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Reiko Vermeulen*

1 Introduction

1.1 Nominative phrases in Japanese

It is well known that Japanese permits more than one nominative phrase in a single clause. In addition to the subject, the particle *ga*, which is generally regarded as the nominative case marker, can mark a possessor of the subject, as in (1), or an adjunct, as in (2).¹

(1) *Possessive Multiple Nominative Construction*

usagi-ga mimi-ga naga-i.

rabbit-GA car-GA long-Pres

'It is rabbits which have long ears.' (modified from Takahashi, 1994: 395)

(2) *Adjunct Multiple Nominative Construction*

ano mise-ga gakusee-ga yoku hon-o kau.

that shop-GA student-GA often book-Acc buy

'It is at that shop that students often buy books.'

In both sentences, the second *ga*-phrase functions as the subject and the sentence-initial *ga*-phrase is obligatorily focused.² The standard view in the literature is that all *ga*-phrases are nominative NPs or DPs and that they are uniformly licensed in multiple specifier or adjoined positions in one particular projection, such as TP, IP or VP (Fukuda, 1991; Fukui, 1986; Heycock,

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¹There are two other types of multiple nominative constructions. One involves a stative predicate, while the other involves a locative phrase and an existential predicate. For reasons of space, I will not discuss these types in this paper, but see Vermeulen (2002).

²More precisely, it must receive an exhaustive listing reading (Kuno, 1973).

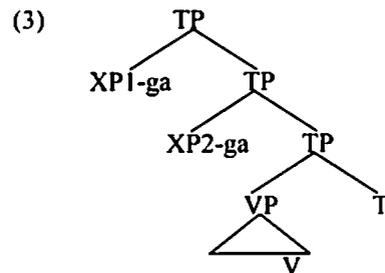
1993b; Hiraiwa, 2001; Saito, 1982; Ura, 1996; among many others). In other words, an explicit distinction between the two constructions is rarely made. Although the superficial similarities seem to support a unified approach, there are in fact a number of significant differences between the two constructions, which will become clearer later.

In this paper, I will argue, contrary to the standard view, that the particle *ga* does not always function as the nominative case marker. It can also mark focus. More specifically, *ga* functions as a case marker whenever it marks an NP bearing a θ -role. However, it is also interpreted as a focus marker, if it appears on the first *ga*-phrase in a multiple nominative construction. I will argue furthermore that a possessive *ga*-phrase is a nominative NP, licensed by predication, while *ga* attached to an adjunct *ga*-phrase is interpreted as a focus marker. I will first discuss theoretical assumptions made in the analysis, and then deal with each construction.

1.2 Theoretical assumptions

Firstly, following Takezawa (1987), I assume that tense licenses nominative case in Japanese. I remain agnostic here as to whether case licensing takes the form of feature-checking or assignment by a head.

Secondly, although there are various alternatives, I will assume here, following the standard approach, that a single tensed head can license more than one *ga*-phrase in multiple specifier positions in its own projection.³ This yields a structure like the following for licensing of multiple *ga*-phrases.



Finally, according to the structure in (3), the obligatorily focused constituent is the higher one of the two *ga*-phrases. I assume a correlation between this position of the *ga*-phrase and the focus imposed on it, and propose the following generalisation.

³See Whitman (2001) and Vermeulen (2002), which assume multiple heads for licensing multiple *ga*-phrases.

(4) *Focus Generalisation*

Ga is interpreted as a focus marker if the constituent to which it is attached c-commands at least another *ga*-phrase and no *ga*-phrase c-commands it.

The generalisation essentially states that *ga* is interpreted as a focus marker if it appears on the first *ga*-phrase in a sequence of multiple *ga*-phrases.⁴ I will take this generalisation to function as an interpretational rule which applies cyclically and as such it will regulate the distribution of *ga* as a focus marker.⁵

These three assumptions will remain constant. The differences between the two constructions will fall out from independent properties of each type.

2 Possessive Multiple Nominative Construction

2.1 Licensing of possessive nominative phrases

A possessor of the subject need not always appear in the nominative. It may alternatively bear the genitive case marker *no* (Kuno, 1973):

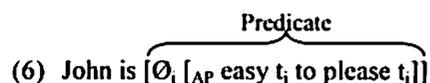
- (5) *usagi-ga/no mimi-ga naga-i.*
 rabbit-GA/Gen ear-GA long-Pres

One insight that emerges from the literature is that a possessive genitive phrase occupies a position internal to the subject, while a possessive *ga*-phrase appears externally to the subject and is licensed by predication (Fu-

