

The Acquisition of Japanese Nominal Modifying Constructions

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By

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P U B L I S H I N G

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by Hanako Fujino

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Charts	ix
Preface	x
Introduction	1
List of Abbreviations	4
Chapter One.....	5
The Genitive Construction	
1.1 Types of Relationships.....	5
1.2 Variations of the Genitive Construction	9
1.3 The Identity of <i>No</i>	10
1.4 Summary	15
Chapter Two.....	16
Adjectival Modification	
2.1 Canonical Adjectives	16
2.2 Nominal Adjectives	18
2.3 Canonical Adjective versus Nominal Adjectives.....	21
2.4 The Clausal Nature of Japanese Adjectives	23
2.5 Summary	27
Chapter Three	29
Sentential Modifiers	
3.1 Some Basic Properties	29
3.2 The Base-Generation Approach.....	31
3.3 The Movement Approach	38
3.4 A Note on the Status of the Fronted Clause.....	52
3.5 Summary	55

Chapter Four	56
The Adnominal Form and the Particle <i>No</i>	
4.1 The Adnominal Form.....	56
4.2 Syntactic Analyses of the Adnominal Form	65
4.3 The Nature of the Particle <i>No</i>	69
4.4 PF Requirements on Clauses.....	75
4.5 Summary	85
Chapter Five	87
The Acquisition of Sentential Modifiers	
5.1 Previous Studies in SLA	87
5.2 The Overgeneration of <i>No</i> in L1A	90
5.3 Clausal Typing and <i>No</i> -Overgeneration.....	98
5.4 Summary	100
Chapter Six	103
The Studies	
6.1 Preview	103
6.2 Corpus Analysis	105
6.3 Experimental Study.....	131
6.4 Summary	146
Chapter Seven.....	148
General Discussion	
7.1 Overview.....	148
7.2 On the Development of the Adnominal Form.....	149
7.3 On the Development of Sentential Modifiers	151
7.4 On the Overgeneration of <i>No</i>	152
7.5 Crosslinguistic Differences	159
Conclusions	161
Appendix A	167
Appendix B.....	168
Appendix C.....	171
Notes.....	183
Bibliography	192
Index	203

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 6-1	Slide 1
Fig. 6-2	Slide 2
Fig. 6-3	Slide 3
Fig. 6-4	Slide 4
Fig. 6-5	Slide 5
Fig. 6-6	Slide 6
Fig. 6-7	Slide 7

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5-1	Frequency of verbal and adjectival inflections in one mother's speech to her child at 1;6 years (Rispoli 1981, via Clancy 1985)
Table 6-1	Production of volitional and conditional forms at I-level
Table 6-2	Production of volitional and conditional forms at I-level
Table 6-3	Results by type of sentential modifier in L and H group
Table 6-4	Results by type of sentential modifier in C group
Table A-1	Personal data of the participants
Table A-2	Personal data of the control group

LIST OF CHARTS

- Chart 6-1 Number of finite verbs and adjectives
- Chart 6-2 Distribution of different forms at N-Level
- Chart 6-3 Use of different inflectional forms at N-Level
- Chart 6-4 Distribution of different forms at I-Level
- Chart 6-5 Use of different inflectional forms at I-Level
- Chart 6-6 Distribution of different forms at A-Level
- Chart 6-7 Use of different inflectional forms at A-Level
- Chart 6-8 Production of sentential modifiers at I-Level
- Chart 6-9 Production of sentential modifiers at A-Level
- Chart 6-10 Production of sentential modifiers with the embedded
predicate in the “base” form
- Chart 6-11 Production of sentential modifiers when the embedded
predicate was a “+1” form
- Chart 6-12 Production of sentential modifiers when the embedded
predicate was a “+2” form
- Chart 7-1 Occurrences of the *no da* construction
- Chart A-1 Use of different inflectional forms in sentential modifiers
of KI
- Chart A-2 Use of different inflectional forms in sentential modifiers
of EI

PREFACE

This book is based on my doctoral dissertation completed in July 2011 at the Ortega y Gasset University Research Institute (Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset), attached to the Complutense University of Madrid.

