

〈論 文〉

Clause Structure of Referent Honorifics in Japanese

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Abstract

This paper discusses the clause structures of Japanese subject and non-subject honorifics, collectively referred to as referent honorifics. Ishikawa (2007) assumed that the lexical representation of the Japanese honorific predicate contains pragmatic information about human relationships, and that the sentence has a bi-clausal structure consisting of two clauses. This study demonstrates that there are three types of counterexamples to Ishikawa's lexical analysis and two types of linguistic data showing that the referent-honorific sentence has a mono-clausal rather than a bi-clausal structure, especially for non-subject honorifics.

Keywords: Clause Structure, Referent Honorifics, Lexical Functional Grammar, Subject Honorific, Non-subject Honorific

1. Introduction

Japanese has two types of referent honorifics: the subject and non-subject honorifics. Their basic characteristics are as follows:¹

1 A list of Japanese particles used in this paper, along with an example of sentence notations, is provided below:

(1) Subject honorific (SH):

- a. The verb form is “*o-V-ni nar-*.”
- b. The honorific target appears as SUBJ.
- c. Yamada sensee-ga Taroo-o o-tasuke-ni nat-ta.
Prof. Yamada-Nom Taro-Acc help-SH-Past
'Prof. Yamada helped Taro.'
- d. *Taroo-ga Yamada-sensee-o o-tasuke-ni nat-ta.
Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Acc help-SH-Past
'Taro helped Prof. Yamada.'

(2) Non-subject honorific (NSH):

- a. The verb form is “*o-V-su-*”.
- b. The honorific target appears as NON-SUBJ (e.g., OBJ, OBL).
- c. Taroo-ga Yamada sensee-o o-tasuke-si-ta.
Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Acc help-NSH-Past
'Taro helped Prof. Yamada.'
- d. *Yamada sensee-ga Taroo-o o-tasuke-si-ta.
Prof. Yamada-Nom Taro-Acc help-NSH-Past
'Prof. Yamada helped Taro.'
- e. Taroo-ga Yamada sensee-ni o-ai-si-ta.
Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Dat meet-NSH-Past
'Taro met Prof. Yamada.'

As shown in (1) and (2), the subject and non-subject honorifics differ in the verb form and grammatical position in a sentence in which the

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- (i) a. *-ga*: Nominative (Nom) / Subject marker
-wa: Topic (Top) / Subject marker
-ni: Dative (Dat) / Oblique marker
-o: Accusative (Acc) / Object marker
-ta: Past-tense marker
 - b. Taroo-ga/wa Hanako-ni hon-o age-ta.
Taro-Nom/Top Hanako-Dat book-Acc give-Past
'Taro gave Hanako a book.'

honored person (e.g., *Yamada sensee* “Prof. Yamada”) appears. In general, it has been held in Japanese linguistics that the subject honorific verb *o-V-ni nar-* is used when the honorific target is in the subject position, whereas the non-subject honorific verb *o-V-su-* is used when it is in a non-subject position (see Harada 1976, Kuno 1987, Hasegawa 2006).

Ishikawa (2007) discussed Japanese subject and non-subject honorifics within the syntactic framework of Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG), providing two assumptions: (i) honorific predicates include pragmatic information concerning human relation in their lexical representation; (ii) the sentence structure of subject and non-subject honorifics is “bi-clausal” (i.e., consisting of two clauses).

This study reviews Ishikawa’s assumptions and considers the clause structure of Japanese referent honorifics. This paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, I overview Ishikawa’s (2007) proposal on honorific predicates that both subject and non-subject honorifics have a bi-clausal structure. In Section 3, I point out three cases in which Ishikawa’s idea does not apply to non-subject honorific predicates. Furthermore, by presenting two types of linguistic data that cast doubt on bi-clausal analysis, I argue that, at least regarding non-subject honorifics, mono-clausal analysis is more appropriate.

