

A Note on *Nitotte*-Phrases in Japanese*

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with *nitotte*-phrases in Japanese. *Nitotte*, a complex particle in modern Japanese, is under intense study, and especially its syntactic and semantic properties have been widely argued in the literature (cf. Shibatani (1986), Mitsui (2001), Mano (2003), Sugimoto (2003, 2005), etc.). However, as for conditions on the occurrence of *nitotte*-phrases, any previous researches do not offer a detail explanation for when and how *nitotte*-phrases are licensed in sentences. In this paper, we try to clarify what regulates the occurrence of *nitotte*-phrases in sentences.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 overviews previous analyses of *nitotte*-phrases and examines their syntactic and semantic characteristics. Section 3 shows the distribution of *nitotte*-phrases and points out that previous analyses do not explain the behavior of the phrase adequately. Section 4 attempts to give an account for problematic behaviors which previous researches cannot explain and elucidate how *nitotte*-phrases are licensed in sentences from a pragmatic point of view. This section also asserts that the pragmatically imposed condition is related to that of *for*-phrases in English middle constructions. Section 5 summarizes this paper.

2. Previous Analyses

2.1. Syntactic Characteristics

As for syntactic characteristics of *nitotte*-phrases, it has been argued whether *nitotte*-phrases are syntactically arguments or adjuncts among previous researches. Mano (2003) claims that *nitotte*-phrases are syntactically arguments based on the honorification test which verifies that syntactic arguments are involved in honorification, showing that *nitotte*-phrases can be involved in honorification:

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------|
| (1) | Yamada sensei-nitotte | Hanako-ga |
| | Mr. Yamada-PART | Hanako-NOM |
| | [hituyoude]-ir-assharu (koto) ¹ | |
| | necessary-be-HON-PRES | |
| | ‘For Mr. Yamada Hanako is necessary.’ (Mano (2003:83)) | |

Note that a predicate *hituyouda* ‘necessary’ is honorified in this example. The attested example in (1) expresses that it is *Yamada sensei* ‘Mr. Yamada’ that needs Hanako. Thus, we can say that Mr. Yamada is involved in honorification and as a

result, *nitotte*-phrases can be syntactically arguments.

Though this syntactic diagnosis appears to be plausible, we can easily find other data where *nitotte*-phrases are not involved in honorification:

- (2) * Hanako-nitotte Yamada sensei-ga
 Hanako-PART Mr. Yamada-NOM
 [hituyoude]-ir-assharu (koto)
 necessary-be-HON-PRES

‘For Hanako Mr. Yamada is necessary.’ (Sugimoto (2005:154))

Contrary to the example in (1), the sentence in (2) is not acceptable. From the example in (2), it is assumed that argumenthood of *nitotte*-phrases is not related to honorification, but rather honorific expression like *sensei* ‘Mr.’ triggers honorification.

Interestingly, *o*-type honorification is not compatible with *nitotte*-phrases. Consider the following example:

- (3) ?? Yamada sensei-nitotte Hanako-ga
 Mr. Yamada-PART Hanako-NOM
 o[urayamashii].
 enviable-be-HON-PRES

‘For Mr. Yamada Hanako is enviable.’ (ibid.)

If we follow Mano’s argument, the sentence in (3) could be acceptable, because *o*-type honorification is also a kind of honorific expressions like that in (1). Contrary to this assumption, the sentence cannot be allowed. From the examples in (2) and (3), we think that the honorification test is not valid for showing argumenthood of *nitotte*-phrases. Accordingly, we cannot say that *nitotte*-phrases are arguments.

We claim that *nitotte*-phrases are not arguments but adjuncts in this paper. Shibatani’s (1986) argument seems to support our claim. According to Shibatani (1986), *ni*-phrases are elements of the structures of sentences, while *nitotte*-phrases are not. His statement leads us to assume that *ni*-phrases are arguments in sentences, while on the other hand, *nitotte*-phrases are not arguments but adjuncts. A primary determinant of adjuncthood of *nitotte*-phrases is the fact that *nitotte*-phrases cannot replace subjective *ni*-phrases, which is illustrated in (4):

- (4) a. Taroo-ni-wa eigo-ga hanas-e-ru.²
 Taro-DAT-CONT English-NOM speak-can-PRES
 ‘Taro can speak English.’