While studying as a PhD student, I was teaching Japanese to undergraduate students. One day, something curious caught my attention. We were studying adjectives and the students were practicing how to modify nouns. The construction in Japanese is [Adj N]. However, some of the students started making phrases inserting a *no*: [Adj *no* N]. *No* is a particle in Japanese that, for beginners, roughly corresponds to the preposition *of* in English and the students had seen it earlier while learning the genitive construction. But there was no such example in the textbooks and I, a native speaker, had never said such a thing. It was simply puzzling why some students, not just one, had started doing this on their own, and somewhat systematically. This error continued well after we finished the lesson on adjectives.

Later on in the course, nominal complements, adverbial relatives and relative clauses were taught. Here again, some students started inserting a *no* between the modifying clause and the head noun. It happened in the same way as before: there was no positive evidence but more than one student started doing so and the error persisted. There had to be something common among these constructions that made the interlanguage grammar of the students demand the presence of a non-target-like *no*.

Looking into the literature, I found that a very similar phenomenon had been observed in first language acquisition (L1A). I also learned that learners of other L1s exhibited similar errors in second language acquisition (SLA). This suggested that despite the apparent differences between L1A and SLA on the one hand, and crosslinguistic differences in SLA depending on the L1 on the other, the same principles restricted the acquisition of modifying constructions in Japanese. In other words, this curious phenomenon was possibly evidence that Universal Grammar (UG) restricts SLA in the same way as it does in L1A.

However, none of the previous studies in SLA had looked closely into this phenomenon nor given a principled account on it. It seemed fundamental to understand the phenomenon in detail in order to find the

answer to this question.

As far as I know, this book is the first to document on the general course of acquisition of Japanese sentential modifiers in SLA. It is also the first to focus on the “adnominal form,” which is commonly used in these constructions. We have studied it from its historical development to its role in sentential modifiers and furthermore, its relation with the particle *no*.

I believe that this book will be of interest to other Japanese language instructors who have been equally puzzled with this phenomenon in their classrooms, as well as to L1A and SLA researchers in the field. I hope that the work presented here would inspire others to further investigation and towards a better understanding of language.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Juana Muñoz Licerias from the University of Ottawa for her guidance and expertise in the elaboration of my dissertation. I am also very grateful to Luigi Rizzi and Adriana Belletti for their precious time and insightful comments during my stay at the Interdepartmental Center for Cognitive Studies of Language (CISCL) of the University of Siena (Italy) during the winter of 2008-2009. I am also thankful to Masaru Kajita, former professor of Sophia University (Tokyo), for guiding me into the marvelous world of Linguistics, and to Yukio Otsu of Keio University (Tokyo), who has always listened to my ideas with infinite patience and encouraged me through the time that I had left my academic studies aside.

I am grateful to Masayuki Komachi and Tomoko Monou for their help in obtaining the references that were not available in Spain, to Lia Walsh for her linguistic assistance, to all the volunteers who participated in my experiment, to my colleagues at Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid for their information on various languages, and to the enthusiastic colleagues at CISCL for their helpful discussions. Last, but not least, I am immensely grateful to my parents for their love and faith in me and to my dear friends for all their support and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

This book deals with the second language acquisition (SLA) of nominal modifying constructions in Japanese, in particular, the general course of acquisition of adjectival phrases, nominal complements, adverbial relatives, and restrictive relative clauses.

In SLA research, there have been many studies on Japanese relative clauses, especially on the question of whether the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (Keenan and Comrie 1977) is valid for predicting the order of acquisition in Japanese. However, the general course of acquisition of nominal modification constructions has not been documented. We feel that it is important to have a general picture of the course of acquisition for a better understanding of individual phenomena that occur during this process. We have also incorporated recent developments of syntactic theory into our proposals and tested them using corpus and experimental data.

