

SYNTACTIC STATUS OF IDIOMATIC SUBJECTS IN JAPANESE*

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1. Introduction

Kishimoto (2009) argues that in Japanese, subjects undergo overt subject raising to TP, which is motivated by the specifier requirement of TP—i.e. the EEP requirement. At the same time, it is observed in Kishimoto that idioms constitute one class of exceptions to the generalization on subject raising: that is, idiomatic arguments that can be construed as subjects do not undergo raising to TP. This is a general pattern of subject idioms in Japanese, since we can find plenty of idioms possessing this property, such as *keti-ga tuku* (meanness-Nom attach) ‘criticize’ and *me-ga muku* (eye-Nom turn) ‘attract attention’.

The fact raises the question of why idiomatic subjects behave differently from ordinary subjects, in not undergoing raising to TP. Kishimoto claims that the specifier requirement is not imposed on T when the subject is included in a sequence that is interpreted non-compositionally. On the other hand, given that idioms are often taken to constitute complex predicates semantically (cf. Chomsky 1981), we could argue that idiomatic subjects do not undergo raising to TP, because they should form part of complex predicates.

If subject idioms serve as complex predicates as the whole, there would be no reason why the subjects should undergo subject raising. This analysis might look like a plausible alternative at first sight, but by looking at the facts of nominalizations, it will be argued that idiomatic subjects stand as elements independent of the verb (even though they might be semantically interpreted as complex predicates of some sort). The data provide evidence supporting the view that idiomatic subjects forming part of idiom sequences do not undergo subject raising in Japanese by virtue of their non-compositional nature, but not due to the formation of complex predicates.

2. Subjects in Idioms

With the advent of the VP-internal Subject Hypothesis (Sportiche 1988, Koopman and Sportiche 1991, Kitagawa 1986, McCloskey 1997), a theoretical issue has arisen as to

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whether or not subjects are raised to TP in Japanese. Broadly speaking, two different views are available in the linguistic literature on Japanese. Miyagawa (1989) and Kishimoto (2001) maintain that in Japanese, just like English, a specifier requirement is imposed on TP—i.e. the EEP requirement, and hence subjects are located in Spec of TP.¹ On the other hand, Fukui (1986, 1995) claims that in Japanese, unlike English, subjects remain VP-internally (see also Kuroda 1988).

Recently, Kishimoto (2009) has provided an array of new data in support of the former view that in Japanese, just like English, subjects should undergo overt raising to TP by virtue of the specifier requirement of TP. Kishimoto argues for the overt subject-raising view, in the light of the focus interpretations available for a *bakari*-sentence like (1).

- (1) Kodomo-ga manga-o yon-de-**bakari** i-ru.
child-Nom comic-Acc read-Ptcp-only be-Pres

‘The child is only reading comics.’ (only comics, *only the child)

As indicated in (1), *bakari* ‘only’ attached to the *te*-form of the main verb can be associated with the object, but not the subject. Thus, (1) can have an interpretation equivalent to one available for (2b), but not for (2a).

- (2) a. Kodomo-**bakari**-ga manga-o yon-de i-ru.
child-only-Nom comic-Acc read-Ptcp be-Pres

‘Only the child is reading comics.’

- b. Kodomo-ga manga-**bakari**-o yon-de i-ru.
child-Nom comic-only-Acc read-Ptcp be-Pres

‘The child is reading only comics.’

As is well-observed (see Rooth 1985, and many others), a focus element acquires a syntactic focusing domain, which is determined configurationally with reference to its syntactic position. As discussed by Kuroda (1992), Aoyagi (1999), among others, a focus particle (denoting exclusiveness) positioned to the immediate right of the verb extends its scope over the verb phrase. This suggests that the focus particle *bakari* ‘only’ attached to the verb takes scope over vP.

Since *bakari* can be associated with the object, but not the subject in (1), Kishimoto (2009) claims that, as a consequence of overt subject raising, the subject in (1) comes to

¹ In Miyagawa’s more recent work, such as Miyagawa (2001, 2005), it is claimed what can be attracted to Spec of TP is not limited to subjects, on the basis of the scope interaction of a quantifier *zen’in* ‘all’ and negation. Saito (2006) argues, however, that the phenomena have to do with something that takes place in a higher domain than the position of subjects. Saito’s argument raises an interesting question of whether the scope interaction of quantifiers and negation should take place, but in this paper, we will not go into this discussion.

occupy Spec of TP, as depicted in (3).

