one could argue that the subject NP *Emi-ga* in (38a) is base-generated in the "restructured" genitive position and moves to its surface position from that position, as illustrated in (39):

- (39) *Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga doroboo-niyotte [NP t<sub>i</sub> [CP e<sub>i</sub> notte i-ta]*  
*kuruma]-o nusum-are-ta*

This solution seems untenable, however, since the surface subjects in (40) have no corresponding genitive source:<sup>6</sup>

- (40) a. Emi<sub>i</sub>-ga doroboo-niyotte [[e<sub>i</sub> Ken-kara e<sub>j</sub> moraw  
 Emi-NOM thief-by Ken-from receive  
 -ta] yubiwa<sub>j</sub>]-o nusum-are-ta  
 -PAST ring-ACC steal-PASS-PAST  
 'Emi had the ring she was given by Ken stolen by  
 a thief'
- b. Ken<sub>i</sub>-ga Aya-niyotte [[e<sub>i</sub> Chomsky-ni e<sub>j</sub> home-rare-  
 Ken-NOM Aya-by Chomsky-DAT praise-PASS-  
 ta] ronbun]-o hihans-are-ta  
 PAST paper-ACC criticize-PASS-PAST  
 'Ken had his paper that had been praised by Chomsky  
 criticized by Aya'
- (41) a. \*doroboo-ga [Emi-no Ken-kara moratta yubiwa]-o  
 thief-NOM Emi-of Ken-from received ring-ACC  
 nusum-da  
 steal-PAST  
 'A thief stole the ring Emi received from Ken'
- b. \*Aya-ga [Ken-no Chomsky-ni home-rare-ta  
 Aya-NOM Ken-of Chomsky-DAT praise-PASS-PAST  
 ronbun]-o hihansi-ta  
 paper-ACC criticize-PAST  
 'Aya criticized the paper that Ken had praised by  
 Chomsky'

If one were to maintain the PR analysis, the surface subject NPs in (40) would have to have moved from inside the relative clause. But then it would be unwantedly necessary to stipulate that A-movement is exempt from being constrained by the Subjacency Condition.

### 3. "External Possessor" Analysis

#### 3.1 The Surface Subject is an Argument of the Verb

Having pointed out several inadequacies with the PR analysis of the possessor passive, I now turn to propose an alternative analysis that provides an optimal account of the construction. Our critical examination of the PR analysis centered