It has also been noted that L2 learners of Japanese occasionally insert *no* between the sentential modifier and the head noun when native Japanese does not require it. This phenomenon, which we will call the “*no*-overgeneration phenomenon,” is intriguing in several respects: first, it is exhibited across different types of sentential modifiers; second, it is exhibited among L2 learners of typologically different L1s (English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish L2 learners, among others); and third, a very similar phenomenon has been observed in first language acquisition (L1A). However, no principled account of SLA has been given in this respect.

In this book, we will deal with the issues mentioned above and provide some answers to the questions raised by this phenomenon. We believe that the answers may have interesting consequences. By investigating the reason why the phenomenon is observed across different constructions, we may discover the common factor or the mechanism that plays an important role in modifying constructions in general. The nature of this factor or mechanism may tell us why the phenomenon is observed among learners of different L1s and finally, we would like to determine how similar the phenomenon in SLA is to that in L1A, because if they prove to be of the same nature, that would mean that Universal Grammar is effective in this aspect of SLA.

We will start by establishing the syntactic analyses of the constructions in question. In Chapter 1, we will deal with the genitive construction. This construction expresses a relation between two nouns, such as possession. We will examine this construction in Japanese from a semantic point of view and discuss the role that the intervening particle *no* plays in it.

In Chapter 2, we will discuss the adjectival construction. There are two types of adjectives in Japanese and both are inflected for tense. We will discuss on its clausal nature with various pieces of evidence.

In Chapter 3, we will deal with sentential modifiers, in particular, nominal complements, gapless relatives, and relative clauses. There has been an ongoing debate on whether Japanese restrictive relatives are base-generated or derived by movement. We will review the arguments that supported the base-generation approach, and show that recent developments and a closer examination of the initial arguments suggest, on the contrary, that they are derived by A-bar movement.

In Chapter 4, we will look into two language particular elements that play important roles in Japanese modifying constructions: the adnominal form and the particle *no*. We will contrast the adnominal form in Classical Japanese with that in Modern Japanese and see how its functions have changed over the years. By elaborating on Cheng's (1991) Clausal Typing Hypothesis, we will define the role that the adnominal form plays in the derivation of sentential modifiers and how it is related to the particle *no* that is inserted in some cases. We will also look at cases where the embedded clause lacks an overt head and try to account for the presence of *no* on phonological grounds.

With the theoretical bases established, we will proceed to questions on language acquisition. In Chapter 5, we will review previous studies on L1A and SLA and identify the similarities observed in the two cases with respect to the acquisition of nominal modifying constructions. We will elaborate a hypothesis for the case in SLA based on our theoretical analyses.

In Chapter 6, we will present two studies. The first one is an analysis of corpus data in which the participants are adult L1 English and adult L1 Korean speakers. The second one is an elicited production task in which the participants are adult L1 Spanish speakers. The results of the studies will provide us with information about the general course of the acquisition of Japanese modifying constructions and the manifestation of the *no*-overgeneration phenomenon in SLA.

In Chapter 7, we present a general discussion on the studies and the results obtained. We will examine whether the findings support our hypothesis and how we may account for the other facts encountered in the

studies. We will also discuss whether the same hypotheses account for the case in L1A and whether there are significant differences depending on the L1 of the learner.

Finally, in Conclusions, we will summarize the work carried out in this book and point at some issues that remain for future investigation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acc: accusative
Adn: adnominal
Aff: affirmative
Ass: assertion
Cl: classifier
Cnc: conclusive
Cnd: conditional
Cnt: continuous
Cnj: conjunction
Cpl: compellation
Dat: dative
Emp: emphatic
Exc: exclamatory
Gen: genitive
Ger: gerundive
Hon: honorific
Imp: imperative
Int: interrogative
Lit: literally
Loc: locative
Mid: middle morpheme
Obl: oblique
Pas: passive
Prf: perfective
Pol: polite form
Pre: present tense
Prh: prohibition
Pst: past tense
Pt: particle
Rel: relative
Ret: retrospective
Sup: suppositional
Top: topic
Vol: volitional

CHAPTER ONE

THE GENITIVE CONSTRUCTION

Japanese is a head-final language. Thus all the nominal modifying constructions have the head noun at the final position. The genitive construction has the following structure, where N_1 is the modifying noun and N_2 is the head noun:

- (1) N_1 *no* N_2

Traditionally, *no*, which stands between the modifying noun and the head noun, has been analyzed as the genitive Case marker. But as we will see, there are cases in which the modifying phrase does not need to be Case-marked. In fact, the status of *no* has been long debated and still has not reached a consensus.