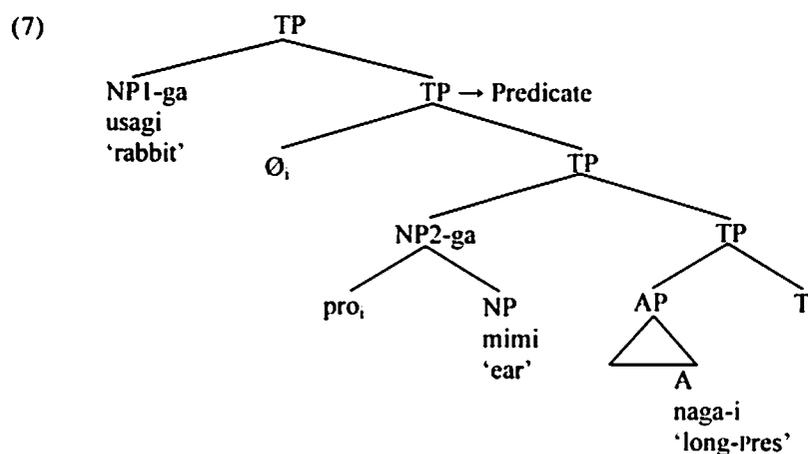
⁴There is an exception to the generalisation. Kuroda (1986) observes that a possessive *ga*-phrase need not be focused in an embedded clause and Satoshi Tomioka (p.c.) tells me that for him, some adjunct *ga*-phrases need not be focused in an embedded clause. At present, I have no account for this contrast between the matrix and the embedded contexts.

⁵Caroline Heycock (p.c.) and Satoshi Tomioka (p.c.) have suggested to me that the obligatory focus of the first possessive *ga*-phrase may be accounted for on a par with another construction in Japanese, in which the subject *ga*-phrase of an intransitive stative predicate must be focused, although it is the only *ga*-phrase in the sentence (Kuno, 1973; Heycock, 1993a). We seem to have a situation where two generalisations overlap. The generalisation in (4) misses the potential correlation between the first possessive *ga*-phrase and the subject *ga*-phrase of an intransitive stative predicate, while the alternative misses the observation that the first *ga*-phrase in a sequence of multiple *ga*-phrases must be focused. I leave for future research how or whether the generalisation in (4) can be extended to include other instances of obligatorily focused *ga*-phrases.

kuda, 1991; Heycock, 1993b; Ura, 1996). However, the question of how this predication relation is achieved is often not satisfactorily addressed. I argue that it is established by means of a null operator as in the case of English *tough* constructions. In a *tough* sentence, a null operator moves from the complement position of the infinitive to the specifier position of the infinitival clause and then perhaps to a specifier position of AP, as shown in (6) (Browning, 1987 and references therein). This movement has the effect of θ -role promotion, whereby the internal θ -role of the *please* is promoted and assigned to the clause external DP *John*. This allows *John* to be interpreted as the complement of *please*. In other words, θ -role promotion derives a predicate out of the AP, since it provides the AP with an external θ -role.



Applying this mechanism to the possessive multiple nominative construction, I propose the following structure for the example in (1).



The possessive *ga*-phrase *usagi-ga* 'rabbit-GA' is base-generated in a specifier position in TP. A null operator binds a *pro* in the immediately following NP projection, which has the effect that an NP-internal θ -role (possessor role) is promoted. The promoted θ -role is assigned to the possessive *ga*-phrase, explaining the possessive relation between the two *ga*-phrases. The null operator does not move from the position which *pro* occupies, since

such movement would violate the CED.⁶

Ga attached to the possessive *ga*-phrase functions as the nominative case marker, as the possessive *ga*-phrase is an NP carrying a θ -role. However, it is also interpreted as a focus marker in (7), because this *ga*-phrase appears as the highest *ga*-phrase in a sequence of multiple *ga*-phrases (cf. (4)).

There is one significant consequence to the proposed approach. If a possessive *ga*-phrase is licensed by predication, it should share syntactic properties with 'normal' subjects and the clause to its right should behave like a predicate. I will now provide evidence showing that these predictions are correct.

2.2 Subject-like properties of a possessive *ga*-phrase

A number of researchers have observed that a possessive *ga*-phrase displays various subject-like properties. Since these observations are uncontroversial, for reasons of space, I will simply list them here and not discuss them in detail.

- (8) a. Under an ECM/control verb, the leftmost possessive *ga*-phrase may appear in the accusative (Heycock, 1993b; Takahashi, 1994).
 b. A possessive *ga*-phrase can bind the subject-oriented anaphor *zibun* (Fukuda, 1991; Heycock, 1993b; C. Takahashi, 1996; Ura, 1996).
 c. A possessive *ga*-phrase can control PRO in a *nagara*-clause 'while'-clause, which requires the closest c-commanding subject to be the antecedent (Perlmutter, 1984; D. Takahashi, 1996; Ura, 1996, 2000).
 d. When a possessive *ga*-phrase refers to a person for whom the speaker has respect, subject honorification can be triggered on the predicate (Takahashi, 1994, 1996).

