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#### ATYPICAL STATIVE SENTENCES IN JAPANESE AND ENGLISH

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Abstract: Stative predicates normally mark objects in the nominative in Japanese and are non-passivizable in English. However, under some conditions, Japanese uses accusative marking and English allows passivization. Fujimura 1989 attributes the Japanese Nom/Acc alternation to degrees of transitivity and Rice 1985 the English passivizability to subjective encoding. I argue the determinant for both phenomena is boundedness based on individuation.

### 1 Introduction

In this paper, I discuss some phenomena concerning the degree of objecthood in stative predicates. It is widely accepted that the object in stative predicates does not undergo a change of state/quality by definition, so that no transitive alternations should be observed. To the contrary, transitive alternations in stative predicates are observed in Japanese and English. In Japanese, the second NP in stative sentences tends to be marked with a nominative case marker ga but under some conditions, it is marked with an accusative case marker o. Likewise, in English, stative predicates cannot be passivized in normal contexts but they can be passivized under some conditions. Though I detail these alternations in what follows, the following sentences exemplify them:

- (1) a. Taroo ga hon ga sukida. Taro Nom books Nom like 'Taro likes books.'
  - b. Taroo ga kono hon o sukida. Taro Nom this book Acc like 'Taro likes this book.'

(2) a. \*The couple next door is known by John.¹ b. The couple next door is thoroughly/barely known by John.

In (1a), the object is ga-marked while in (1b) it is o-marked. In (2a), the sentence cannot be passivized whereas in (2b) the sentence is passivized. In this paper, we call sentences such as (1b and 2b) atypical stative sentences.

What factors determine these alternations? I claim that [+/-bounded] is the determining factor. If the situation is [+bounded], it is o-marked in Japanese and passivizable in English. However, in statives, no change is brought to the object. In other words, it is not affected. Hence, the feature [+bounded] must be brought about by processes other than affectedness. I claim that individuation can also bring about the feature.

Individuation is the process by which an entity appears against its background. In this sense, it can be compared to perspectualization, fore/backgrounding or differentiation. As far as English cases are concerned, Rice 1985 claims that some psychological processes affect passivizability in statives. I also claim that the psychological processes can be replaced by the notion of individuation.

In what follows, I will discuss the Nom/Acc alternations in Japanese in detail and then discuss passivizability in English.

## 2 Nom/Acc Alternations in Japanese

Since Japanese is a Nominative-Accusative language, a direct object<sup>2</sup> is expected to be marked with the accusative case marker o, but in statives (=stative predicates) it is marked with the nominative case marker ga. In addition, Nom/Acc alternations with reference to the object are often observed. Following Kuno 1973, Shibatani 1978, 1986, and Haig 1979, I assume that the second ga-marked NP in statives is a nominative object. Arguments for the subjecthood of the second NP are given in Tonoike 1977, Makino 1975-6 and DeWolf 1984-5. In this paper, I will not mention the arguments for or against the objecthood of the second NP.

Case-marking in statives in Japanese contradicts a one-to-one correspondence between case and grammatical relation; the Nominative usually corresponds to a subject and the Accusative to an object. Such seemingly contradictory phenomena pose the following question:

#### (i) What motivates the Nom/Acc alternations?

As for the question above, Shibatani 1978 claims that the alternations are optional, whereas Fujimura 1989 claims that they are motivated by the degrees of transitivity.

From the semantic structure of objecthood in statives, I infer that when an object is ga-marked, it is less bounded, while when it is o-marked, it is more bounded. Further, I claim that the less an object is distinct from the subject and the background, the more naturally it shares ga-marking with the subject, while the more it is distinct, the more naturally it is omarked. In other words, when individuation is low, an object tends to be ga-marked whereas when the individuation is high, the object is likely to be omarked. This type of intransitive/transitive alternation is also evidenced by data from languages such as Finnish and Australian languages, which I will not discuss here (see Timberlake 1975b, Austin 1982, Lichtenberg 1982). What is more important is that case assignment is controlled not only syntactically but also semantically.