- (3) [TP Kodomo-ga [VP ~~Kodomo-ga~~ manga-o yon-de-**bakari** i-ru]]
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One of the main claims advanced by Kishimoto in the light of the focus interpretations available for the *bakari*-constructions is that ordinary nominative subjects undergo subject raising to TP.² As observed by Kishimoto, however, one class of exceptions to the generalization is found in idiomatic expressions.

- (4) a. Doodemoui koto-ni me-ga i-ku.
trivial thing-Dat eye-Nom go-Pres
'Trivial things attract attention.'
- b. Mata, ano-hito-ni tuki-ga mawat-ta.
again that-person-to attach-Nom turn-Past
'That person got lucky again.'

In (4), the idiomatic arguments are marked with nominative case.³ The verbs *iku* 'go' and *mawaru* 'turn' take a nominative subject when used non-idiomatically. We can easily ascertain that the verb *iku* takes a nominative subject, by looking at the facts of subject honorification and reflexivization, both of which have subject orientation.

- (5) a. *Ito-sensei-ga* soko-ni o-iki-ni-nat-ta.
Ito-teacher-Nom there-to Hon-go-Hon-Past
'Prof. Ito went there.'
- b. Mary_i-ga zibun_i-no heya-ni it-ta.
Mary-Nom self-Gen room-to go-Past
'Mary went to her room.'

As seen in (5), the nominative phrase can be the target of subject honorification, and also serves as the antecedent of the reflexive *zibun* 'self'. The data show that the nominative phrase is the subject of the clause.

In the case of the idioms in (4), due to the nature of idiomatic arguments, it is not possible to apply the subject tests to the nominative expressions in order to confirm their

² We will not discuss non-canonical subjects as well as dative subjects, which do not fall under the scope of the present paper. For the details of the discussion on the non-canonical subjects, see Kishimoto (2009).

³ Most typically, the idiomatic arguments are body-part expressions, but sometimes include other types of expressions such as those given in (4).

syntactic status. However, given that the subjects of these verbs (in non-idiomatic uses) are marked with nominative case, we can hypothesize that the nominative phrases are identified as the subjects of the idiomatic clauses.

As argued by Kishimoto (2009), there is good reason to believe that the nominative-marked idiomatic expressions are not raised to Spec of TP. In both idioms in (4), when the focus particle *bakari* is attached to the *te*-form of the verb, it can be associated with the dative phrase, as seen in (6).⁴

- (6) a. *Doodemoii koto-ni me-ga it-te-bakari i-ru.*
 trivial thing-Dat eye-Nom go-Ptcp-only be-Pres
 ‘Only trivial things are attracting attention.’
- b. *Ano-hito-ni tuki-ga mawat-te-bakari i-ru.*
 that-person-to attach-Nom turn-Ptcp-only be-Pres
 ‘Only that person’s is getting lucky.’

This fact suggests that the dative phrase is located within vP. Furthermore, the examples in (7) indicate that the nominative phrases cannot be moved across the dative phrases via scrambling.

- (7) a. ?**Me-ga_i doodemoii koto-ni t_i ik-u.*
 eye-Nom trivial thing-Dat go-Pres
 ‘Trivial things attract attention.’
- b. ?**Mata, tuki-ga_i ano-hito-ni t_i mawat-ta.*
 again attach-Nom that-person-Dat turn-Past
 ‘That person got lucky again.’

In the idioms at issue, then, the nominative phrase—which constitutes part of the idiomatic sequence—must occur to the right of the dative phrase residing in vP. The data suggest that the nominative-marked expressions in (4) serve as subjects, while remaining in vP-internal position (without subject raising to TP).

- (8) a. [TP [VP *Doodemoii koto-ni me-ga ik*] -u]
- b. [TP [VP *Ano-hito-ni uki-ga mawar*] -u]

Since *iku* ‘go’ and *mawaru* ‘turn’ are unaccusative verbs whose sole argument is generated in

⁴ *Ni*-marking could be either a case marker or a postposition (see Sadakane and Koizumi 1995, Kishimoto 2001). The distinction is not relevant here, and for ease of reference, we will assume that *ni*-marking represents ‘dative case’.

object position, there is a sense in which the subject that does not undergo raising to TP occurs to the right of a dative argument, as in illustrated in (8).⁵

The nominative phrases (i.e. the idiomatic arguments) occurring to the right of dative phrases in (4) should be counted as subjects syntactically. We can adduce more evidence in favor of the present view from other types of idioms. Even though the idioms in (4) do not have transitive counterparts, we can easily find idioms that can participate in transitivity alternation, while preserving their idiomatic meaning, as shown in (9).

