

A Functional and Pragmatic Approach to NQ-Scrambling in Japanese

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In Japanese, nouns can form numeral NPs with NQs (i.e. numeral quantifiers) marked by the genitive particle *no*, as given in (1):

- (1) Taroo-ga [_{NP} **sansatu-no** hon-o] katta.
Taro-Nom three-Gen book-Acc bought
'Taro bought three books.'

The NQs can also be postposed or preposed out of their associated NPs, as given in (2a, b):

- (2) a. Taroo-ga [_{NP} hon-o] **sansatu** katta.
b. **Sansatu** Taroo-ga [_{NP} hon-o] katta.

These phenomena are generally called Quantifier Floating, and the fronted pattern like (2b) is especially called NQ-scrambling (see Miyagawa 1989). My presentation deals with this NQ-scrambling as a main topic.

Miyagawa (1989) provides a syntactic analysis of NQ-scrambling by means of the mutual c-command requirement (see Miyagawa (1989) for a detailed discussion of this analysis). Contrary to this view, Ishii (1999) considers that all NQs which precede their associated NPs are quantificational adverbs, which are different from the stranding type of NQs that Miyagawa discusses. Ishii claims that although this adverb type is free from the syntactic restriction of the mutual c-command requirement, it instead must obey the semantic restriction of having only a multiple-event reading. In other words, this restriction stipulates that the NQ-scrambling construction is not allowed with a single-event interpretation:

- (3) Multiple-event readings:
a. Zenbu-de **hutatu** Taroo-ga mado-o aketa.
in total two Taro-Nom window-Acc opened
'Taro has opened two windows in total.' (Ishii 1999:253)
b. Kesa kara **go-nin** yuuei kinsi kuiki-o gakusei-ga oyoida.
this morning since five swimming ban zone-Acc student-Nom swam
'Five students have swum in the No Swimming zone since this morning.'
(ibid.:252)
- (4) Single-event readings:
a. ?***Yonko** Jiroo-ga onigiri-o itido-ni densi-renze-ni kaketa.
four Jiro-Nom rice ball-Acc all at once microwave-to put
'Jiro microwaved four rice balls at once.' (ibid.:253)
b. ?***Nizyuu-nin** ofisu-ni gakusei-ga totoo-o nasite yattekita.
twenty office-to student-Nom group-Acc forming came over
'20 students came over to my office in a group.' (ibid.:252)

From the contrast between (3) and (4), Ishii concludes that NQ-scrambling is limited to a multiple-event reading.

However, many counterexamples can be found to Ishii's semantic analysis. For instance, the following NQ-scrambling examples are perfectly acceptable despite having only a single-event reading:

- (5) a. **Sansatu** matomete Taroo-ga hon-o katta.
 three collectively Taro-Nom book-Acc bought
 ‘Taro bought three books collectively.’
- b. **San-nin** tikara-o awasete gakusei-ga piano-o motiageta.
 three with united efforts student-Nom piano-Acc lifted
 ‘Three students lifted a piano together.’

As evidenced by the above examples, it is obvious that NQ-scrambling is irrelevant to event plurality.

Takami (1998) shows that Quantifier Floating in Japanese can be captured appropriately by the functional notion of information structure. In this analysis, it is considered that a floating NQ conveys the most important information (or new information), and thus the positions where a floating NQ occurs are compatible with two positions which are normally occupied by a focus element: a preverbal position like (2a) and a clause-initial position like (2b).

In my presentation, on the basis that Takami’s functional proposal is on the right track, it is shown that the analysis of NQ-scrambling can be developed further from a pragmatic perspective. The NQ in a clause-initial position has an informational focus in common with the one in a preverbal position, but the usage of the former is somewhat limited compared with the latter. I would like to propose here that NQ-scrambling is more acceptable as the situation becomes clearer. To ascertain the plausibility of this proposal, let us consider a few of the above examples again. In (2b) and (5a), these NQ-scrambling sentences are both acceptable, but in (2b) the NQ *sansatu* sounds just slightly awkward due to abruptly appearing in the sentence-initial position without any context; on the other hand in (5a), since the NQ *sansatu* is uttered with the adverb *matomete*, the situation described is clearer, and thus (5a) is more acceptable than (2b). In (4a), if the adverb *itido-ni* ‘all at once’ is uttered with the fronted NQ *yonko* together, the situation described can be understood clearly and its unacceptability greatly improves, as given below:

- (6) **Yonko** *itido-ni* Jiroo-ga onigiri-o densi-renze-ni kaketa.
 four all at once Jiro-Nom rice ball-Acc microwave-to put
 ‘Jiro microwaved four rice balls at once.’

In my presentation, I will deal with more examples and provide a new perspective for the phenomenon of NQ-scrambling in Japanese.

References:

- Ishii, Y. (1999) “A Note on Floating Quantifiers in Japanese.” In M. Muraki and E. Iwamoto (eds.) *Linguistics: In Search of the Human Mind*, 236-267. Tokyo: Kaitakusha.
- Miyagawa, S. (1989) *Structure and case marking in Japanese*. New York: Academic Press.
- Takami, K. (1998) “Nihongo-no Suuryooshi-Yuuri-ni Tuite [On Quantifier Float in Japanese].” *Gengo* 27:1, 86-95; 27:2, 86-95; 27:3, 98-107. Tokyo: Taishukan.