- b. * Taroo-nitotte eigo-ga hanas-e-ru.
 Taro-PART English-NOM speak-can-PRES
 lit. 'For Taro can speak English.'

(Shibatani (1986:153))

When *Taroo-ni-wa* 'Taro' in (4a) is substituted into *Taroo-nitotte* 'for Taro', as shown in (4b), the sentence is not acceptable.

Furthermore, we can point out that *nitotte*-phrases and subjective *ni*-phrases co-occur in sentences. Consider the following examples:

- (5) a. Hanako-ni tasuke-ga hituyouda.
 Hanako-DAT help-NOM need
 'Hanako needs help.'
- b. Taroo-nitotte-wa Hanako-ni tasuke-ga hituyouda.
 Taro-PART-CONT Hanako-DAT help-NOM need
 lit. 'For Taro, Hanako needs help.'

(Sugimoto (2005:155))

The sentence in (5a) contains a subjective *ni*-phrase '*Hanako-ni*'. On the other hand, the sentence in (5b) involves the subjective *ni*-phrase '*Hanako-ni*' and the *nitotte*-phrase '*Taroo-nitotte-wa*'. Based on the common constraint that a sentence has solemnly one subject, the example in (5b) indicates that only the *ni*-phrase is the subject in the sentence.³ If the *nitotte*-phrase were a subjective argument, the sentence in (5b) would be unacceptable. But actually, it is perfectly acceptable.

Interestingly, we can find the cases where adverbial *ni*-phrases are replaced by *nitotte*-phrases.⁴ Shibatani (1986) points out that adverbial elements are syntactically adjuncts and adverbial *ni*-phrases can be substituted into *nitotte*-phrases. From his argument, it follows that this substitution is possible because of adjuncthood of adverbial *ni*-phrases and *nitotte*-phrases. Consider the following examples:

- (6) a. Taroo-ni-wa kono mondai-wa muzukashi-sugiru.
 Taro-PART-CONT this problem-TOP difficult-too.
 'For Taro this problem is too difficult.'
- b. Taroo-nitotte-wa kono mondai-wa muzukashi-sugiru.
 Taro-PART-CONT this problem-TOP difficult-too.
 'For Taro this problem is too difficult.'

(Shibatani (1986:153))

The sentence in (6a) involves an adverbial *ni*-phrase, while the sentence in (6b) contains a *nitotte*-phrase instead. The replacement shown in (6) indicates that the both *ni*-phrase in (6a) and the *nitotte*-phrase in (6b) have the same syntactic status as

adjuncts. From the diagnosis above, it follows that *nitotte*-phrases are not arguments but adjuncts.

2.2. Semantic Characteristics

In this section, we focus on three semantic characteristics of *nitotte*-phrases.

Firstly, a *nitotte*-phrase expresses a judgment of the speaker (cf. Sugimoto (2003)).⁵ Hence, when we say *Ken-nitotte kono hon-wa muzukashii* ‘This book is difficult for Ken’, the sentence as a whole means that the speaker judges that this book is difficult for Ken.

Secondly, *nitotte*-phrases are qualified as nominal phrases expressing “PLACE” or “DOMAIN” (cf. Mano (2003)). Therefore, the fact that a *nitotte*-phrase can be substituted into a locative (*aida*)*de*-phrase in (7) arises from this semantic property:

- (7) a. Yamada sensei-no go[kazoku]-nitotte kono
 Yamada teacher-GEN family-HON-PART this
 terebi bangumi-ga [omoshiroku]-te-ir-assharu
 TV program-NOM amusing-be-HON-PRES
 souda.
 it is said that
 ‘It is said that for Mr. Yamada’s family this TV program is
 amusing.’
- b. Yamada sensei-no go[kazoku]-no aidade-wa kono
 Yamada teacher-GEN family-HON-LOC-TOP this
 terebi bangumi-ga [omoshiroku]-te-ir-assharu
 TV program-NOM amusing-be-HON-PRES
 souda.
 it is said that
 ‘It is said that for Mr. Yamada’s family this TV program is
 amusing.’