- (9) a. Kono-ryoori-ni keti-ga tui-ta.
 that-dish-Dat meanness-Nom attach-Past
 ‘This dish was criticized.’
- b. Kare-ga kono-ryoori-ni keti-o take-ta.
 he-Nom this-dish-Dat meanness-Acc attach-Past
 ‘He criticized this dish.’

In (9b), the idiomatic expression *keti* ‘meanness’, which occurs to the right of the dative phrase, is marked in the accusative case, suggesting that it resides in direct object position. In (9a), the same expression is marked in the nominative case, and must also appear to the right of the dative phrase.

The accusative arguments of transitive idioms can often undergo passivization, and when passivization applies, they come to be marked with nominative case, as shown in (10).

- (10) Gakusei-ni keti-ga take-rare-ta.
 student-Dat meanness-Nom attach-Pass-Past
 ‘The student was criticized.’

The fact that the passive subject is marked with nominative case indicates that the accusative expression of the transitive idiom serves as an argument that may be promoted to subject via passivization.

The constituent position of the idiomatic arguments is fixed. Just as the accusative phrases cannot be scrambled across the dative phrases, so the nominative phrases cannot be moved over the dative phrases via scrambling, as seen in (11).

- (11) a. ?*Keti-ga_i kono-ryoori-ni t_i tui-ta.
 meanness-Nom that-dish-Dat attach-Past
 ‘This dish was criticized.’

⁵ This generalization does not hold in English, however, because idiomatic subjects in English idioms are placed in Spec of TP.

- b. *Kare-ga keti-o_i kono-ryoori-ni t_i take-ta.
 he-Nom meanness-Acc this-dish-Dat attach-Past
 ‘He criticized this dish.’

Furthermore, the examples in (12) show that the focus particle *bakari* attached to the verb can be associated with the dative phrases.

- (12) a. Kare-ga ryoori-ni keti-o take-te-**bakari** i-ru.
 he-Nom dish-Dat meanness-Acc attach-Ptcp-only be-Pres
 ‘He only criticize the dishes.’ (only the dishes)
- b. *Kono-ryoori-ni* keti-ga tui-te-**bakari** i-ru.
 this-dish-Dat meanness-Nom attach-Ptcp-only be-Pres
 ‘This dish was only criticized.’ (only this dish)

The availability of the intended interpretations in (12) shows that the dative phrases are located within vP. Furthermore, since the nominative phrases must follow the dative phrases, the nominative phrases should also be located within vP.

The intransitive idioms at issue take a dative-nominative case pattern. Since some stative predicates displaying this type of case marking pattern take dative subjects, one might suspect that the dative phrase in (9a) should serve as subject. The fact of the matter is that it does not (i.e. the idiomatic predicates, which are non-stative, do not take dative subjects).⁶ We can further confirm that the dative phrases do not function as subjects, by looking at the examples in (13).

- (13) a. **Ito-sensei-ni* keti-ga o-tuki-ni-nat-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Dat meanness-Nom Hon-attach-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito was criticized.’
- b. *Gakusei-ga *Ito-sensei-ni* keti-o o-tuke-ni-nat-ta.
 student-Nom Ito-teacher-Dat meanness-Acc Hon-attach-Hon-Past
 ‘The student criticized Prof. Ito.’

The unacceptability of the sentences in (13) indicates that the dative phrases of the idioms *keti-ga tuku* ‘be criticized’ and *keti-o tuku* ‘criticize’ cannot be targeted by subject honorification. This is what we would expect if the dative phrases do not function as subjects. On the other hand, the nominative phrase of the idiom *keti-o tuku*, which serves as an

⁶ For the discussion of some exceptions to this generalization, see Kishimoto (2005).

ordinary subject, can be the legitimate target of subject honorification.⁷

- (14) *Ito-sensei-ga* *gakusei-ni* *keti-o* *o-tuke-ni-nat-ta.*
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Dat meanness-Acc Hon-attach-Hon-Past

‘Prof. Ito criticized the student.’

Exactly the same patterns are observed with regard to subject honorification when the verb is used non-idiomatically, as shown in (15).

- (15) a. **Ito-sensei-ni* *penki-ga* *o-tuki-ni-nat-ta.*
 Ito-teacher-Dat paint-Nom Hon-attach-Hon-Past

‘Prof. Ito got a paint.’