2. Ishikawa (2007)

2.1 Honorific Predicates

As seen in the previous section, in Japanese subject and non-subject honorifics, the honorific target (i.e., the person being honored) appears as a referent of the subject or non-subject element. Therefore, Ishikawa (2007) treats these honorifics as “referent honorifics.” Ishikawa argued that referent honorifics are established along the speaker-referent axis, that is, the relationship between the speaker and the person referred to. The speaker-referent relation seems to depend on pragmatic

information; however, Ishikawa claimed that pragmatic information can be reflected in a lexical predicate representation provided that the representation has the feature [SP-REF], which represents the relation between the speaker and referent. For example, the lexical representation of the subject honorific predicate *o-kiki-ni nar-* is analyzed as presented in (3b) (Ishikawa 2007: 215):

- (3) a. Tanaka sensee-wa sono koto-o Taroo-kara o-kiki-ni nat-ta.
 Prof. Tanaka-Top the thing-Acc Taro-from hear-SH-Past
 ‘Prof. Tanaka heard about the matter from Taro.’
 b. o-kiki-ni nar-
 (↑ PRED) = ‘hear <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBJ) (↑ OBL)>
 (↑ SP-REF) = ‘R (↑ SUBJ) > R (SP)’

In (3a), the subject honorific predicate *o-kiki-ni nar-* is used and *Tanaka sensee*, who is socially superior to the speaker, appears in the subject position. This social human relationship between the subject and speaker is encoded in the lexical entry of the predicate *o-kiki-ni nar-* and is represented by the feature [SP-REF] in (3b). The property equation (↑ SP-REF) = “R (↑ SUBJ) > R (SP)” indicates that the referent of SUBJ is superior to SP(EAKER) in the strength of R.²

Regarding the non-subject honorific, although Ishikawa followed the same approach as the subject honorific, he further claimed that another axis should be added and named it the “speaker-setting axis.” In the non-subject honorific, the speaker is required not only to give deference to the non-subject referent along the speaker-referent axis but also to downgrade the subject referent along the speaker-setting axis. Ishikawa assumed that the latter relation is represented by feature [REF] in a

2 Ishikawa (2007: 215) said: “R(x) is assumed to designate the value of the strength of x along the axis in question.” However, he did not mention what “R” stands for. Presumably, “R” stands for “RESPECT.”

lexical representation. For instance, the non-subject honorific predicate *o-kiki-su* is represented as in (4b) (Ishikawa 2007: 216 (partially modified)):

- (4) a. Taroo-wa sono koto-o Tanaka sensee-kara o-kiki-si-ta.
 Taro-Top the thing-Acc Prof. Tanaka-from hear-NSH-Past
 ‘Taro heard about the matter from Prof. Tanaka.’
- b. o-kiki-su-
 (↑ PRED) = ‘hear <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBJ) (↑ OBL)>’
 (↑ SP-REF) = ‘R (↑ GF) > R (SP)’
 (↑ REF) = ‘R (↑ GF) > R (↑ SUBJ)’

In (4a), the non-subject honorific predicate *o-kiki-su-* is used, and the exalted person, *Tanaka sensee*, appears as the referent for OBL (IQUE). In (4b), the equation concerning feature [SP-REF] denotes that SP is socially lower than GF, which is one of the governed grammatical functions other than SUBJ (Ishikawa 2007: 216). Furthermore, the equation concerning this feature [REF] shows that the referent of the GF is superior to that of the SUBJ. Thus, these two equations indicate that GF is socially higher than SP or SUBJ in human relations. Therefore, the lexical representation in (4b) can successfully capture the fact shown in (4a) that the non-subject referent *Tanaka sensee* (GF) has a higher social status than the speaker (SP) or subject referent *Taroo* (SUBJ).

2.2 The Sentence Structure of Referent Honorifics

Ishikawa (1985) claimed that the Japanese causative auxiliary *-sase* takes the bi-clausal structure, as shown below (n.b. the auxiliary *-sase* is changed into *-ase* by the consonant deletion after consonant verb stems):

- (5) a. Taroo-ga Hanako-ni hon-o yom-ase-ta.
 Taro-Nom Hanako-Dat book-Acc read-Caus-Past
 ‘Taro caused Hanako to read a book.’
- b. -ase
 (↑ PRED) = ‘cause <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBL) (↑ XCOMP)>’
 (↑ XCOMP SUBJ) = (↑ OBL)
- (6) f-structure:

PRED	‘cause <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBL) (↑ XCOMP)>’						
SUBJ	PRED ‘Taroo’						
OBL	[1] [PRED ‘Hanako’]						
XCOMP	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">PRED</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">‘read <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBJ)>’</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">SUBJ</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">[1]</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">OBJ</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">PRED ‘book’</td> </tr> </table>	PRED	‘read <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBJ)>’	SUBJ	[1]	OBJ	PRED ‘book’
PRED	‘read <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ OBJ)>’						
SUBJ	[1]						
OBJ	PRED ‘book’						

According to Ishikawa (1985), the causative predicate *V-sase* “cause to V” is a complex verbal form, and thus the causative auxiliary *-sase* projects the bi-clausal structure by adopting an XCOMP argument whose SUBJ is controlled by its OBL argument, as presented in (5b) or (6).