(Mano (2003:84))

Here, a *nitotte*-phrase is substituted into a locative (*aida*)*de*-phrase. It is clear that the *nitotte*-phrase in (7a) and the locative phrase in (7b) are semantically equivalent, which indicates that the former can denote “PLACE” or “DOMAIN”.

Thirdly, *nitotte*-phrases express “possible contrast” in the sense of Sugimoto (2003).⁶ To confirm the meaning of “possible contrast”, let us consider the following example:

- (8) Yamada sensei-nitotte kono bangumi-ga omoshiroi.
 Yamada teacher-PART this program-NOM amusing.
 ‘For Mr. Yamada this program is amusing.’

The example expresses that *Yamada sensei*, ‘Mr. Yamada’ thinks *kono bangumi*, ‘this program’ *omoshiroi*, ‘amusing’. His daughter, on the other hand, might think the program boring. That is, it is possible to assume that there exists a person who considers the program boring. Possible, because there is a possibility to presuppose opponents of an entity in *nitotte*-phrases. Sugimoto asserts that the phrase conveys this interpretation and postulate a condition that the phrase in question appears in sentences iff it conveys the meaning of “possible contrast”. To put it differently, *nitotte*-phrases are not allowed to appear in sentences without the meaning of “possible contrast”. With the argument above, we can give an account for why the example in (9) is acceptable:

- (9) Hoka-no hito-wa iza shira-zu sore-wa Taroo-nitotte
 For others it may be possible it-TOP Taro-PART
 omoimoyoranu dekgoto datt-anode-ar-u.
 unexpected event be-PAST.
 ‘For others it may be possible, for Taro it was unexpected event.’

(Sugimoto (2003:88))

The example in (9) involves the phrase *hokano hitowa izashirazu* ‘for others it may be possible’, which emphasizes the meaning of “possible contrast”. The *nitotte*-phrase, hence, is completely acceptable, because it conveys the meaning of “possible contrast”.

Furthermore, Sugimoto (2003) points out that unacceptable sentences with *nitotte*-phrases become acceptable by adding negation, modals expressions, modification of noun phrases in *nitotte*-phrases, adding *sonzaida* phrases, or *sugiru* ‘too’ phrases. Sugimoto mentions that this is because such elements ensure the meaning of “possible contrast” instead of *nitotte*-phrases.

Let us first see the cases where a *nitotte*-phrase co-occurs with a negative element:

- (10) a. * Taroo-nitotte kanojo-wa miryokutekida.
 Taro-PART she-TOP charming
 ‘For Taro she is charming.’

- b. Taroo-nitotte kanojo-wa miryokutekide-wa-nai.
 Taro-PART she-TOP charming-NOT
 ‘For Taro she is not charming.’

(Mitsui (2001:24))

Sentence in (10a) is unacceptable, while the sentence with a negative element in (10b) is acceptable. The sentence in (10a) is not acceptable because the *nitotte*-phrase does not convey the meaning of the “possible contrast”. However, the sentence is perfectly acceptable when a negative element appears in the sentence as shown in (10b).

Then, consider the following examples:

- (11) a. ? Taiyou-wa nihonjin-nitotte akai.
 Sun-TOP Japanese-PART red
 lit ‘Sun is for Japanese red.’
 (cf. For Japanese sun is red.)
- b. Taiyou-wa nihonjin-nitotte akai-{rashii/youda/
 Sun-TOP Japanese-PART red-{might/seems to/
 kamoshirenai/noda}.
 may/would}
 lit. ‘Sun for Japanese {might/seems to/may/would} be red’.
 (cf. For Japanese sun {might/seems to/may/would} be red.)

(Mitsui (2001:28f.))