- b. **Gakusei-ga* *Ito-sensei-ni* *penki-o* *o-tuke-ni-nat-ta.*
 student-Nom Ito-teacher-Dat paint-Acc Hon-attach-Hon-Past

‘The student smeared paint on Prof. Ito.’

- c. *Ito-sensei-ga* *gakusei-ni* *penki-o* *o-tuke-ni-nat-ta.*
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Dat paint-Acc Hon-attach-Hon-Past

‘Prof. Ito smeared paint on the student.’

The examples in (15a-b) show that the dative phrases do not count as the legitimate target of subject honorification. In fact, (15c) suggests that with the transitive idiom *keti-o tuku*, the nominative phrase should serve as the subject. Needless to say, when the intransitive verb *tuku* ‘attach’ takes a human subject (in the non-idiomatic use), subject honorification can target the nominative phrase.

- (16) *Ito-sensei-ga* *mae-no* *hito-ni* *o-tuki-ni-nat-ta.*
 Ito-teacher-Nom front-Gen man-Dat Hon-attach-Hon-Past

‘Prof. Ito got very close to the man in the front.’

Since the intransitive idiom *keti-ga tuku* displays the morphological pattern that obtains for an intransitive verb *tuku* ‘attach’ used in the non-idiomatic sense, we can maintain that the idiomatic argument in (9a)—marked in the nominative case—should count as a syntactic subject.

In Japanese, a fairly large number of intransitive idioms place nominative-marked idiomatic arguments to the right of *ni*-marked phrases. Some of such idioms are listed in (17).

⁷ Some idioms (e.g. *kuti-o tataku* (mouth-Acc beat) ‘talk’) are not consonant with subject honorification due to their derogatory meanings.

predicate, it does not stand in argument position syntactically. If so, we could plausibly say that the argument does not undergo subject raising to TP.

The complex predicate analysis at first blush might look feasible, especially in view of the fact that an idiomatic sequence is often claimed to form a complex predicate (see e.g. Chomsky 1981). However, a closer look at the idiom data reveals that the idiomatic arguments are not incorporated into the verbs. Empirical evidence in support of this view can be derived from the nominalization facts of idioms. We will turn to this discussion in the next section.

3. *Kata*-nominalizations

In this section, we will show that *kata*-nominalizations provide evidence that idiomatic arguments contained in the idiom sequences are counted as syntactic arguments, rather than form part of complex predicates—i.e. they are located in argument position. It is also shown that some idioms contain an idiomatic argument incorporated into the verb. We argue that the idiomatic arguments of such idioms behave differently from the idiomatic subjects which Kishimoto (2009) claims should stay in the base position without raising to TP.

To begin with, as often discussed in the Japanese literature (e.g. Kishimoto 2006, Sugioka 1992), when a verb is nominalized with the addition of the suffix *kata* ‘way’, its arguments are marked in the genitive case, as illustrated in (21).

- (21) a. Sensei-ga gakusei-o home-ta.
 teacher-Nom student-Acc praise-Past
 ‘The teacher praised the students.’
- b. sensei-no gakusei-no home-kata
 teacher-Gen student-Gen praise-way
 ‘the way of the teacher’s praising the students’

In *kata*-nominalization, it is generally the case that verbal case—nominative or accusative case—is changed to (nominal) genitive case. Thus, if any argument of the verb *homeru* appears in the verbal case, the nominalized expression turns out to be illicit.

- (22) a. *sensei-ga gakusei-no home-kata
 teacher-Nom student-Gen praise-way
 ‘the way of the teacher’s praising the students’
- b. *sensei-no gakusei-o home-kata
 teacher-Gen student-Acc praise-way
 ‘the way of the teacher’s praising the students’

The examples in (22) illustrate that ordinary arguments consistently receive nominal case (i.e. genitive case) inside *kata*-nominals.

Even though this pattern of case marking is fairly pervasive in Japanese, we can still find cases where verbal marking is assigned to nominal elements by *kata*-nominalization. First, (23) illustrates that the nominal *gakusei* ‘student’ retains its verbal marking *ni* even when it is embedded in a *kata*-nominal (see Martin 1975).