Ishikawa (2007) claimed that the subject and non-subject honorific predicates, *o-V-ni nar-* and *o-V-sur-*, respectively, can be analyzed in the same manner as the causative predicate analysis in Ishikawa (1985). In the case of honorific predicates, Ishikawa assumed that the affixal morpheme *-nar-* or *-sur-* is an auxiliary and explained that it projects the bi-clausal structure by taking a COMP or an XCOMP in its lexical representation.

Let us consider the case of subject honorifics ((7a) is taken from Ishikawa 2007: 218 (partially modified), and (1c) is repeated here as (7b)):

- (7) a. *-nar-*
 (↑ PRED) = ‘become <(↑ COMP)>’
 (↑ COMP PRED FORM) = HON-GERUND
 (↑ COMP SP-REF) = ‘R (↑ COMP SUBJ) > R (SP)’
 b. [Yamada sensee-ga Taroo-o o-tasuke-ni] nat-ta.
 Prof. Yamada-Nom Taro-Acc help-SH-Ger become-Past
 ‘Prof. Yamada helped Taro.’

In (7a), the honorific auxiliary *-nar-* is a one-place predicate whose argument is COMP. The embedded clause represented as COMP is supposed to be HON(ORIFIC)-GERUND, based on the premise that the prefix *o-* is a nominal honorific marker (Martin 1975). The human relation of the subject honorific is reflected in the gerundive clause; that is, *Yamada sensee* (COMP SUBJ) is socially superior to the speaker (SP).

Consider the case of the non-subject honorific ((8a), which is taken from Ishikawa 2007: 219-220 (partially modified), and (2c) is repeated here as (8b)):

- (8) a. *-sur-*
 (↑ PRED) = ‘do <(↑ SUBJ) (↑ XCOMP)>’
 (↑ XCOMP SUBJ) = (↑ SUBJ)
 (↑ XCOMP PRED FORM) = HON-GERUND
 (↑ SP-REF) = ‘R (↑ XCOMP GF) > R (SP)’
 (↑ REF) = ‘R (↑ XCOMP GF) > R (↑ SUBJ)’
 b. Taroo-ga [Yamada sensee-o o-tasuke] si-ta.
 Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Acc help-NSH-Ger do-Past
 ‘Taro helped Prof. Yamada.’

In (8a), the honorific auxiliary *-sur-* is shown to be a two-place predicate, and it takes a SUBJ argument and an XCOMP argument, whose subject is controlled by the SUBJ argument. The embedded clause XCOMP is

the HON-GERUND form, in which the human relation of the non-subject honorific is captured by the features [SP-REF] and [REF]; that is, *Yamada sensee* (XCOMP GF) is socially superior to the speaker (SP) or *Taroo* (SUBJ).

Before concluding this section, some points must be mentioned: Ishikawa (2007) analyzed subject and non-subject honorific predicates as complex verb forms. However, it is not clear how the lexical representation of complex verbs such as (3b) or (4b) mixes with that of auxiliary verbs such as (7a) and (8a). Because Ishikawa does not mention anything about this question and does not provide any clues for discussion, I will not address it in the following section.

3. Discussion

3.1 Lexical Analysis of Non-subject Honorific Predicates

In Section 2.1, we observed Ishikawa's (2007) lexical analysis of the LFG. Although this analysis seems to capture the social human relations found in Japanese honorific sentences, it is considered problematic regarding non-subject honorific sentences. There are three counterexamples to Ishikawa's lexical analysis of non-subject honorifics.

The first type is as follows:

- (9) a. *Inu-ga kooen-de Yamada sensee-o o-mati-si-ta.
dog-Nom park-at Prof. Yamada-Acc wait-NSH-Past
'The dog waited for Prof. Yamada at the park.'
- b. *Hannin-ga Yamada sensee-ni tegami-o o-okuri-si-ta.
culprit-Nom Prof. Yamada-Dat letter-Acc send-NSH-Past
'The culprit sent a letter to Prof. Yamada.'