<u>Ga-marking Environments</u> Japanese is a Nominative-Accusative language, so a subject is marked with the Nominative case marker, that is, ga, whereas an object is marked with the Accusative case marker o. However, the Nominative case marker ga is used for the object in statives' as illustrated as follows:

- (3) Taroo wa eigo ga hanas-eru (potential). Taro Top English Nom speak-Pot 'Taro can speak English.'
- (4) Taroo wa mizu ga nomi-tai (desiderative). Taro Top water Nom drink-Des 'Taro wants to drink water.'

- (5) Taroo wa Hanako ga sukida (transitive adjective). Taro Top Hanako Nom like 'Taro likes/is fond of Hanako.'
- (6) Taroo wa okane ga iru. Taro Top money Nom need 'Taro needs money.'
- (7) Taroo wa ani ga aru.
  Taro Top brother Nom exist
  'Taro has a brother.'

To judge whether or not (3-7) are stative, I follow Kuno's (1973) criterion for stativity to the effect that the non-past tense form of the stative can refer to the present, whereas that of the non-stative refers only to the future or generic or habitual action. Ima kono shunkan 'at this very moment' could cooccur with (3-7), which works as a syntactic test to show that these five sentences are stative.

According to Vendler 1957, (3-7) are true at speech time and entail no inception/termination. The ga-marked object does not bring the endpoint to the situation expressed by the predicate. In this sense, the situation with the ga-marked object is [-bounded].

O-marking Environments The Accusative is preferred in sentences where a demonstrative such as kono 'this' modifies the object, lst/2nd person pronoun 'watasi/anata' is used as the object, or external conditions are given. I owe the following examples to Fujimura (1989). Observe:

- (8) a. Taroo wa hon ga/?o yom-eru.
  Taro Top book Nom/Acc read-Pot
  'Taro can read a book.'
  - b. Taroo wa kono hon ?ga/o yom-eru. this
- (9) a. Hanako wa Taroo ga/?o sukida. Hanako Top Taro Nom/Acc like 'Hanako likes Taro.'
  - b. Hanako wa watasi ?ga/o sukida.

- (10) a. Hanako wa zi ga/?o yom-e-nai.'

  Hanako Top letter Nom/Acc read-Pot-Neg
  'Hanako cannot read letters.'
  - b. Kurai node Hanako wa zi ?ga/o yom-e-nai. dark because 'Because it is dark, Hanako cannot read letters.'

Basically, ga is preferred in statives as in the a-sentences. However, if the object is restricted to speech time, that is, the present due to kore 'this', o is preferred. First and second person pronouns share the same time point, that is, speech time, so both refer to the present time as well.

External conditions such as *kurai node* 'Because it is dark' limit the negation of the potentiality to the present, because 'Hanako cannot read letters' as long as 'it IS dark'. Normally Hanako can read letters but for lack of light Hanako cannot read the letters temporarily, so this situation is not general but specific, so that o is preferred.

Furthermore, o is preferred when the object is used contrastively or specifically as in

- (11) a. Boku wa biiru ga/?o nomi-tai. I Top beer Nom/Acc drink-Des 'I want to drink beer.'
  - b. Boku wa Asahi yori Miller (?)ga/o nomitai.

Asahi rather Miller
'I want to drink Miller rather than
Asahi.'

- (12) a. Watasi wa hon ga/?o yomi-tai.

  I Top book Nom/Acc read-Des
  'I want to read a book.'
  - b. Watasi wa kinoo katta hon (?)ga/o yomi-tai.

yesterday bought 'I want to read the book that I bought yesterday.'

In (11a & 12a), the objects are generic (= less individuated), while in (11b & 12b), they are specific (= more individuated) due to comparison or

restriction. Therefore, the former tends to be gamarked whereas the latter tends to be o-marked.

As regards case-marking, antiambiguity is a phenomenon worth discussing. Observe the following examples (Shibatani 1975, Haig 1979):

- (13) a. Watasi wa susi ga/?o tabe-tai. I Top sushi Nom/Acc eat-Des 'I want to eat sushi.'
  - b. Watasi wa susi ?ga/o asoko de tabe-tai. over there at
    - 'I want to eat sushi over there.'
  - c. Watasi wa susi ??ga/o miti no mukoogawa road Gen far side

no mise de tabe-tai.

Gen store at

'I want to eat sushi at that store across the road.'