- (23) Mary-no gakusei-ni nari-kata
 Mary-Gen student-Dat become-way
 ‘the way of Mary’s becoming a student’

Nominals embedded under *naru* ‘become’ are verbally marked even if they appear in *kata*-nominals, by virtue of the fact that they serve as nominal predicates syntactically, rather than arguments.⁹

Second, as discussed by Kishimoto (2008), Japanese has some idiomatic expressions such as *te-ni ireru* ‘obtain’, where a dative expression occurs to the right of an accusative phrase. When this type of idiomatic expression is nominalized, the verbal case of the idiomatic argument is retained.

- (24) a. Mary-ga kuruma-o te-ni ire-ta.
 Mary-Nom car-Acc hand-Dat enter-Past
 ‘Mary got a car.’
 b. Mary-no kuruma-no te-ni/*-e-no ire-kata
 Mary-Gen car-Acc hand-Dat/-to-Gen enter-way
 ‘the way of Mary’s getting a car’

As seen in (24) an (idiomatic) argument standing to the right of an accusative argument receives verbal dative case rather than genitive case. In the light of this fact, Kishimoto (2008) claims that Japanese nominalizations (such as *kata*-nominalizations) include two different case-marking domains, as depicted in (25).¹⁰

⁹ *Naru* ‘become’ selects a predicate as its complement. This can be verified by the fact that the complement position can be filled by an adjective.

- (i) Kodomo-ga kawaiku nat-ta.
 child-Nom cute become-Past
 ‘The child became cute.’

¹⁰ Kishimoto (2008) mainly deals with nominalization formed with the addition of the suffix *-sa*, which derives a nominal from an adjective, but it has also been shown that the same generalization

- (27) Kodomo-wa sore-o ki-ni it-ta.
 child-Top it-Acc mind-Dat enter-Past

‘The child liked it.’

On the surface, dative-marked expression *ki-ni* in *ki-ni iru* ‘like’ appears in the surface position as the argument *te* ‘hand’ contained in an idiom like *te-ni ire-ru* ‘obtain’. However, there are a number of reasons why the idiom *ki-ni iru*, unlike *te-ni ireru*, should be analyzed as forming a single predicate with the verb.

First, the idiom *ki-ni iru* can have both intransitive and transitive uses. This idiom follows a regular alternation pattern, in that the accusative phrase of the transitive version corresponds to the nominative phrase of its intransitive counterpart. Nevertheless, the verb form is invariant.

- (28) Kodomo-wa sore-ga ki-ni it-ta.
 child-Top it-Nom mind-Dat enter-Past

‘The child liked it.’

The regular morphological forms for the predicates meaning ‘enter’ are *hairu* (for an intransitive verb) and *ireru* (for a transitive verb). The intransitive verb *hairu* is a suppletive form originated from a complex verb *hai-iru* (crawl-enter).¹¹ Note that other paired idioms such as *te-ni ireru* ‘obtain’ and *te-ni hairu* ‘be obtained’ have regular verb forms.

- (29) a. Mary-ga hon-o te-ni ire-ta.
 Mary-Nom book-Acc hand-Dat enter-Past

‘Mary obtained the book.’

- b. Hon-ga te-ni hait-ta.
 book-Nom hand-Dat enter-Past

‘The book was obtained.’

The morphology of the theme argument in the two sentences in (27) and (28) signals that there is an intransitive-transitive alternation. In the idioms (27) and (28), the archaic form of *iru* ‘enter’—which is not used in ordinary context—appears as the predicate, which suggests that the idiom should have become frozen, and reanalyzed as a single lexical item, with the loss of its compositionality. If so, the entire idiomatic sequence should count as a single predicate.

Second, the fact that the idiom *ki-ni iru* serves as a complex predicate is justified by the fact that a particle cannot intervene between the nominative/accusative argument and the verb, as illustrated in (30).

¹¹ Yo Matsumoto (p.c.) has drawn my attention to this fact.

- (30) *Kodomo-wa sore-ga/o ki-ni-wa it-ta.
 child-Top it-Nom/-ACC mind-Dat-Top enter-Past
 ‘The child liked it.’

As discussed by Kishimoto (2005, 2008), a focus particle is generally allowed to intervene between lexical items if they are syntactically separate. (31) shows that with an idiom like *te-ni ireru* ‘obtain’, there is such a syntactic break between the dative phrase and the verb.

- (31) Kodomo-wa sore-o te-ni-wa ire-ta.
 child-Top it-Acc hand-Dat-Top enter-Past
 ‘The child got it.’

