

# Mixed case marking in Japanese sa-nominalization

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## Introduction

- Japanese syntactic nominalization, formed with the desiderative adjective *hosi* 'want' and the nominalizer *-sa*, shows mixed case marking, where both nominative and verbal case markings are possible with its object.
- The mixed markings are argued to be sensitive to the size of noun phrase: DP for GEN and nP for NOM/ACC.
- The alternation between NOM and ACC is a consequence of two possible positions of the object: NOM for the edge position of aP and ACC for the complement position of AP.

## Mixed Case Marking in the sa-nominal

- The desiderative adjective *hosi* 'want' is a two-place predicate, whose object is marked either NOM or ACC. When the adjective is nominalized with a suffix *-sa*, the object gets GEN.

(1) Taro-wa kane-**{ga/?o}** hosi-i  
Taro-Top money-Nom/Acc want-Pres  
'Taro wants money.'

(2) Taro-no kane-**{no/\*ga/\*o}** hosi-sa  
Taro-Gen money-Gen/Nom/Acc want-Nml  
'Taro's desire for money.'

- Interestingly, however, when the *sa*-nominal is followed by *-ni* (or *no-amari*), forming the adverbial construction, verbal case markings survive (Kageyama 1982):

(3) **Mixed Case Marking**  
Taro-wa [**kane-**{no/ga/o}****] hosi-sa-ni, uso-o tuita.  
T-Top money-Gen/Nom/Acc want-Nml-Dat lie-Acc told  
'Taro lied out of his desire for money.'

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## On the Size of Noun Phrase: DP Vs. nP

The mixed markings are sensitive to the size of noun phrase: DP for GEN and nP for NOM/ACC.

### Modification by demonstratives

- The demonstrative such as *ano* 'that' and *reino* 'aforementioned' is located in Spec-DP in a head-final language (Noguchi 1995; Furuya 2008).
- If the *sa*-nominal is modified by *ano* or *reino*, only the nominal marking (i.e., GEN) is available:

(4) **{ano/reino}** yoku hanasiteita [kane-**{no/\*ga/\*o}**] hosi-sa-ni,  
that/aforementioned often talked.about money-Gen/Nom/Acc want-Nml-Dat  
Taroo-wa uso-o tuita.  
T-Top lie-Acc told  
'Taro lied out of his desire for money about which he often talked.'

### Referentiality

- Referentiality is closely related to the size of noun phrase: DP is referential but NP/nP is not.
- The pronominal *sorezitai* 'that in itself' in the subsequent clause can refer back to *sonna koto* 'such a thing' both in (5a) and (5b).
- But the referentiality differs in the *sa*-nominal between (5a) and (5b): *sorezitai* can refer to the *sa*-nominal in (5a) but not in (5b).

(5) a. Taro-wa [kane-**no**] hosi-sa<sub>i</sub>-ni, sonna koto<sub>j</sub>-o sita ga,  
Taro-Top money-Gen want-Nml-Dat such.a.thing-Acc did but  
**sorezitai**<sub>i,j</sub>-wa waruikoto-de-wa nai.  
itself-Top bad.thing-Cop-Top Neg  
'Taro did that out of a desire for money, but that in itself is not a bad thing.'

b. Taro-wa [kane-**{ga/o}**] hosi-sa<sub>i</sub>-ni, sonna koto<sub>j</sub>-o sita ga,  
Taro-Top money-Nom/Acc want-Nml-Dat such.a.thing-Acc did but  
**sorezitai**<sub>i,j</sub>-wa waruikoto-de-wa nai.  
itself-Top bad.thing-Cop-Top Neg  
'Taro did that out of a desire for money, but that in itself is not a bad thing.'

- We propose two structures for the *sa*-nominal: one projecting up to DP as in (6a) and another constituting nP, without DP, as in (6b).

(6) a. [DP [nP [AP DP-**Gen**] hosi ] n(-sa) ] DP  
b. [nP [AP DP-**Nom/Acc**] hosi ] n(-sa) ]

- The object DP of *hosi* is assigned GEN only if the *sa*-nominal projects to DP (Miyagawa 1993), but is assigned either NOM or ACC if it projects only to nP.

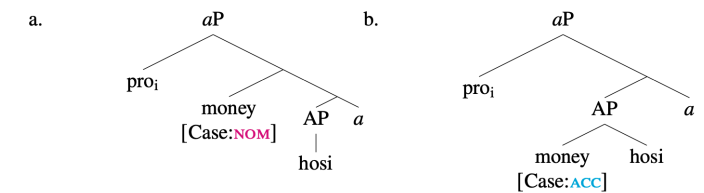
**Question:** How and why can both NOM and ACC be assigned to the object argument within the *sa*-nominal?

- To explain this, we pursue an approach to the assignment of case without appealing to agreement. Specifically we adopt a modified version of Zushi (2016:48) proposal:

- (7) a. When a nominal is merged with a lexical head, its Case feature is valued as accusative.  
b. When a nominal is merged with a phase head *v* or *a*, its Case feature is valued as nominative.

- We propose that NOM/ACC alternation is a result of two possible positions of the object: at the edge position of aP (8a) or the complement position of AP (8b).

(8) [TP Taro<sub>i</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> [vP [nP [NP aP n(-sa)] ni] [VP uso-o tuk] v]] T(ta)]



**Why two positions?** We speculate that it has to do with the fact of the desiderative adjective *hosi* having its verbal counterpart, *hoss(u)* 'to want (something)', which takes an accusative object.

(9) Taroo-wa kane-o **hossi**-ta.  
Taro-Top money-Acc want-Pst  
'Taro wanted money.'

- The adjective *hosi* seems a **deverbal adjective**, which remains to have a property of taking an argument at its complement position.

**Prediction:** Among transitive adjectives, only those with a corresponding verbal form allow for NOM/ACC alternation of the object.

- Transitive nominal adjectives *suki/kirai* can take NOM/ACC objects, but the compound *dai-suki/dai-kirai* cannot. (Sugioka 1984, Fukuda 2020)
- Suki/kirai* have their verbal counterparts, *suk(u)/kiraw(u)*, but the compounds do not (i.e., *\*dai-suk(u)/\*dai-kiraw(u)*).

(10) a. Boku-wa kanojo-no-koto-**{ga/o}** **{suki/kirai}** datta.  
I-Top she-Gen-thing-Nom/Acc like/dislike Cop.Pst  
'I liked/disliked that girl.'

b. Boku-wa kanojo-no-koto-**{ga/\*?o}** **dai-**{suki/kirai}**** datta.  
I-Top she-Gen-thing-Nom/Acc big-like/dislike Cop.Pst  
'I really liked/disliked that girl.'

- Note also that the psych-adjective *kowa-i*, which does not have its verbal counterpart, can take a NOM object but not an ACC object.

(11) Boku-wa hebi-**{ga/\*?o}** **kowa-i**.  
I-Top snake-Nom/Acc afraid.of-Pres  
'I'm afraid of snakes.'