1.1 Types of Relationships

There are more than fifteen types of semantic relationships that hold between the two nouns in the Japanese genitive construction (Teramura 1991). Typically, the first noun modifies or adds information to the second¹:

- (2) *Possession:*
Taro *no* hon
Taro Gen book
Taro's book
- (3) *Part-whole:*
zoo *no* hana
elephant Gen nose
nose of elephant

- (4) *Subgroup:*
 saboten no mi
 cactus Gen fruit
cactus fruit

In some others, the relationships are pragmatic, requiring certain common knowledge:

- (5) London no ane
 London Gen older-sister
my older sister in London (=who lives in London)
- (6) kamera no Nikon
 camera Gen Nikon
Nikon of cameras (=Nikon, that is known for cameras)

Metaphors can also be expressed by the genitive construction:

- (7) tetu no onna
 iron Gen woman
iron lady
- (8) yuki no hada
 snow Gen skin
skin like snow

Nouns that have minimal semantic content of their own, such as *koto* “matter” or *mono* “thing,” are called *keesiki meesi* “formal nouns” (Matsushita 1928)². When these occur as the head noun, the modifying noun serves as its complement:

- (9) Taro no koto
 Taro Gen matter
matter about Taro
- (10) Taro no mono
 Taro Gen thing
Taro’s things

The head noun may also be a noun that is semantically “partial,” in the sense that it has certain semantic content, but needs to be specified:

- (11) kankyoo no mondai
 environment Gen problem
environmental problems
- (12) piano konkuuru no yuusyooosya
 piano contest Gen winner
winner of the piano contest

In (11), *mondai* “problem” tells us that there is an issue, but the word itself does not convey any information on what the issue is about. Likewise, in (12), *yuusyooosya* “winner” does not mean much if we do not know what the person was the winner of.

Direction words such as *ue* “up” and *naka* “inside” are nouns in Japanese³ and can also participate in a genitive construction. In this case, *N*₁ serves as the “ground” for *N*₂ to fix its denotation:

- (13) tukue no ue
 table Gen on
on the table
- (14) kaban no naka
 bag Gen inside
inside the bag

The relationship between the two nouns can also be grammatical:

- (15) *Subject-predicate:*
 wakamono no zisatu
 the young Gen suicide
suicide of the young
- (16) *Subject-object:*
 DNA no kenkyuu
 DNA Gen investigation
investigation of DNA

Apposition is also expressed in the [*N*₁ *no* *N*₂] configuration:

- (17) sakka no Tanaka
 writer Gen Tanaka
Tanaka, the writer

Tokieda (1950) and Okutsu (1978) argue that *no* in this case should be analyzed as the adnominal form of the copular verb *da*, because the construction can be paraphrased as a copular sentence, as shown in (18):

- (18) Tanaka-wa sakka da.
 Tanaka-Top writer is
Tanaka is a writer.

Their claim is supported by the fact that when two nouns are coordinated to occupy the position of N_1 , they are joined by *de*, which is the continuative form (*renyookei*) of *da*, and not *to* “and,” the conjoining particle for nouns. This is illustrated in the following:

- (19) *Coordination in an appositive [N_1 no N_2]:*
 [sakka **de** hyooronka] no Tanaka
 writer is.Cnt commentator Gen Tanaka
Tanaka, the writer and commentator
- (20) *Coordination in a predicative [N_1 no N_2]:*
 [mati **to** mura] no hakai
 city and village Gen destruction
destruction of the city and the village

Finally, when the head noun (N_2) is adverbial, such as *toki* “time” or *tokoro* “place,” N_1 complements N_2 and the interpretation is similar to that of an adverbial relative clause:

- (21) byooki no toki
 illness Gen time
when (I am) ill
- (22) rusu no tokoro
 absence Gen place
In one's absence

As we can see in the translation of the examples above, many of the semantic relationships that can be expressed by the Japanese genitive construction cannot be done so in English.