2.3 Predicate-hood of the clause to the right of a possessive *ga*-phrase

There are two pieces of evidence suggesting predicate-hood of the clause in question. Firstly, in a coordinate construction, both conjuncts must be of the same semantic category. The clause in question can be conjoined with a

⁶The idea that a null operator can be base-generated is not so peculiar, as there are other instances of base-generated null operators, for instance, an island in English containing a resumptive *pro*, as in the following example.

(i) This is the man [who, they think [that [if Mary marries him,] everyone will be happy]].

clause which contains no nominative phrase by the predicate coordinator *katu* 'and' (Fukui & Sakai, 2003). Both conjuncts are interpreted as referring to the clause-external *ga*-phrase, *usagi-ga*, 'rabbit-GA'.

- (9) $[_{TP}$ *usagi-ga* $\overbrace{[_{TP}$ *tiisaku* $]$ *katu* $\overbrace{[_{TP}$ \emptyset $[_{TP}$ $[_{NP}$ *pro* *mimi* $]-ga$ *naga-i* $]$ $]$ $]$
 rabbit-GA small.be and ear-GA long-Pres
 'It is rabbits which are small and have long ears.'

Secondly, predicates can usually be modified by a degree adverb such as *very*. (Bresnan 1973). The following examples show that both conjuncts in (9) are indeed predicates, as they can be modified by *totemo* 'very'.

- (10)a. *usagi-ga* *totemo* [*husahusa-site-iru*]
 rabbit-GA very furry-do-Pres
 'It is rabbits which are very furry.'
 b. *usagi-ga* *totemo* [*mimi-ga* *naga-i*]
 rabbit-GA very ear-GA long-Pres
 'It is rabbits which have very long ears.'

These facts, together with the evidence from the subjecthood tests, demonstrate that a possessive *ga*-phrase is licensed by predication.

2.4 Further Predictions

The proposed analysis makes five further predictions. Firstly, if θ -role promotion is involved in deriving the possessive multiple nominative construction, this operation should not be limited to possessors of the subject. Any argument of the subject should be able to appear as a *ga*-phrase in a position external to the subject and receive its θ -role in that position. The following examples illustrate that this prediction is borne out.

- (11) *Roma-no/ga* *hakai-ga* *hisai* *datta*.
 Rome-Gen/GA destruction-GA horrible was
 'Rome's destruction was horrible.'
 (12) *John-no/ga* *hihan-ga* *takusan* *atta*.
 John-Gen/GA criticism-GA many were
 'There were many criticisms against John.'

By contrast, an adjunct modifier of the subject should not be able to appear as a *ga*-phrase in a position external to the subject. An adjunct does not

receive a θ -role, hence there is no θ -role to promote. The following examples demonstrate that this is indeed true.⁷

(13) saikin-wa ame-no/*ga hi-ga ooi.
 recently-Top rain-Gen/GA day-GA many-pres
 'Recently, there have been many rainy days.'

(14) huta-kire-no/*ga hamu-ga yuusyoku-ni naru.
 two-slice-Gen/GA ham-GA supper-to make.up
 'Two slices of ham make up a supper.'

(modified from Saito & Murasugi, 1990:99)

Secondly, a predicate generally licenses no more than one external argument. It should therefore be impossible for more than one argument of the same subject to appear with *ga* externally to the subject. This prediction is correct. In Japanese, all arguments of a deverbal noun can appear in the genitive in the projection of the noun, as shown by (15a). In (15b), the agent of the deverbal noun 'criticize' is realised with *ga*, while (15c) illustrates that it is possible for a theme argument of the subject to appear externally to the subject with the agent remaining internally to the subject. However, as (15d) demonstrates, it is not possible for both the agent and the theme to be licensed externally to the subject.

- (15) a. [sensee-no gakusee-no hihan]-ga hidokatta.
 teachers-Gen students-Gen criticism-GA terrible-Past
 'The teachers' criticism against the students was terrible.'
- b. sensee-ga [gakusee-no hihan]-ga hidokatta.
 teachers-GA students-Gen criticism-GA terrible-Past
- c. gakusee-ga [sensee-no hihan]-ga hidokatta.
 students-GA teachers-Gen criticism-GA terrible-Past
- d. *sensee-ga gakusee-ga [hihan]-ga hidokatta.
 teachers-GA students-GA criticism-GA terrible-Past

A third prediction is that since θ -role promotion is potentially a recursive operation and there is no limit on the number of specifier positions permitted in one projection, there can be an indefinitely large number of possessive *ga*-phrases, as long as one possessive *ga*-phrase modifies the immediately following *ga*-phrase. This is indeed true (Kuno, 1973; Tateishi, 1991; Takahashi, 1994).