From (13a) to (13c), the degrees of acceptability of the Nominative decrease. Shibatani 1975, 1978 argues that susi is more likely to be perceived as a subject as the distance between susi and the predicate tabetai becomes larger and that to avoid such ambiguity, o is preferred.

However, I claim that the reason why o is preferred in (13b and c) is that the object susi is involved in a particular situation defined by the addition of adverbial phrases, that is, more individuated. This is clear from:

- (13)' a. Watasi wa susi ga/(?)o tabe-tai. I Top sushi Nom/Acc eat-Des 'I want to eat sushi.'
  - b. Watasi wa asoko de susi (?)ga/o tabetai.
    - Top over there at
  - 'I want to eat sushi over there.'

    c. Watasi wa miti no mukoogawa no mise

    I Top road Gen far side Gen store
    de susi ?(?)ga/o tabe-tai.8

    at Nom/Acc eat-Des
    - 'I want to eat sushi at that store across the road.'

Antiambiguity cannot explain (13)' because susi is placed just before the predicate. However, increased individuation is compatible with the preferences shown. Thus, o is preferred when the object is more individuated.

Individuation In the preceding sections, the environments for the Nominative and the Accusative were discussed, and the following conditioning factors were noticed: (i) ga is preferred when the object is more generic, while (ii) o is preferred when the object is more specific. In what follows, I will discuss these semantic characteristics of the object in detail with reference to the notion of individuation.

Firstly, the object in statives with ga is less distinct from the background, that is, the other undifferentiated objects. In

(14) Hanako wa inu ga/?\*o kowai.° Hanako Top dog Nom/Acc fear 'Hanako is afraid of dogs.'

Inu 'dog' in general in (14) is the object of Hanako's fear kept from situation to situation, against which a particular dog emerges as a figure as in Hanako wa sono inu ga/??o kowai 'Hanako is afraid of that dog'. As the object is more specific, the preference of omarking increases.

Secondly, the object in statives with ga is less distinct from the subject. Observe:

- (15) a. Hanako wa imooto ga/\*o aru. Hanako Top sister Nom/Acc exist 'Hanako has a sister.'
  - b. Kuzira wa hai ga/\*o aru. whale Top lung Nom/Acc exist 'The whale has a lung.'

There is a family relationship between *Hanako* and *imooto* in (15a). Likewise, the relation between *kuzira* and *hai* in (15b) is a whole-part relation. It is not too much to say that the objects in (15) are inalienable parts of the subjects. This seems to be

the reason for ga-marking for the object as well as the subject.

To combine two generalizations, the final version should be that if the object is less distinct from the background and the subject, it prefers to be ga-marked, and on the contrary if it is more distinct, o-marking is preferred.  $^{10}$ 

We posed a question at the beginning of this section. The answer could be as follows: What motivates the ga/o alternations is the degree of the distinctness of the object from the background and the subject, that is, individuation."

<u>Advantages</u> I will mention two advantages of my claim, that is, the answer above with regard to the ga/o alternations in comparison to two different analyses appearing in previous research. Firstly, Fujimura 1989 tries to explain ga/o alternations simply by applying Hopper & Thompson's (1980) transitivity criteria. In

(16)a. Anoko wa bukiyooda, demo tamago ga that child Top awkward but egg Nom war- eru.

break-Pot
'Though that child is awkward, he can break eggs.'

 Anoko wa arerugii da, demo tamago ga allergic is

tabe-rareru.
eat-Pot
'Though that child is allergic, he can
eat eggs.'

the a-sentence seems less acceptable than the b-sentence (English translation is mine). $^{12}$  However, if ga in (16a,b) is replaced by o, on the contrary, the a-sentence becomes more acceptable than the b-sentence. And also in

- (17) a. Mikka de seetaa ga ande-shimathree days in sweater Nom knit-finishe-masu. Pot-Pol 'You can finish knitting a sweater in three days.'
  - b. Mikka de seetaa ga am-e-masu. knit-Pot-Pol 'You can knit a sweater in three days.'

The a-sentence sounds less acceptable than the b-sentence. Conversely, if o is substituted for ga in (17a,b), the a-sentence becomes more acceptable than the b-sentence.