1.2 Variations of the Genitive Construction

In Japanese, postpositional phrases can also participate in the genitive construction:

- (23) [PP *Pari kara*] no [NP *hikooki*]
 Paris from Gen plane
 plane from Paris

A note on the grammatical category of “postpositions” is in order here, because morphologically, they are particles in Japanese. Functionally, they are Case markers but they are different from prepositions in English because the equivalent construction in English is ungrammatical:

- (24) an airplane (*of) from Paris

Another difference is that English prepositions can be stranded, as shown in (25). *The school* is interpreted as the complement of *to*, in the position occupied by \emptyset :

- (25) the school that he went to \emptyset

In Japanese, however, this may not be. (26a) is an ordinary phrase where *gakkoo* “school” is the complement of *e* “to.” (26b) is the semantic equivalent of (25), but *e* “to” cannot be left stranded and must be omitted:

- (26) a. *Kare-ga gakkoo e itta.*
 he-Nom school to went
 He went to school.
- b. [*kare-ga* \emptyset (**e*) *itta*] *gakkoo*
 he-Nom to went school
 school that he went

Thus, despite the fact that these particles are commonly referred to as “postpositions,” they are very different from prepositions.

Quantificational adverbs and quantifiers can also appear in the position normally occupied by N_1 :

(27) [AP takusan] no [NP hon]
 many Gen book
 many books

(28) [QP san-satu] no [NP hon]
 three-Cl Gen book
 three books

Here the relationship is “quantification” rather than “modification,” because the first part denotes the quantity of the head noun. Not all quantifiers establish the same relationship with the head noun:

(29) [QP san-kilo] no [NP hon]
 three-kg Gen book
 book (that weighs) three kilograms

In (29), *san-kilo* “three kilograms” describes how heavy the book is, so the relationship is one of modification.

In sum, the genitive construction in Japanese is peculiar both semantically and syntactically. Semantically, a very wide range of relationships can be expressed (possession, part-whole, subgroup, pragmatic-social, metaphoric, complement-specification, grammatical, adverbial, quantification, etc.). Syntactically, the modifier is not limited to nominal phrases and postpositional phrases and quantificational phrases are also valid. These properties raise the question on the identity of *no*. Evidently, it is not just a genitive Case marker, as we have indicated in the glosses. We will discuss this issue in the following section, starting with a review on the literature.

1.3 The Identity of *No*

1.3.1 *The Problem*

The particle *no* that relates the two nouns in the genitive construction has long been analyzed as a genitive Case marker (Matsushita 1928). In Minimalism, it has been proposed that *no* is a D-element with a Case feature that triggers the movement of the modifying NP to Spec-DP (Zushi 1996, Whitman 1998, 1999). There, its Case feature is checked against the corresponding feature on the NP. According to this analysis, our earlier example (2) has the following syntactic structure:

- Taro's book*

In traditional Japanese grammar, *no* is classified as a conjoining particle along with *to* “and” and *ka* “or.” It associates two nominal expressions in a way that the first one modifies the second one. Saito and Murasugi (1990:296) propose the following rule that descriptively captures this aspect of *no*:

- Y, Z are (projections of) N or D.

(32) MOD Insertion: $[_{XP} Y X] \rightarrow [_{XP} Y \text{ MOD } X]$
 where: (i) X is some projection of [+N, -V] or [+D];
 (ii) Y is any maximal projection modifying X;
 (iii) MOD in modern Standard Japanese is *no*
 (Kitagawa 2005)⁶

Both Saito and Murasugi's (1990) rule in (31) and Kitagawa and Ross's in (32) have the advantage of unifying the different types of phrases involved in the genitive construction, but fail to account for the Case-marking property of *no*. Furthermore, "modification" is just one of the many semantic relationships that hold in the Japanese genitive

construction, so statement (ii) in (32) would be too restrictive.