The sentence in (11a) sounds odd, while that in (11b) does not. The reason why the former is not acceptable is that the *nitotte*-phrase does not convey the meaning of the “possible contrast”. The contrast illustrated in (11) shows that adding modal expressions such as *rashii/youda/kamoshirenai/noda*, increases the acceptability of sentences involving *nitotte*-phrases.

Then, let us see the cases where *nitotte*-phrases appear in sentences with a *sonzaida* phrase:

- (12) a. * Taroo-nitotte kanojo-wa miryokutekida.
 Taro-PART she-TOP charming
 ‘For Taro she is charming.’
- b. Taroo-nitotte kanojo-wa miryokutekina sonzaida.⁷
 Taro-PART she-TOP charming creature
 ‘For Taro she is a charming creature.’

(Sugimoto (2003:91))

The sentence without the *sonzaida* phrase in (12a) is unacceptable, because the *nitotte*-phrases does not express “possible contrast”, which contrasts to the sentence

containing *sonzai-da* phrase in (12b).

We can find the same phenomena when *nitotte*-phrases co-occur with *sugiru* ‘too’ phrase. Consider the following examples:

- (13) a. * Taroo-nitotte kono kaaten-wa akai.
 Taro-PART this curtain-TOP red
 ‘For Taro this curtain is red.’
 b. Taroo-nitotte kono kaaten-wa aka-sugiru.
 Taro-PART this curtain-TOP red-too.
 ‘For Taro this curtain is too red.’

(Sugimoto (2003:92))

The sentence in (13a) is not acceptable because the *nitotte*-phrases does not express “possible contrast” as in (12a). However, as exemplified in (13a), the *sugiru* ‘too’ phrase rises the acceptability of the sentences with the *nitotte*-phrase.

From the argument above, we assume that *nitotte*-phrases represent speakers’ judgments, express “PLACE” or “DOMAIN”, and convey the meaning of “possible contrast”. *Nitotte*-phrases, however, show puzzling behavior which do not indicate the semantic properties mentioned in this section. Hence, in the next section, we deal with some problematic distribution of *nitotte*-phrase.

3. Distribution of *Nitotte*-Phrases

In this section, we look at some problematic distribution of *nitotte*-phrases. In addition, we aim to point out that previous analyses can give no account for the behavior of the phrases. Here, we consider three phenomena concerning *nitotte*-phrases in order.

Firstly, *nitotte*-phrases are not always interchangeable with *ni*-phrases, as shown in (14):

- (14) a. Beiso-nitotte/*ni chuushintekina
 The US and Soviet –PART central

 kadai-wa anzen-no mondai dea-ru.
 issue-TOP the issue of safety be-PRES
 ‘For the US and Soviet, the central issue is the issue of safety.’
 b. Sousajoo kuwashii-koto-wa chotto
 for investigation detail-NOM-TOP a little
 moushiagekanemasu ga
 tell-HON-NOT but

wareware-nitotte-wa/*ni	judai	nan-desu-yo.
we-PART	important	be-PRES
lit. 'For investigation, we cannot tell you the detail, a little, but for us it is important.'		

(Tsukamoto (1991:82))

In (14), *ni*-phrases cannot replace *nitotte*-phrases, which makes a contrast to the examples in (6), repeated here as (15):

- (15) a. Taroo-niwa kono mondai-wa muzukashi-sugiru.
b. Taroo-nitotte-wa kono mondai-wa muzukashi-sugiru. (= (6))

Secondly, adding modal expressions does not always ensure the meaning of “possible contrast”. Let us confirm the case exemplified below:

- (16) a. * Taroo-nitotte kono kaaten-wa akai.
Taro-PART this curtain-TOP red
'For Taro this curtain is red.' (= (13a))
- b. * Taroo-nitotte(-wa) kono kaaten-wa akai-monoda.⁸
Taro-PART(-CONT) this curtain-TOP red
'For Taro this curtain is red.'