Fujimura claims that the object in the a-sentence is more affected than that of the b-sentence, so that o is preferred. To be sure, waru 'break' and andeshimau 'finish knitting' seem to bring the endpoint to their objects. But as Jacobsen 1989, 1992 points out, the endpoint cannot be realized in statives because of the blocking of the realization by the stative suffix. Jacobsen 1989, 1992 claims that in eventive transitives the object undergoes change in real time while in statives the object does not undergo change and the situation expressed by the predicate does not arise in real time but requires irreal modality. I agree that no change occurs in the object in statives but disagree that the situation requires irreal modality. For me, stativity is characterized by no change of state/quality but still requires the flow of time. At any rate, in statives, no change of state/quality is admitted, so that no endpoint is given by affectedness. Therefore, Fujimura's claim, which is based on the change brought to the object, does not work.

I claim that an alternative answer to (16 and 17) is that 'war-eru' in (16a) and 'ande-shima-e-masu' in (17a) individuate the object highly while 'tabe-rareru' in (16b) and 'am-e-masu' in (17b) cause the object to be less individuated. Therefore, ga matches 'tabe-rareru', and 'am-e-masu' whereas o suits 'war-eru', and 'ande-shima-e-masu'.

Secondly, the approach using the notion of individuation is more general in explaining ga/o

conversions than Kuno's (1973), Muraki's (1975), and Sugamoto's (1982) approaches.

(18) a. Watasi wa mizu ga nomi-tai.

I Top water Nom drink-Des
'I want to drink water.'
b. Watasi wa mizu o nomi-tai.
Acc
'I want to drink water.'

According to Kuno, ga is used if mizu is considered to be the object of the derivative as a whole, that is, nomi-tai, whereas o is used if mizu is treated as the object of only the transitive verb stem, that is, nomi. For Muraki, ga cooccurs with the focus on mizu as in (18a), while o cooccurs with the focus on nomi as in (18b). Sugamoto states that the sentence structure for (18) is given as [NP1[[NP2 Pt]sP1]s]s, which transforms to look like [NP1[NP2(Pt-)P1]s]s by predicate merger (Pt = verb stem nomi, P1 = stative suffix -tai, NP1 = watasi, NP2 = mizu). NP2 is predicated by (Pt-)P1 and then marked with ga due to the intransitiveness. On the other hand, if the transitiveness of Pt prevails over the intransitiveness of Pt, NP2 is marked with o.

The shift between transitive verb stems and complex predicates as a whole in (18) cannot apply to simple predicates such as suki 'like', kowai 'fear', iru 'need', etc. In contrast, the notion of individuation can explain not only complex, but also simple predicates, whether the individuation is encoded linguistically or non-linguistically. Notice that aru 'exist' does not allow the ga/o alternations as shown in (15). The lack of case alternations with aru and the difficulty of case alternations with iru 'need' are left to future research.

The schema for the ga/o alternations in Japanese is given as follows:

(19)

stative

high individuation low individuation non-stative ACC ACC MOM ACC

The Nominative appears under the conditions: stative and low individuation. Otherwise, the object is omarked.

#### 3 Passivizability in English

Rice 1985 discusses atypical passives in English and claims that a transitive prototype should be defined based on subjective as well as objective encoding of the situation referred to by a given sentence rather than only based on objective encoding as given in Hopper & Thompson's case. In other words, for Rice, Hopper & Thompson's transitivity components are necessary but not sufficient conditions as determining factors for passivizability in English sentences.

Rice 1985 turns to some psychological processes in producing or parsing given sentences, which she calls 'subjective construal of events' (Rice 1985:431). To be sure, every meaning accompanies its psychological processes of parsing or producing but the psychological processes are normally considered not to affect the formation of the meaning of a sentence. For example, the mathematical expression 'One and one makes two' accompanies some psychological processes which vary from situation to situation, and consequently cannot be involved in the meaning of the expression. However, Rice 1985 claims that some concurrent psychological endpoint enables some atypical sentences to be passivized and that such endpoints are not given within Hopper & Thompson's criteria. My hypothesis is that passivizability in English is conditioned by [+/-bounded], which is conditioned by the degree of individuation.

First, Rice 1985 discusses prepositional verb constructions with reference to passivizability. Observe,

- (20) a. John was rushed to by Mary, who needed advice.
  - b. \*The countryside was rushed to by Mary, who needed a rest.

