On the Referential Property of Prepositional Subjects
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The purpose of this paper is to argue that, with respect to the prepositional subject construction (henceforth, PSC), the prepositional subject (PS) is actually a DP at LF. Typical examples of the PSC include the following:

(1) a. Under the bed is a cozy place to hide.　　　(Nishihara (2005:221))

　　　b. During the vacation may be convenient.　　(Quirk et al. (1985:658))

Notice that sentences (1) have the copula *be* as the verb. To account for the acceptability of them, Matsubara (2003) formulates a constraint that the predicates in the PSC must be informationally light verbs. It goes without saying that the copula verb *be* is an example of informationally light verbs. Hence, his constraint seems to account well for the fact that sentences (1) are acceptable. On the other hand, it is possible to interpret in a different way the fact that typical examples of the PSC include the copula *be*. As is shown in (1), the PSC describes the property of the entity denoted by the PS (Iwasaki and Kobukata (2006)). In light of this, we can consider the PSC as an instance of predicational sentences.

Based on Iwasaki and Kobukata's proposal that the PSC is an example of predicational sentences, let us now discuss how it is derived syntactically. Following the assumptions in the current version of Minimalist Program, Mikkelsen (2005) proposes a syntactic derivation of predicational sentences in general, and it seems natural to make use of it for proposing a derivation of the PSC. However, this is not so straightforward as expected. To be concrete, Chomsky's (2001) mechanism of Agree forces us to discuss a fact about the PS. To see this, let us consider the conditions on applications of the operation Agree, given in (3):

(3) a. Goal as well as probe must be active for Agree to apply.

　　　b. α must have a complete set of φ-features (it must be *φ-complete*) to delete uninterpretable features of the paired matching element β.

(Chomsky (2001:6))

Condition (3a) requires that a PS, which forms an Agree relation with T, must have a case feature, which is uninterpretable. Note that the notion of case is applied to nominal expressions. Therefore, it is not trivial to argue that the PS has a case feature. Chomsky assumes that a case feature is deleted by the valuation of the φ-features of a probe, i.e., T in this case. This means that the PS must have φ-features. Furthermore, given the condition in (3b), it must be φ-complete. Regarding this problem, Matsubara (2000) points out that the PS is φ-complete and has a case feature on the basis of some empirical evidence.

Combining Matsubara's (2000) argument with Mikkelsen's (2005) proposal, I can offer a syntactic derivation of the PSC as follows (in the diagram below, the PP corresponds with the subject):

(4) $[_{TP}$ PP$_i$ $[_{T'}$ $[_T v$ T$]$ $[_{vP}$ t_v $[_{PredP}$ t_i $[_{Pred'}$ Pred DP/AP$]]]]]$

First, the functional category v adjoins to T, and the verb *be*, which corresponds to v, is realized as inflected forms with tense. Next, T enters into an Agree relation with the PP. In consequence, the φ-features of T are valued, and the case feature of the PP is valued as nominative. Finally, in order for the EPP feature of T to be deleted, the PP in spec-PredP moves to spec-TP.

In addition, this characterization of the PSC makes it possible to argue that the PS is referential. Consider the following:

(5) a. The lead actress in that movie is Swedish, isn't *she*?

b. The lead actress in that movie is Ingrid Bergman, isn't *it*?

(Mikkelsen (2005:6))

Sentence (5a) is an example of predicational sentences, while sentence (5b) is one of specificational sentences. The operation of pronominalization replaces the subject with the pronouns, italicized in (5). The forms of the pronouns are different from each other, although the subject of each sentence in (5) is exactly the same. Mikkelsen (2005) argues that this is because the subject is interpreted differently in each sentence. The use of a gendered pronoun *she* in (5a) indicates that the subject is referential, and the use of an inanimate pronoun *it* in (5b) that it is predicative. From the fact that the subject of a predicational sentence is referential, it is natural to consider that the PS of the PSC is also referential, since the PSC is an instance of predicational sentences. At this point, recall the widely accepted assumption that the semantic notion of referentiality is interpreted in the functional category D (cf. Chomsky (1995), Fukui and Sakai (2003)). Given that the PS is referential, it is quite reasonable to assume that it is actually headed by D at an interpretation level. More specifically, I propose a syntactic structure of it in LF as follows:

(6) $[_{DP}$ D $[_{PP}$ P DP$]]$

The bracket diagram in (6) shows that the PS is headed by D and the visible part of it, which is designated as PP in (6), is actually the complement of the head D. The functional category D is generally assumed to select a nominal element (cf. Panagiotidis (2005)). By virtue of this selectional property of the functional category, reanalysis applies to the complement of D, and its category changes from a PP to an NP. Interestingly, my claim that the PS is actually a DP at LF suggests that the PSC may not be as idiosyncratic as it appear to be, because it is consistent with the thesis that the subject is a nominal expression.