In (9a, b), the non-subject honorific verb *o-V-sur-* is used, and the honorific target appears in a non-subject position. Note that the non-subject referent is socially superior to both the speaker and subject

referent. These conditions are consistent with Ishikawa's lexical analysis in (4b); nevertheless, these examples are judged completely unacceptable. The crucial factor of unacceptability is to be found in the pragmatic field: the subject referent, *inu* "dog" or *hannin* "culprit," cannot establish any respectful relations with the honored person, *Yamada sensee* "Prof. Yamada." Ishikawa claims that pragmatic information can be reflected in the lexical representation of honorific verbs; however, his lexical analysis makes a false prediction for examples such as (9a, b).

The second type is cases in which the honorific target does not appear in a sentence.³

- (10) a. *Watasi-ga takusii-o o-yobi-si-masu.*
 I-Nom taxi-Acc call-NSH-AH
 'I will call a taxi (for you).'
- b. *Watasi-ga ringo-o o-kiri-si-masu.*
 I-Nom apple-Acc cut-NSH-AH
 'I will cut an apple (for you).'
- c. *Watasi-ga denwabangoo-o o-sirabe-si-masu.*
 I-Nom phone number-Acc check-NSH-AH
 'I will check the phone number (for you).'

As observed in (10a-c), it is often the case with non-subject honorifics that an honorific target is not included in a sentence. This phenomenon occurs when the non-subject honorific verb *o-V-sur-* is followed by the addressee honorific verb *masu* and there is a distinguished person as the hearer of the utterance. As Ishikawa considered non-subject honorifics to be referent honorifics, his analysis cannot account for this type of example.

3 In (10a-c), AH stands for "addressee honorific," and this type of honorific requires the honorific target to be the hearer of the utterance.

The last type is seen in ditransitive constructions. Before discussing Ishikawa's problem, let us consider the following example:

- (11) Taro-ga Yamada sensee-ni Tanaka sensee-o go-shookai-si-ta.
Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Dat Prof. Tanaka-Acc introduce-NSH-Past
'Taro introduced Prof. Tanaka to Prof. Yamada.'

In (11), two honored persons are placed in non-subject positions: the dative NP and the accusative NP. What can be an honorific target? In general, it has been held in the literature that when the ditransitive predicate is used in non-subject honorifics, what is interpreted as the honorific target is not the referent of the direct object, but that of the indirect object (for further details, see Harada 1976, Boeckx and Niinuma 2004). Therefore, in (11), the indirect object referent *Yamada sensee* is interpreted as an honorific target. This is confirmed by the following contrastive acceptability:

- (12) a. Taro-ga Yamada sensee-ni Hanako-o go-shookai-si-ta.
Taro-Nom Prof. Yamada-Dat Hanako-Acc introduce-NSH-Past
'Taro introduced Hanako to Prof. Yamada.'
b. *Taro-ga Hanako-ni Tanaka sensee-o go-shookai-si-ta.
Taro-Nom Hanako-Dat Prof. Tanaka-Acc introduce-NSH-Past
'Taro introduced Prof. Tanaka to Hanako.'

In the ditransitive construction of the non-subject honorific, as is clear from the contrastive acceptability between (12a) and (12b), the honorific target is in the indirect object, not in the direct object.

Ishikawa's lexical analysis in (4b) is insufficient to explain ditransitive cases as exemplified above. His analysis only requires that the target of the non-subject honorific must occur in GF (i.e., NON-SUBJ); thus, this requirement overlooks the asymmetry between indirect and direct objects. For instance, in (11) (and (12b)), because

the direct object is GF, the direct object referent *Tanaka sensee* can be misinterpreted as the honorific target. However, Ishikawa's analysis does not exclude these misinterpretations.

3.2 Clause Structure of Referent Honorifics

In Section 2.2, I discussed Ishikawa's (2007) assumption that referent honorifics have a bi-clausal structure. This proposal is innovative and linguistically interesting, yet I am skeptical of it. In what follows, I present two types of evidence to show the possibility that referent honorifics, especially non-subject honorifics, do not have a bi-clausal but a mono-clausal structure.