(20a) is grammatical but (20b) is out. By reanalysis, 'rush to' works as a transitive verb in (20a) but does not in (20b). According to Rice, the distinction between the discreteness or specificity of 'John' and the diffuseness of 'the countryside' plays a significant role in passivizability in (20). Also, she claims that the more diffused or spacious the endpoint is, the less likely it will serve as a participant to the action and the more likely it will be construed as a setting. This is exactly the same as what the notion of individuation in Hopper & Thompson's sense means.

Second, Rice discusses imperfectives, which include conceptual, symmetrical and configurational imperfectives. 'Know' and 'mind' are examples of conceptual imperfectives, 'resemble' is an example of a symmetrical imperfective, and 'enclose' and 'occupy' are examples of configurational imperfectives. The following are examples of conceptual imperfectives.

- (21) a. \*The couple next door is known by John.14
  - b. ?The couple next door was known by John.
  - c. ?The couple next door is not known by John.
  - d. The couple next door is thoroughly/barely known by John.
  - e. The couple next door is only known by John.
  - f. The couple next door should be known by John (since he married their daughter)!

(21a) is ungrammatical. However, the grammaticality is more or less improved in (21b-f). As Rice points out, what is interesting is that the addition of negative adverbs 'not' in (21c) and 'barely' in (21d) or an irrealis modal 'should' in (21f) are expected to decrease the transitivity of the sentences but to the contrary, they enhance transitivity. Rice claims that the reasons for the improved grammaticality in (21b-f) are that an endpoint is subjectively superimposed on

the objective reading of each sentence. However, the differences in topicality are observed between (21a) and (21b-f). Likewise, in Japanese translation of (21), the subjects in (21b-f) are required to be marked with a topic marker wa. From this, we could infer that the subject in (21a) is neutral whereas the subjects in (21b-f) are topicalized. According to Timberlake 1975a, 1977, topicality is one of the components of individuation. Therefore, the degree of individuation is higher in (21b-f) than in (21a). This is why (21b-f) are somewhat passivizable in comparison to (21a). Furthermore, if the situation referred to by the predicate is more individuated, it is also [+bounded] while if it is less individuated, it is also [-bounded]. Therefore, the boundedness is a determining factor for passivizability in English, too. So far I have discussed only conceptual imperfectives. The same arguments are more clearly applicable to symmetrical and configurational imperfectives:

- (22) a. \*The swimming pool is contained by the yard.
  - b. The swimming pool is enclosed by the yard.

Rice 1985:432 claims that the perimeter of the swimming pool is traced mentally. From this, we may infer that such mental tracing brings about a conceptual boundedness. Rather, the swimming pool is more distinct from the background, namely, the yard, in (22b) than in (22a). The swimming pool in (22b) is more individuated. Thus, the subjective encoding can be paraphrased by the notion of individuation.

#### 4 Summary

Boundedness is the determinant for the transitive alternations in statives. Nom/Acc alternations in Japanese and passivizability in English are both conditioned by the same determinant. However, the problem is how the object can be bounded. In statives, the notion of affectedness is powerless in that if something is affected, it requires some change, which cannot be given in statives by

definition. The entity cannot be affected in statives but it could be individuated, either completely or incompletely. If the entity is individuated completely, that is, distinctively differentiated from the background, it is [+bounded]. On the contrary, if it is not completely individuated, it is [-bounded]. In short, the transitive alternations in Japanese and English are correlated with the degrees of individuation.

#### NOTES

- 'I am grateful to John Haig, William O'Grady, Roderick Jacobs, Patricia Lee and Greg Lee for useful comments, as well as to an anonymous KWPL reviewer. All errors are my own.
- 'The couple next door is known to John' is OK, as pointed out by O'Grady (personal communication).
- $^{\circ}$  In Japanese, an indirect object is marked with a dative case marker ni as follows:

Watasi wa Taroo ni hon o ageru.

I Top Taro Dat book Acc give
I give Taro a book.'

See also Shibatani 1978.