The example in (16a) involves the *nitotte*-phrase and it is not acceptable. Furthermore, the sentence in (16b) shows that a modal expression does not affect the acceptability of the sentence in (16a). To make the sentence in (16a) acceptable, we must modify the *nitotte*-phrase as illustrated below:

- (17) Shichoukaku shougai-no ar-u
 Seeing and hearing handicaps have-PRES
 Taroo-nitotte(-wa) kono kaaten-wa akai monoda.
 Taro-PART(-CONT) thi scurtain-TOP red
 'For Taro, who has seeing and hearing handicaps this curtain is red.'

The *nitotte*-phrase in (17) is modified and it can appear in the sentence perfectly. We will deal with the problem why the sentence in (17) is allowed more detail in the next section, but it is important to point out the cases where modifying *nitotte*-phrases also increases the acceptability of *nitotte*-phrases.

Thirdly, *nitotte*-phrases do not always convey the meaning of “possible contrast” (cf. Sugimoto (2003)). Consider the following example:

- (18) Subeteno hito-nitotte kono mondai-wa
All people-PART this problem-TOP

muzukashii.

difficult

‘For all people, this problem is difficult.’

The sentence in (18) contains the expression *subete* ‘all’. This expression literally means that there is no exception for *subetenno hito* ‘all people’. Thus, there is no possibility that someone thinks that the problem is not difficult. Given that *nitotte*-phrases have the meaning of “possible contrast” as Sugimoto (2003) mentions, it is clear that the situation described by (18) contradicts his statement. Furthermore, the following example also indicates that *nitotte*-phrases do not convey a contrastive meaning:

- (19)
- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------|--------------|
| Subetenno | hito-nitotte | kono | mondai-wa |
| All | people-PART | this | problem-TOP |
| muzukashii | ga | ano | mondai-wa |
| difficult | but | that | problem-CONT |
| kantande | ar-u. | | |
| easy | be-PRES | | |

‘For all people this problem is difficult but that problem is easy.’

The *nitotte*-phrase in (19) involves *subete* ‘all’. Therefore, it does not convey a meaning of “possible contrast” as we have mentioned. Rather, the contrast between *kono mondai* ‘this problem’ and *ano mondai* ‘that problem’ is a topic of the sentence. As for the example in (19), we can say that not the *nitotte*-phrase but the subjects of sentences have a contrastive meaning.

Three distributions which we have just seen are problematic because they are not explained from the semantic aspects of *nitotte*-phrases. In other words, previous analyses dealing with the semantic characteristics of the phrase in question do not give a precise account for how *nitotte*-phrases are licensed in sentences. We, thus, must find the answer for the question concerning the license of *nitotte*-phrases in sentences. In the next section, from a pragmatic point of view, we examine what allows *nitotte*-phrases to appear in sentences and attempt to explain the problematic behavior of the phrase we have seen in this section.

4. A Pragmatic Condition on Licensing *Nitotte*-Phrases

4.1. What Regulates the Occurrence of *Nitotte*-Phrases in Sentences

The purpose of this subsection is to give an answer to the question how *nitotte*-phrases are licensed in sentences. In considering the question, the pragmatic analysis on adjuncts by Goldberg and Ackerman (2001) is suggestive. Goldberg and Ackerman (2001:798) contends that adjuncts are used to satisfy the

often-cited requirement that every utterance have a focus that serves to convey new information in the discourse. Their main claim is summarized as follows:

- (20) a. From a point of informativeness, adjuncts are elements which convey new information, and thus they are informative in discourse.
 b. Adjuncts are licensed iff they are informative in discourse.

With this summary in mind, consider the following:

- (21) a. This house was destroyed (by the storm).
 b. # This house was created.
 c. This house was created by a 16th-century architect.

(Goldberg and Ackerman (2001:801))

According to Goldberg and Ackerman, the sentence in (21a) is perfectly acceptable, while the sentence in (21b) seems to demand that something more to be said. The sentence in (21a), furthermore, can contain the adjunct optionally, contrary to the fact that the sentence in (21c) should contain the adjunct obligatorily for it to be acceptable. From this point, Goldberg and Ackerman claim that the adjunct in (21c) is an obligatory element in discourse, because it is an element which conveys new information of the sentence.