The first type is coordination. In Japanese, it is possible to use gerunds to construct a coordinate structure without an overt coordinating particle (cf. Gunji 1987):

- (13) Taroo-ga [[*ocha-o nomi*] [*ringo-o tabe*]] *oe-ta*.
 Taro-Nom tea-Acc drink-Ger apple-Acc eat-Ger finish-Past
 'Taro finished drinking tea and eating an apple.'

In (13), the gerund constituents *ocha-o nomi* and *ringo-o tabe* are conjoined and the matrix verb *oe-ta* is attached to this complex phrase.

According to Ishikawa's bi-clausal analysis, the embedded clause ((X)COMP) is assumed to be in the gerund form (HON-GERUND), as shown in (7a) and (8a). In this case, the gerund clause is expected to be suitable for coordination. However, the acceptability of subject and non-subject honorifics differs due to this coordination, as shown in the following:

(14) Subject Honorific

[[Tanaka sensee-ga Taroo-o o-tasuke-ni]
Prof. Tanaka-Nom Taro-Acc help-SH-Ger
[Yamada sensee-ga Hanako-o o-tasuke-ni]]
Prof. Yamada-Nom Hanako-Acc help-SH-Ger
nat-ta.
become-Past

‘Prof. Tanaka helped Taro and Prof. Yamada helped Hanako.’

(15) Non-subject Honorific

*Taroo-ga [[Tanaka sensee-o o-maneki]
Taro-Nom Prof.Tanaka-Acc invite-NSH-Ger
[Yamada sensee-ni o-ai]] si-ta.
Prof. Yamada-Dat meet-NSH-Ger do-Past

‘Taro invited Prof. Tanaka and saw Prof. Yamada.’

Although the subject honorific in (14) allows gerund clauses to be conjoined, the non-subject honorific in (15) does not. The unacceptability of (15) casts doubt on the bi-clausal analysis of the non-subject honorific.

The second type consisted of negative polarity items (NPIs). It is widely accepted in Japanese syntax that the NPI *sika* “except” can be licensed by the negation *-nai* within the same clause (cf. Muraki 1978):

(16) a. Taroo-wa [Hanako-ga yasai-sika tabe-nai to]
Taro-Top Hanako-Nom vegetables-except eat-Neg Comp
si-tta.

know-Past

‘Taro knew that Hanako doesn’t eat anything but vegetables.’

b. *Taroo-wa [Hanako-ga yasai-sika tabe-ru to]
Taro-Top Hanako-Nom vegetables-except eat-Pres Comp
sira-nai.

know-Neg

‘Taro doesn’t know that Hanako eats anything but vegetables.’

As the contrastive acceptability in (16a, b) shows, the NPI *sika* must be a clause-mate with negation *-nai*.

With this in mind, consider the following examples of subject and non-subject honorifics:

(17) Subject Honorific

Tanaka sensee-wa Taroo-sika o-tasuke-ni nara-nakat-ta.
 Prof. Tanaka-Top Taro-except help-SH-Neg-Past
 ‘Prof. Tanaka didn’t help anyone but Taro.’

(18) Non-subject Honorific

Taroo-wa Tanaka sensee-sika o-tasuke-si-nakat-ta.
 Taro-Top Prof. Tanaka-except help-NSH-Neg-Past
 ‘Taro didn’t help anyone but Prof. Tanaka.’

In (17) and (18), it is shown that the NPI *sika* is successfully licensed through sentential negation. This clarifies that honorific sentences are single clauses rather than embedded ones. Bi-clausal analysis incorrectly predicts that these sentences are unacceptable because the negation *-nai*, which follows the honorific predicate, is not within the same clause that contains the NPI *sika*. Based on this result, it seems more reasonable to consider referent honorifics as having a single-clause structure.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I discuss Ishikawa’s (2007) analysis of subject and non-subject honorifics in Japanese. In Section 2, I review Ishikawa’s two assumptions: (i) honorific predicates contain pragmatic information about human relations in their lexical representation; (ii) the sentence structure of subject and non-subject honorifics is bi-clausal. In Section 3, I demonstrate that these assumptions are untenable. For Assumption (i), I present three examples for which Ishikawa could not provide a

satisfactory explanation. For Assumption (ii), I present two types of evidence showing that bi-clausal analysis is problematic, at least regarding non-subject honorifics.

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