The unacceptability of particle insertion in (30) suggests in turn that in the case of the idiom *ki-ni iru*, the dative-marked argument is incorporated into the verb to derive a complex predicate. This property of *ki-ni iru* crucially differs from what we observe for the idiom *te-ni ireru*, which has a regular form of the verb.

The idiomatic sequences of *ki-ni iru* and *te-ni ireru* differ in the degree of tightness, but the difference in the status of the dative phrases we observe for the two idioms is not reflected in the morphological marking on the idiomatic expressions under *kata*-nominalization.

- (32) a. kodomo-no sore-no ki-ni iri-kata
 child-Gen it-Gen mind-Dat enter-way
 ‘the way of child liking it.’
 b. kodomo-no sore-no te-ni ire-kata
 child-Gen it-Gen hand-Dat enter-way
 ‘the way of child’s getting it.’

As seen in (32), the idiomatic arguments of both idioms receive dative marking in the *kata*-nominals. This is due to the fact that the dative-marked expressions located to the right of accusative phrases appear in the verbal-marking domain irrespective of whether they stand in an argument position or are incorporated into the verb.

In contradistinction, if idiomatic arguments are marked with either nominative or accusative case, different case marking patterns should emerge under *kata*-nominalization. If nominative and accusative phrases appear in argument position, they are located in the nominal-marking domain. On the other hand, if these arguments are rendered as part of complex predicates (via incorporation), they should reside in the verbal-marking domain. Thus, the relevant idiomatic expressions should be assigned different case markings according to whether they constitute part of complex predicates or not. A case in point is found in the idioms in (33).


- (33) a. John-ga sono-koto-ni ki-o take-ta.
 John-Nom that-matter-Dat mind-Acc attach-Past
 ‘John paid attention to that matter.’
- b. John-ga sono-koto-ni ki-ga tui-ta.
 John-Nom that-matter-Dat mind-Nom attach-Past
 ‘John noticed that matter.’

The transitive idiom (33a) can be altered to an intransitive one, while preserving its idiomatic meaning, as in (33b). Interestingly, when the idioms are nominalized with the addition of *kata* ‘way’, we observe the following patterns.

- (34) a. kare-no sono-koto-e-no ki-no/-ga tuki-kata
 he-Gen that-matter-to-Gen mind-Gen/-Nom attach-way
 ‘the way of his noticing that matter’
- b. kare-no sono-koto-e-no ki-no/-o take-kata
 he-Gen that-matter-to-Gen mind-Gen/-Acc attach-way
 ‘the way of his paying attention to that matter’

The notable fact is that the idioms *ki-o takeru* and *ki-ga tuku* allow both verbal case (i.e. nominative or accusative case) and nominal case (i.e. genitive case) to appear on the idiomatic argument *ki* ‘mind’.

Under the view held here, the dual possibility of case marking should come from a difference in structural position: that is, the idiomatic arguments in these idioms are allowed to be located in either the nominal-marking or the verbal-marking domain. This means that the idiomatic arguments of *ki-o takeru* and *ki-ga tuku* can stand as elements syntactically separate from the verb or can be incorporated into the verb, as illustrated in (35).

- (35) a. [ki-o [_v take]-ru]
 b. [~~ki~~-o [_v ki-o take]-ru]


Note in passing that in Japanese, nominative case may be changed to genitive case via ‘nominative-genitive’ conversion, which can operate on arguments embedded under relative and noun-complement clauses (see Harada 1971, Watanabe 1996 and many others).

- (36) a. [John-ga/-no kai-ta] hon
 John-Nom/-Gen write-Past book
 ‘the book which John wrote’

- b. [hon-o/*-no kai-ta] hito
 book-Acc/-Gen write-Past person
 ‘the person who wrote the book’

As shown in (36), nominative-genitive conversion can apply to a nominative argument, but not an accusative argument. In (34), both nominative and accusative arguments have the option of having genitive case marking. Thus, we can postulate that the genitive marking in (34) is not derived via the rule of nominative-genitive conversion.

With the idioms *ki-ga tuku* and *ki-o tuku*, the nominal expressions may appear in argument position, which is separate from the verb syntactically, because a particle is allowed to attach to the right of it, as seen in (37).

- (37) a. John-wa sono-koto-ni ki-wa tute-te i-ta (tumori da).
 John-Top that-fact-Dat mind-Top attach-Ptcp be-Past intention Cop
 ‘John intended to pay attention to that fact.’
- b. Kare-wa sono-koto-ni ki-wa tui-ta (yooda).
 he-Top that-fact-Dat mind-Top attach-Past seem
 ‘He seems to have noticed that fact.’