- $^{\rm 3}$  Following Vendler 1957 and Comrie 1976, I assume that a state or stative predicate is characterized by no change of state/quality.
- Ga/o alternations are elusive or rather not absolute but relative, but if we use a contrastive pair, that is, a/bsentences, the choices of the case markers seem to become more stable. I adopt this method from Fujimura 1989, which statistically deals with the relevant data.
- $^{5}\,$  Makino 1975-6 claims that ga appears in impersonal potentials while o occurs in personal potentials as in
  - (la) Watasi wa hon ga kak-eru (impersonal potential). I Top book Nom write-Pot 'I can write a book.'

- (1) Hanako wa konna tiisana inu ga/(?)o kowain-desu-ka. Hanako Top such little dog Nom/Acc fear-Pol-Q 'Is Hanako afraid of such a little dog?'
- <sup>16</sup> As O'Grady (personal communication) suggests, the generalizations above, I also feel, should be based on statistically broader observation. This is left to my future research.
- Hopper & Thompson 1980 define individuation as follows: The component of individuation refers both to the distinctness of the patient from the A (transitive subject) and from its own backgrounds. The components are given by Timberlake 1975a, 1977 as participant hierarchies: proper/common, concrete/abstract, count/mass, animate/inanimate, singular/plural, definite/indefinite, neutral/emphatic negation, topicalized/neutral and modified/unmodified. Hopper & Thompson as well as Timberlake claims that the term on the left in each pair above is more individuated than that on the right. In other words, a participant is more distinct from the event on the left than on the right. Timberlake adopts the distinction between a participant and a narrated event from Jakobson 1971, who claims that in Russian the genitive of negation indicates quantification, that is, a limitation on the extent to which a participant participates in the narrated event (Timberlake 1975a, 1977). And Timberlake also points out that the individuation is the inverse of the quantification. The more the participant is individuated, the less it is quantified and vice versa.
- For (16-7), I use more/less acceptable instead of more/less preferred with no change in meaning.
- Jarkey 1999 proposes three determining factors for Nom/Acc alternations in Japanese statives: derived-underived distinction, intentionality, and individuation, where the priority decreases in this order. In contrast, I claim that the notion of individuation is the only determining factor for Nom/Acc alternation in Japanese statives.
- '4' 'This fact is known by John' is OK, as pointed out by Jacobs (personal communication). In this case, the subject is modified by a demonstrative 'this', which makes the subject highly individuated.

(1b) Watasi wa hon o kak-eru (personal potential).
 I Top book Acc write-Pot
'I can write a book.'

Makino points out that in case of personal potentials the situation expressed by the predicate is controllable by the speaker while in case of impersonal potentials the situation is beyond the speaker's volitional control as shown in

> (2) Watasi wa sizen ni (sura-sura, tomedo naku) si I Top spontaneously smoothly without a break poem ga/??o kak-eru. Nom/Acc write-Pot 'I can write a poem spontaneously (smoothly, without a

Adverbial phrases meaning that the situation is selfuncontrollable, namely, sizen ni, sura-sura, and tomedo naku cooccur with ga and not with o.

However, if we admit my claim that the o-marked object is high in individuation while the ga-marked one is low in individuation (I will discuss this later), the Transitivity Hypothesis (Hopper & Thompson 1980) predicts that ga should cooccur with impersonal potentials, which are (-volitional) while o should cooccur with personal potentials, which is [+volitional]. Notice that volitionality commits itself to the different sentence meanings. Makino's claim is deducible from my own claim.

- <sup>6</sup> Asahi or Miller is more general than an individual beer but more specific than beer as a class. The comparison between Asahi and Miller presupposes a more general class, that is, beer as a class.
- Shibatani 1975 and Haig 1979 argue for the necessity of o-case marking in ambiguous environments where the distance between an object and its predicate is so long as to cause the hearer or the reader to mistake the second ga-marked NP for a subject. I understand that when a lot of phrases are placed between the object and the predicate, the distance is large and when few are placed, it is small. This phenomenon is called antiambiguity.
- $^{\rm N}$  Susi in (13c)' becomes even more individuated if de (Loc) is replaced by no (Gen) as in
  - Watasi wa miti no mukoogawa no mise no susi ??ga/o tabe-tai.
- Most people may not agree with my judgment on (14), but the preference for o may increase in the following sentence:

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