Based on the theory of Goldberg and Ackerman (2001), and the fact that *nitotte*-phrases are adjuncts, we can characterize *nitotte*-phrases as shown in (22):

- (22) a. *Nitotte* phrases are elements which convey new information, and thus, they are informative in discourse.
 b. *Nitotte* phrases are licensed iff they are informative in discourses.

The characterization in (22) seems to be plausible, though it leads us to ask a question about what information of *nitotte*-phrases actually is. For the explanation, let us consider the sentences in (23) as an example:

- (23) a. Kono fuku-wa ookii(-koto)
 These clothes-TOP big(-NOM)
 'These clothes are big.'
 b. Ken-nitotte-wa kono fuku-wa ookii(-koto)
 Ken-PART-TOP these clothes-TOP big(-NOM)
 'For Ken these clothes are big.' (Mano (2003:80))

The sentence in (23a) means that *kono fuku* 'these clothes' is *ookii* 'big'. Notice that the sentence involves a predicate, *ookii* 'big'. The predicate generally expresses a large size, degree or amount of an entity. That is, *ookii* denotes a characteristic of an entity. Accordingly, the sentence in (23a) mentions about a property of *kono fuku* 'these clothes'. What, then, does the sentence in (23b)

means? The sentence expresses that the clothes have a characteristic of largeness for Ken's figure. In other words, the *nitotte*-phrase is a specific criterion for the speaker to measure the size of these clothes. From the argument above, we define the informativeness of *nitotte*-phrases in the following way:

- (24) *Nitotte*-phrases can be informative in that they appear in sentences as specific criteria for speakers to judge characteristics of subjects.

With the definition in (24) in mind, let us go back to the examples in (23). When the speaker utters the sentence in (23a), he/she judges that these clothes are big for ordinary people. In this example, people who think these clothes are big are not specified. Contrary to this example, when the speaker utters the sentence in (23b), he/she judges that these clothes are big especially for Ken. In this example, the information of the largeness of these clothes is specific. This is because Ken appears in the sentence as a specific criterion for the speaker to characterize the size of these clothes. Consequently, the information of the largeness in (23b) is specified and the sentence as whole is more informative than that in (23a).

From the argument above, we postulate a condition of the occurrence of *nitotte*-phrases as follows:

- (25) a. *Nitotte* phrases are licensed iff they are informative in discourses.
 b. *Nitotte*-phrases can be informative in that they function as specific criteria for speakers who make judgments of characteristics on the subjects.

Then, with the condition in (25), how can we explain the problematic behavior of *nitotte*-phrases which we have seen in the previous section? Let us, first consider the examples in (16), repeated here as (26):

- (26) a. * Taro-nitotte(-wa) kono kaaten-wa akai.
 b. * Taro-nitotte(-wa) kono kaaten-wa akai-monoda.

(= (16))

According to Sugimoto (2003), the sentence in (26a) is not acceptable, because the *nitotte*-phrase does not express the meaning of "possible contrast". The sentence in (26a) could be acceptable if elements which ensure the meaning of "possible contrast" were added. Nevertheless, the sentence in (26b) is not acceptable. As for the sentences in (26), we think that the reason why the sentences do not allow *nitotte*-phrases is because the *nitotte*-phrase does not satisfy the condition in (25). That is, the *nitotte*-phrases in (26) are not informative in that they cannot be specific criteria for the speaker to characterize a color of the subject, *kono kaaten* 'this curtain'. This is because color is fixed generally and it is common among people.

Thus, it is redundant to mention common knowledge by referring to a specific individual.

For the *nitotte*-phrase to be acceptable, it must be informative as defined in (25). As one of such instances, see the example in (27):

- (27) Shichoukaku shougai-no aru Taro-nitotte(-wa) kono kaaten-wa
akai-monoda. (= (17))

The *nitotte*-phrase in (27) is modified and it is perfectly acceptable. *Taro* is interpreted as a person who has lost his sense of sight. That is, *Taro* is interpreted as a person who makes a different judgment from that of the ordinary. It is, thus, worth for interlocutors to mention how the color of *kono kaaten* ‘this curtain’ is recognized by Taro. In this case, the *nitotte*-phrase functions as a specific criterion for the speaker to characterize the property of the subject and as a result, the phrase is perfectly acceptable in the sentence.