At the same time, we can find empirical evidence supporting the view that the accusative-marked argument of *ki-o tuku* may be incorporated into the verb. Note here that with the transitive idiom *ki-o tuku*, the prefix part of the verbal honorific can be attached to the accusative argument, as well as the verb.¹²

¹² The transitive idiom *ki-o tuku* allows the option of attaching the honorific prefix to the verb, but the acceptability of this form seems to be subject to speaker variation: while some speakers accept them, others find it marginal. By contrast, the honorific form where the prefix is attached to the accusative expression is an unmarked form, and acceptable for all speakers I have consulted. Some speakers who accept both forms detect a slight, but clear, difference in meaning between the two forms. On the other hand, this honorific prefix does not attach to the nominative argument of the intransitive idiom of *ki-ga tuku*, as seen in (i)

- (i) a.??? Ito-sensei-ga sono-koto-ni o-ki-ga tuki-ni-nat-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom that-matter-Dat Hon-mind-Nom attach-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito noticed that matter.’
- b. Ito-sensei-ga sono-koto-ni ki-ga o-tuki-ni-nat-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom that-matter-Dat mind-Nom Hon-attach-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito noticed that matter.’

In the case of *ki-ga tuku*, the only option available is to attach the prefix to the verb. Note that this idiom allows the idiomatic argument to retain its verbal nominative marking, which indicates that the argument can form a complex predicate with the verb. If so, it is reasonable to state that the

(38) a. Ito-sensei-ga sono-koto-ni totemo **o**-ki-o take-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom that-matter-Dat much Hon-mind-Acc stand-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito paid much attention to that matter.’

b. ?Ito-sensei-ga sono-koto-ni totemo ki-o **o**-take-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom that-matter-Dat much mind-Acc Hon-attach-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito paid much attention to that matter.’

The honorific maker *o* *-ni-naru* has a structural restriction such that the initial part *o*- can only be associated with a verbal element. Thus, as shown in (39), the idiomatic expression *kuti* ‘mouth’ appearing in the idiom *kuti-ni dasu* does not permit the addition of *o*- even if it is an argument that must appear to the right of the accusative phrase.

(39) a. Ito-sensei-ga gakusei-no koto-o kuti-ni **o**-dasi-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Gen matter-Acc mouth-Dat Hon-put.out-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito cut in on the student’s matter.’

b. *Ito-sensei-ga gakusei-no koto-o **o**-kuti-ni dasi-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Gen matter-Acc Hon-mouth-Dat put.out-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito cut in on the student’s matter.’

This is the morphological pattern we observe for most transitive idioms. On the other hand, the idiom *ki-ni iru*, which forms a single predicate by virtue of incorporating the idiomatic argument, shows that *o*- can only be attached to the left of *ki* ‘mind’, as seen in (40).

(40) a. Ito-sensei-ga gakusei-o **o**-ki-ni iri-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Acc Hon-mind-Dat enter-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito liked the student.’

b. *Ito-sensei-ga gakusei-o ki-ni **o**-iri-**ni-nat**-ta.
 Ito-teacher-Nom student-Acc mind-Dat Hon-enter-Hon-Past
 ‘Prof. Ito liked the student.’

Importantly, the accusative argument of *ki-o takeru*, just like the dative argument of *ki-ni iru*, tolerates the addition of the honorific prefix *o*-. This would not be possible if the accusative nominal acts as an argument syntactically independent of the verb. Thus, the acceptability of (38a) suggests that the idiomatic accusative should constitute part of a complex predicate.

Given the fact that the idiomatic arguments of *ki-o takeru* and *ki-ga tuku* may be marked

attachment of the honorific prefix to the nominative argument of *ki-ga tuku* in (ia) is ruled out by some independent restriction.

with either verbal or nominal case under *kata*-nominalization, as seen in (34), we can conclude that the idioms have two options of placing their idiomatic arguments in constituent structure: the idiomatic arguments may stand in argument position, as in (35a), or may be incorporated into the verb, as in (35b).

The fact that *ki-o takeru* forms a single predicate is reflected in the availability of a derived nominal as well. As seen in (41), just as *ki-ni iru* may be used as a derived nominal when the verb takes the adverbial form, so the adverbial form of *ki-o takeru* can occur as a derived nominal.