In sum, the problem regarding the identity of *no* lies in capturing its multifaceted properties, since in some cases it is a Case marker and in other cases it is a “modification marker.” If we assume it to be a genitive Case marker, we would have to posit another *no* for the constructions where Case-marking is not involved. On the contrary, if we assume it to be a modification marker, we would have to account for its Case-marking function when it attaches to nominal phrases. Needless to say, the ideal situation would be to attribute the different properties to one single *no*.

1.3.2 The Null-Headed Genitive Construction

The genitive construction can lack an overt head, and when it does, the head has a pronominal interpretation:

- (33) (Talking about movies,
 [Kinoo no]-wa omosirokatta.
 yesterday Pt -Top was interesting
Yesterday's one(=movie) was interesting.

Adjectival phrases in Japanese may also lack an overt head:

- (34) (Talking about movies,
 Kinoo [omosiroi no]-o mita.
 yesterday interesting Pt-Acc saw
(I) saw an interesting one (=movie) yesterday.

Traditionally, *no* in these cases has been analyzed as a pronominal element (Okutsu 1974, Kamio 1983, Mihara 1994). The fact that it generally corresponds to *one* in English, as the translation of the examples (33) and (34) shows, has also given support to this hypothesis.

Okutsu (1974) argues that there is an operation called “*no-no* haplology” (*karyaku no no*), where one of two consecutive occurrences of *no* is deleted. He assumes that the above constructions are headed by full NPs in the underlying structure. Then, the full NPs are substituted by the pronominal *no*:

- (35) a. [omosiroi NP]->[omoshiroi *no*]
 b. [kinoo no NP]->[kinoo ***no no***]

When the modifier is an adjective, as in (35a), substitution of the NP by *no* gives the desired result. When it is a noun, as in (35b), it yields two

no's. *No-no* haplology then applies and deletes one of them.⁷

However, as Kamio (1983)⁸ points out, *no* differs from other pronouns in several respects. First, unlike other pronouns, it cannot form an NP alone:

- (36) ***No**-o katta.
Pt-Acc bought
(I) *bought one*.

Second, it cannot combine with determiners⁹:

- (37) *[Ano **no**]-wa omosiroi.
that Pt-Top is interesting
That one is interesting.

The above properties suggest that *no* is a bound morpheme, but Japanese does not have clitic-like pronominals and such an element would be unique. Moreover, pronouns usually have paradigms. Even in Japanese, where there is no inflection for person, number and gender, personal pronouns have a paradigm: *watasi* (1st person singular), *anata* (2nd person singular), *kare/kanozyo* (3rd person singular), etc. So, it is unlikely that *no* is a bound pronominal element.

In the previous section, we briefly saw Kitagawa and Ross (1982) and Kitagawa's (2005) analyses of *no* as a Prenominal Modification Marker (MOD). In short, the latter is a morphological marker that indicates that the preceding phrase, namely, the one it is attached to, modifies the following NP. Under this hypothesis, what occupies the position of the head in the null-headed genitive construction is a null pronoun (*e*: phonologically null category):

- (38) a. kinoo no *e*
 yesterday MOD

 b. omosiroi no *e*
 interesting MOD

This analysis naturally accounts for the properties presented above. First, there is no need to stipulate “*no-no* haplology,” because the head position is occupied by an empty pronoun in the underlying structure and no substitution takes place. Second, *no* does not stand alone nor combine with demonstratives because it is simply a marker of prenominal modification.

It also accounts for why null-headed genitive constructions are not possible when the head is intended as an adverbial noun, as in (39), or a direction word, as in (40), because a null pronoun is not adverbial nor prepositional:

- (39) [Gakusei no toki/*e]-wa tanosikatta.
 student Gen time -Top was fun
lit: The time of student was fun.
(=It was fun when I was a student.)
- (40) Simbun-wa [tukue no ue/*e]-ni aru.
 newspaper-Top desk Gen on -Loc is
The newspaper is on the desk.

