

# On the Syntactic Relation between Noun Phrase and Numeral Classifier

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## Summary

Assuming that an overtly case-marked noun phrase (NP) forms a single constituent with a corresponding numeral classifier (NC), Kawashima and Kitahara 1993 (K&K) argue that in Japanese, an object determiner phrase (DP) can intervene between them when the constituent is a subject and receives a non-presuppositional interpretation. This in turn means that the intervention in question is not allowed when the subject phrase is presuppositional. In this thesis, however, I will refute K&K's analysis. I will do this by taking the following steps.

To begin with, I will introduce the following five assumptions that K&K adopt. First, NP and NC form a single constituent, and the meaning of NP-NC (e.g. *nihonjin-ga san-nin*) and that of NC-NP (e.g. *san-nin-no nihonjin-ga*) are exactly the same. Second, it is allowed in Japanese to swap the subject and the object without changing the meaning of the sentence; in other words, Scrambling is available in Japanese. Third, K&K espouse the widely-accepted syntactic analysis by which a subject first appears inside the verb phrase (VP) and moves to a higher place in order to be assigned case. This is called the VP-Internal Subject Hypothesis (VPISH). Fourth, K&K adopt the Mapping Hypothesis (Diesing 1992), in which material from VP is mapped into the nuclear scope, while that from inflectional phrase (IP) is mapped into a restrictive clause. Finally, K&K assume the Empty Category Principle (ECP): a non-theta-marked trace must be antecedent-governed.

Then I will summarize the main argument of K&K. According to them, an empty DP can only refer to a presupposed antecedent DP, which occupies VP-external position. Conversely, it fails to refer to a non-presuppositional DP, which is assumed to be in VP-internal position. Using this as a test, K&K differentiate two situations, namely, (i) when an object DP intervenes between a subject NP and its corresponding NC without making the sentence ungrammatical, and (ii) when such an intervention results in ungrammaticality. K&K argue that (i) is obtained when the subject is non-presuppositional and that (ii) is when it is presuppositional. K&K propose two different syntactic structures for these two cases. When non-presuppositional, the subject first occurs inside VP, in

accordance with the VPISH. Then the object DP scrambles to a VP-adjoined position. Subsequently, the subject NP moves to the specifier position of IP in order to get case, leaving its NC behind. But according to the Mapping Hypothesis, it is the trace of the subject NP that is interpreted in LF. On the other hand, when the subject is presuppositional, it must be interpreted outside VP. After receiving a theta-role inside VP, therefore, the subject DP, which contains a NC, moves to Spec-IP, where it is later interpreted in LF. After that, the object DP scrambles to an IP-adjoined position and the subject NP further scrambles to another IP-adjoined position. According to K&K, only the former derivation, but not the latter, is legitimate, since the trace of the subject NP in Spec-IP in the latter derivation gets bound by the object DP, not by its antecedent, which thus fails to fulfill the ECP. In order to reinforce this argument, K&K present a similar case from German. They also use facts about relative clause to support this idea; that is, if a relative clause modifies the subject NP, this NP becomes presuppositional. Thus, K&K conclude that the separability of subject NP and its corresponding NC depends on whether the subject is presupposed or not; if it is, separability is obtained, but if not, it isn't.

However, there are serious theoretical problems with this analysis. Since they can be separated by an adverb, NP and NC do not form a single constituent in the first place, which severely undermines K&K's syntactic analysis. Also, the way the Mapping Hypothesis and the ECP are utilized in their argumentation is problematic. Therefore, it is premature to assume that there are two different structures for (i) and (ii). In fact, the structure for (i) can handle both grammatical and ungrammatical cases. In addition, the reliability of K&K's test is doubtful because it seems to lapse into a circular argument.

K&K's analysis faces empirical problems as well. To begin with, their way of determining whether the subject is presuppositional or not is flawed. A close observation of actual sentences immediately reveals that NP-NC structure seems not to be presupposed for a majority of cases; consequently, the meaning of NP-NC and that of NC-NP are not likely to be the same. Moreover, whether the subject is presupposed or not really depends on the context in which the sentence is used, not the structure of the subject DP. Finally, K&K's grammaticality judgement of their example sentences is doubtful. A quick survey of grammaticality judgement with native speakers of Japanese has shown that there is a significant discrepancy between K&K's judgement and the intuition of the actual speakers.

Unless these problems are solved, it is inevitable to say that K&K's analysis has much to be desired.