- (41) a. kodomo-no o-ki-ni-iri
 child-Gen Hon-mind-Dat-enter
 ‘the children’s favorite’
- b. Soko-de ki-o-tuke-o si-nasai!
 there-in mind-Acc-attach do-Imp
 ‘Do ‘attention!’ there.’

Importantly, in the derived nominals (*o-*)*ki-ni-iri* ‘favorite’ and *ki-o-tuke* ‘attention’, the verbal marking that appears on the idiomatic argument is retained.

- (42) a. ki-ni iru > ki-ni-iri
 mind-Dat enter mind-Dat-entering
- b. ki-o takeru > ki-o-tuke
 mind-Acc attach mind-Acc-attaching

This does not happen if an idiomatic argument constitutes an element separate from the verb. If such an idiomatic expression appears in a derived nominal (while retaining an idiomatic meaning), it appears in the bare form—i.e. without case marking.

- (43) a. kuti-o dasu > kuti-dasi
 mouth-Acc extend mouth-extending
 ‘cut in’ ‘cutting in’
- b. kokoro-ni kakeru > kokoro-gake
 heart-Dat hang heart-hanging
 ‘keep ... in mind’ ‘keeping in mind’
- c. te-ga kireru > te-gire
 hand-Nom cut hand-cutting
 ‘be through with’ ‘being through with’

As exemplified in (43), verbal case marking—regardless of its type—is not retained if the argument appears in a derived nominal. This state of affairs is expected, because there is no verbal head licensing this kind of marking in the derived nominals. Nevertheless, verbal marking is retained in the derived nominals in (40). This suggests that the entire idiomatic sequences of *ki-ni iru* and *ki-o takeru* are rendered as single predicates—viz. the idiomatic argument becomes reanalyzed as forming part of a complex predicate by way of getting incorporated into the verb.

With *ki-o takeru* and *ki-ga tuku*, the entire idiomatic sequence may serve as a single predicate. The present analysis leads to the prediction that when the idiomatic argument of *ki-o takeru* is incorporated into the verb, the honorific prefix *o-* will be attached to the argument. In this case, we would expect that the argument can be assigned only verbal marking under *kata*-nominalization. This is expectation is in fact correct.

- (44) Ito-sensei-no o-ki-o/*-no take-**ni-nari**-kata
 Ito-teacher-Gen Hon-mind-Acc/-Gen attach-Hon-way
 ‘the way of Prof. Ito’s paying attention’

Example (44) shows that in the case of an idiomatic argument that forms part of a complex predicate, its verbal marking must be retained under *kata*-nominalization, even though it is a case marker that is normally changed to genitive case.

Recall now that in the idioms we saw in the previous section, the nominative-marked expressions are placed to the right of the dative phases, but the nominative arguments consistently receive nominal marking under *kata*-nominalization, as confirmed by the additional examples given in (45).

- (45) a. Ito-sensei-e-no keti-no/*-ga tuki-kata
 Ito-teacher-to-Gen meanness-Acc/-Nom attach-way
 ‘the way of criticizing Prof. Ito.’
- b. Ano-hito-e-no tuki-no/*-ga mawari-kata
 that-person-to-Gen attach-Gen/-Nom turn-way
 ‘the way of that man’s getting lucky’

It should be clear now that the idiomatic arguments in (45), on the basis of which Kishimoto argues for the absence of subject-raising for idiomatic subjects, reside in the nominal-marking domain. Importantly, the nominalization data show that the arguments are not incorporated into the predicates. This suggests that the nominative-marked idiomatic arguments of *ki-ga tuku* and *tuki-ga mawaru* are located in the structural position where the internal arguments of unaccusative verbs are base-generated: that is, the idiomatic expressions counting as subjects remain in their base-generated direct object position without subject raising to Spec of TP, as suggested by Kishimoto (2009).

4. Conclusion

In Japanese, subjects included in idiomatic sequences do not undergo raising to Spec of TP. Kishimoto (2009) claims that when an idiomatic subject—which is interpreted non-compositionally—appears in a clause, the EPP requirement of TP is voided. As a possible alternative, it might be argued that the absence of subject raising should come from its constituting part of a complex predicate, but we have seen that this cannot be the case. On the basis of *kata*-nominalizations, it has been argued that idiomatic subjects which Kishimoto claims to show the absence of subject-raising are not incorporated into the verbs syntactically. The data provide evidence that idiomatic subjects remain vP internally, even if they are located in argument position without forming complex predicates.

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