Then, how can we explain the cases where the meaning of “possible contrast” seems to be canceled? Consider the following example:

- (28) Subete-no hito-nitotte kono mondai-wa muzukashii. (= (18))

The attested example in (28) shows that *nitotte*-phrases do not always convey the meaning of “possible contrast”. We may give an account for such examples when we postulate a condition in (25). The condition in (25) defines that *nitotte*-phrases occur in sentence when they are informative in discourse. Therefore, the *nitotte*-phrase in (28) is acceptable, because it functions as a specific criterion for the speaker to judge the difficulty for the subject. That is, a speaker characterizes *kono mondai* ‘this problem’ as a difficult one by mentioning that everyone cannot solve it. Hence, the *nitotte*-phrase satisfies the condition in (25), and it is acceptable. The following example is also explained in the same way:

- (29) Subete-no hito-nitotte kono mondai-wa muzukashii ga ano
mondai-wa kantande ar-u. (= (19))

The *nitotte* phrase in (29) can appear in the sentence, though it does not express the meaning of “possible contrast”. As for the example, we explain the acceptability as follows: The speaker judges the difficulty of *kono mondai* ‘this problem’ and the ease of *ano mondai* ‘that problem’ by referring *subeteno hito*. Therefore, *nitotte*-phrase functions as a specific criterion for the speaker. Thus, it satisfies the condition in (25) and as a consequence, the phrase is allowed in the sentence.

From the argument above, we conclude that *nitotte* phrases are licensed iff they are informative in discourses and that *nitotte*-phrases can be informative in that they function as specific criteria for speakers to characterize properties of the subjects.⁹

In the next subsection, we argue that a condition on licensing *nitotte*-phrases is similar to that of licensing adjunct *for*-phrases in English middle constructions.

4.2. *A Similarity Between Nitotte-Phrases and For-Phrases in English Middle Constructions*

In this subsection, we try to verify that a condition of the occurrence of *nitotte*-phrases is analogous to that of *for*-phrases in English middle constructions. *For*-phrases in English middle constructions are exemplified as in (30):

- (30) a. This book reads easily.
 b. This book reads easily for Mary.

A middle construction in (30a) which has a function describing a property of the subject can involve a *for*-phrase as shown in (30b), and the *for*-phrase is classified as an adjunct (cf. Stroik (1992, 1995, 1999), Ackema and Schoorlemmer (1995), and Kambe (2006)). Furthermore, it is pointed out that *for*-phrases do not always appear in middle constructions freely, which is illustrated as in (31):

- (31) a. (on shoe chest:) Stows on floor or shelf.
 b. * (on shoe chest:) Stows on floor or shelf for tidy people.

(Ackema and Schoorlemmer (1995:180))

As for the condition of the occurrence of *for*-phrases in English middle constructions, Kambe (to appear) assumes as follows: *For*-phrases are licensed iff they are informative in discourse. *For*-phrases are informative in that they are specific criteria for speakers to characterize properties of the subjects.¹⁰ With the argument above in mind, let us focus on sentences in (31) in more detail. The sentence in (31a) means that people in general can easily stow the shoe chest on floor or shelf and the ease is inherent in the shoe chest. The sentence in (31b) means that the shoe chest is easy to stow not for people in general but for tidy people. Here, people who stow the shoe chest are tidy people, and thus, ‘stowers’ except them might feel that the chest is difficult to stow. That is, the ease of stowing the shoe chest does not directly originate in the chest itself but it depends on who stows the shoe chest. Therefore, in (31b), *tidy people* cannot be a specific criterion for the speaker to characterize the quality of the subject, because a characteristic of the shoe chest (i.e. a quality to stow on somewhere easily) is not emphasized by referring who stows the shoe chest. As a result, a *for*-phrase in (31b) is not informative and it is not acceptable. The following example, however, shows that once the *for*-phrase is modified, it is perfectly accepted:

- (32) a. (on shoe chest:) Stows on floor or shelf.