Similarly, the null-headed genitive construction is not possible when the head noun is intended to be a formal noun (i.e. a noun that is a place holder and has no semantic content of its own) such as *koto* “thing/matter.” This is expected if we assume that the head is a null pronoun, because a formal noun could not serve as its antecedent. In fact, the acceptability of a formal noun as the antecedent improves if certain semantic content can be inferred. Observe the following:

- (41) a. [Kimi no koto/*e]-ga simpai-da.
 you Gen matter -Nom am worried
(I) am worried about you.
- b. [Gakkoo no koto/*e]-ga zenzen katazuka-nai.
 school Gen matter -Nom totally get done not
The matters of the university are not getting done at all.
- c. [watasitati no koto/e]-ga barete-simat-ta.
 we Gen matter -Nom has been exposed
Our matter (=secret) has been exposed.

In (41a), *koto* is merely a placeholder because it has no meaning at all. In (41b), we know by *katazukanai* “not get done” that the object is something we can get done, for example, a job or a list of things to do. The null pronoun is acceptable provided that there is some contextual information, but would be marginal otherwise. In (41c), something that is ours and has regrettably been exposed (*bareru* “be exposed,” *simatta* is perfective with a connotation of regret) is understood as a secret, so a null

pronoun is acceptable even without any context.

Thus, the hypothesis that *no* in the null-headed genitive construction has the same status as in the overt case and a null pronoun occupies the head position is less controversial than the traditional view that *no* itself is a pronominal element. We will adopt this view for our analysis of the null-headed genitive construction. However, the problem of the identity of *no*, illustrated in the previous section remains unsolved. Kitagawa and Ross's (1982) proposal to treat *no* uniformly as a Prenominal Modification Marker (MOD) descriptively accounts for the facts, but does not provide us with answers.

1.4 Summary

In this chapter, we have presented and discussed about the first of the pronominal modifying constructions in Japanese, namely, the genitive construction. We have seen that it is unique in many ways. First, it hosts a wide variety of relationships, of which typical ones such as possession, part-whole relation, modification, and subject-object relationship only constitute the core cases. Second, the pronominal modifier is not limited to noun phrases: it may also be a quantifier phrase (involving a quantificational adverb or a quantifier), or a postpositional phrase. Thus, contrary to the standard assumption that *no* in this construction is a genitive Case marker, it does not always fulfill this function. This observation led us to question the identity of *no*, together with its status when the construction lacks an overt head noun.

With regard to the status of *no* in the null-headed genitive construction, the traditional view has been that *no* is a pronominal element and the construction is derived by the application of a rule called *no-no* haplology (Okutsu 1974). We have argued against this view on the grounds that if that were the case, *no* would be a unique element of Japanese morphology. Alternatively, we have supported Kitagawa and Ross's (1982) (and Kitagawa 2005) view that *no* is a Prenominal Modification Marker (MOD) whose function is to overtly indicate that the preceding phrase modifies the following NP. This analysis has the advantage of doing without the rule of *no-no* haplology and capturing the null case in parallel with the overt case. Furthermore, it can account for instances of the genitive construction where Case-marking is not involved. However, the question of how *no* may mark genitive Case in some cases and not in others remains for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

ADJECTIVAL MODIFICATION

In Japanese, there are two types of adjectives: canonical adjectives (*keiyoosi*) and nominal adjectives (*keiyoodoosi*) (the English terms are taken from Nishiyama 1999). Their differences lie in their origin, their conjugational pattern, and their compatibility with certain suffixes and modifiers. In both cases, the adjective (and the copula) bears tense, and is thus considered to have a clausal structure.

2.1 Canonical Adjectives

Let us first look at canonical adjectives (*keiyoosi*), such as the one depicted in (1):

- (1) a. Kono hon-wa **omosiro-i**.
this book-Top interesting-Cnc
This book is interesting.
- b. Kono hon-wa **omosiro-i-desu**.
this book-Top interesting-Cnc-Pol
This book is interesting. (polite speech)
- c. **Omosiro-i** hon-ga aru.
interesting-Adn book-Nom is
(There) is an interesting book.