- b. (on shoe chest:) Stows on floor or shelf for anyone with half a brain.

(Stroik (1999:122))

As we have seen, the sentence in (32a) indicates that the shoe chest is easy for people in general to stow, and the quality is inherent in the show chest. The sentence in (32b) shows that the shoe chest has a property that not only people in general but also people who have disabilities to use their hands can stow it easily. Thus, by referring to people who have difficulties for handling their hands, the speaker characterizes the quality of the show chest. The sentence in (32b), therefore, allows a *for*-phrase to appear in it, because *anyone with half a brain* are specific criteria for the speaker to characterize a property of the subject.

From the consideration above, we conclude that a condition on the occurrence of *for*-phrases in English middle constructions is similar to that of *nitotte*-phrases.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we deal with *nitotte*-phrases in Japanese. In section 2, we overview previous analyses of *nitotte*-phrases and argue their syntactic and semantic characteristics. In the section, we claim that *nitotte*-phrases are syntactically adjuncts, and semantically the phrase expresses speakers' judgment. Also we confirm that the phrase seems to express "possible contrast" in a sense of Sugimoto (2003). In section 3, we focus on problematic behavior of *nitotte*-phrases, and point out that previous semantic analyses do not explain the distribution of *nitotte*-phrases adequately. In section 4, we investigate how *nitotte*-phrases are pragmatically licensed in sentences, examining that the pragmatically imposed condition is related to that of *for*-phrases in English middle constructions.

NOTES

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¹ Mano (2003) puts ? for some acceptable sentences (She shows the acceptable sentence in (1) with ?). In this paper, we treat such examples without ? and use the mark for sentences which sound odd.

² The example in (2a) involves a contrastive *wa*. In this paper, we treat sentences with the

contrastive marker as the same as sentences without it.

³ The rule is proposed in Yamaoka (2000). For detail, see Yamaoka (2000) and references therein.

⁴ For a definition on adverbial *ni*-phrases, see Shibatani (1986).

⁵ Among previous researches, *nitotte*-phrases express judgments of person appearing in the phrase as objects (cf. Morita and Matsumoto (1989)). Contrary to this statement, TES reviewers point out that an interpretation that *nitotte*-phrases express judgments of speakers is preferable. Furthermore, it is difficult to interpret the *nitotte*-phrase in (i) expresses a judgment of *communication*, because they are primary inanimate entity:

- (i) Onaji kanji-wo tsukatte ir-u koto-wa
 Same Chinese character-ACC use-NOM-TOP
 komyunikeishon-nitotte yahari taihenna tsuyomida-to omoim-asu.
 communication-PART after all remarkable advantage-NOM think
 'I think that using the same Chinese character is a remarkable advantage for
 communication after all.' (Morita and Matsumoto (1989:5f.))

As for the example in (i), we can naturally assume that not *communication* but the speaker judges using the same Chinese character is suitable for communication. From the argument above, we assume that *nitotte*-phrases express judgments of speakers in this paper.

⁶ Sugimoto (2003) uses the word "possible contrast" in terms of modal logic. For the detail explanation, see references therein.

⁷ We cannot find a suitable English counterpart for *sonzaida*. Thus, we select the most natural translation for the word in this paper.

⁸ We cannot find a suitable English counterpart for *monoda*. Thus, we select the most natural translation for the word in this paper.

⁹ We cannot account for the problem why *nitotte*-phrases are not always interchangeable with adverbial *ni*-phrases:

- (i) a. Beiso-nitotte/*ni chuushintekina kadai-wa anzen-nomondai dea-ru.
 b. Sousajoo kuwashii-koto-wa chotto moushiagekanemasu ga
 wareware-nitotte-wa/*ni judai nan-desu-yo.

(= (14))

As for the examples, we will leave them as open questions and investigate what regulates the phenomena in the future research.

¹⁰ For detail, see Kambe (to appear).

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