When the adjective is used as a predicate, as in (1a), it appears in the conclusive form (Cnc, *syuusikei*). It marks the end of the sentence and normally appears at sentence-final position. As shown in (1b), the adjective may also be accompanied by the politeness (Pol) suffix *-desu*. When the adjective is used as a modifier, as in (1c), it takes the adnominal form (Adn, *rentaikei*)¹. *Rentaikei* literally means “form that follows a nominal element” (i.e. *ren* “continue,” *tai* “nominal,” *kei* “form”) and signals that the clause in which it is contained is a modifier to the

adjoining noun. In Modern Japanese, the conclusive form and the adnominal form are identical except for in the copula², but they serve different functions and are subject to selection³.

Canonical adjectives are inflected for tense. When they are inflected for past tense, the suffix *-ta* is attached:

- (2) a. Kono hon-wa **omosi-ro-kat-ta**.
 this book-Top interesting-Cnt-Pst.Cnc
 This book was interesting.
- b. Kono hon-wa **omosi-ro-kat-ta-desu**.
 this book-Top interesting-Cnt-Pst.Cnc-Pol
 This book was interesting. (polite speech)
- c. **Omosi-ro-kat-ta** hon-wa kore da.
 interesting-Cnt-Pst.Adn book-Top this is
 (The) book (that) was interesting is this.

In (2a) and (2b), *-ta* attaches to the continuative form (Cnt, *renyoo-kei*)⁴ and appears in the conclusive form because it occupies the sentence-final position. *Renyookei*, which literally means “form that follows a verbal element” (i.e. *ren* “continue,” *yoo* “verbal,” *kei* “form”), is taken when a verbal element such as a tense suffix follows. In (2b), as in (1b), the adjective is followed by the politeness suffix *-desu*. In (2c), although there is no overt difference, we may say that *-ta* is in the adnominal form, because the whole phrase (the adjective in past tense) functions as a modifier of the head noun *hon* “book.”

Negation is also incorporated in the adjective. The negative suffix *-nai* attaches to the continuative form:

- (3) a. Kono hon-wa **omosi-ro-ku-nai**.
 this book-Top interesting-Cnt-Neg.Cnc
 This book is not interesting.
- b. **omosi-ro-ku-nai** hon
 interesting-Cnt-Neg.Adn book
 not-interesting book (“book that is not interesting”)

When negation coincides with past tense, the negative suffix *-nai* appears in the continuative form to allow the affixation of the past tense suffix *-ta*:

- (4) a. Kono hon-wa **omosi-ro-ku-na-kat-ta**.
 this book-Top interesting-Cnt-Neg-Cnt-Pst.Cnc
This book was not interesting.
- b. **omosi-ro-ku-na-kat-ta** hon
 interesting-Cnt-Neg-Cnt-Pst.Adn book
was-not-interesting book ("book that was not interesting")

As for the nature of canonical adjectives, they are native Japanese words that are composed of one single morpheme. As we will see in the next section, other native words that are “polymorphemic” and loan words fall into the category of nominal adjectives.

2.2 Nominal Adjectives

The second type of adjectives in Japanese is *keiyodoosi*, which literally means “adjectival verb” (i.e. *keiyoo* “adjectival, attributing,” *doosi* “verb”). In English, *keiyodoosi* has been translated as “nominal adjectives” (Teramura 1982, Nishiyama 1999) or “adjectival nominals” (Miyagawa 1987). As the confusing terms suggest, this category shares properties with adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Miyagawa (1987) defines it as a category possessing [+V, +N].

As the glosses for (5) show, nominal adjectives are accompanied by the copula:

- (5) a. Kono hon-wa **benri-da**.
 this book-Top useful-be.Cnc
This book is useful.
- b. Kono hon-wa **benri-desu**.
 this book-Top useful-be.Pol
This book is useful. (polite speech)
- c. **Benri-na** hon-ga aru.
 useful-be.Adn book-Nom is
(There) is a useful book.

In (5a), the adjective is used as a predicate and the copula appears in the conclusive form. (5b) is the same sentence with the politeness suffix *-desu*. In fact, *-desu* is a derived form of *-da*. In (5c), the adjective is used as a modifier and the copula appears in the adnominal form *-na*. Recall