⁷This of course raises the question of what kind of elements receive a θ -role. This issue is beyond the scope of this paper. I will therefore not discuss it here.

- (16) kitahankyuu-ga anettai-ga usagi-ga mimi-ga naga-i.
 N.Hemisphere-GA subtropics-GA rabbit-GA ear-GA long-Pres
 'It is the N. Hemisphere, where rabbits in the subtropics have long ears.'

Fourthly, an adverb should be able to immediately follow a possessive nominative NP, but not a possessive genitive NP. An adverb may adjoin to a TP, but not to a position within an NP. As reported by Fukuda (1991), Heycock (199b) and C. Takahashi (1996), this prediction is borne out.

- (17) kono tyoosa-ni-yoruto, kitahankyuu-ga (kyonen)
 this research-according.to N. Hemisphere-GA last.year
 usagi-no (*kyonen) mimi-ga nagakatta.
 rabbits-Gen last.year ears-GA long-Past
 'According to this research, it was the Northern Hemisphere, where rabbits had long ears last year.'

Finally, the word order among *ga*-phrases should be fixed, since predication requires c-command and each *ga*-phrase is the subject of the clause to its right. The ungrammatical example in (18) shows that the order between the two possessive *ga*-phrases cannot be reversed (modified from Takahashi, 1994: 399).

- (18) *usagi-ga kitahankyuu-ga mimi-ga naga-i.
 rabbit-GA N. Hemisphere-GA ear-GA long-Pres
 (intended) 'Rabbits in the Northern Hemisphere have long ears.'

In sum, various properties of the possessive multiple nominative construction seem to fall out more naturally from an explicit theory of predication, namely in terms of θ -role promotion. In particular, an argument of a subject can appear with *ga*, but not an adjunct modifier of a subject, since only the former receives a θ -role from the subject. Furthermore, it is not possible for more than one argument of the same subject to appear with *ga* externally to the subject. This is because a predicate usually assigns no more than one external θ -role. I now turn to the adjunct multiple nominative construction.

3 Adjunct Multiple Nominative Construction

3.1 *Ga* on an adjunct *ga*-phrase is interpreted as a focus marker

Although the particle *ga* is generally regarded as the nominative case marker

in Japanese, it seems unlikely that its presence on an adjunct is motivated by case requirements. It is well known that adjuncts do not usually require case in Japanese. Since an adjunct *ga*-phrase must always be interpreted as focused, I argue that *ga* attached to an adjunct functions as a focus marker. A further argument for this claim comes from the observation that an adjunct bearing *ga* can have the form PP-*ga*. Since PPs do not generally require case, the presence of *ga* on an adjunct must be motivated by reasons other than case.

The adjunct in (2) can be realised with the postposition *de* 'at' instead of *ga*, as shown in (19a). When it appears with the postposition, it is not obligatorily focused and may follow the subject *ga*-phrase as illustrated in (19b).⁸

- (19)a. ano mise-de/*ga* gakusee-*ga* hon-o yoku kau.
 that shop-at/*GA* student-*GA* book-*Acc* often buy
 'It is at that shop that students often buy books.'
- b. gakusee-*ga* ano mise-de/**ga* hon-o yoku kau.
 student-*GA* that shop-at/*GA* book-*Acc* often buy

Interestingly, *ga* can appear following the postposition *de*, if another element such as *dake* 'only' intervenes.

- (20) ano mise-de-[?](*dake*)-*ga* gakusee-*ga* hon-o yoku kau.
 that shop-at-only-*GA* student-*GA* book-*Acc* often buy
 'It is only at that shop that students often buy books.'

Given the data in (19) and (20), it seems reasonable to assume that the adjunct *ga*-phrase is not really an NP followed by *ga*, but rather a PP followed by *ga*.

This point is further supported by an oft-employed diagnostic for determining whether a given particle is a postposition or a case marker. An NP

⁸Tateishi (1991) cites the following example as grammatical, where the subject *nihonzin-ga* 'Japanese-*GA*' precedes an adjunct *ga*-phrase *ano ziko-ga* 'that accident-*GA*'. The quantifier *takusan* 'many' has floated out of the subject.

(i) nihonzin-*ga* ano ziko-*ga* takusan sinda.
 Japanese-*GA* that accident-*GA* many died

However, the subject seems to be left-dislocated here, as it cannot appear in this position with the quantifier *takusan* 'many', making it non-specific.

(ii) (**takusan-no*) nihonzin-*ga* ano ziko-*ga* sinda.
 many-*Gen* Japanese-*GA* that accident-*GA* died

Takahashi (1994:399) also argues that the subject may precede an adjunct *ga*-phrase. However, her example seems to involve left-dislocation of what I consider in this paper to be a possessive *ga*-phrase. See Vermeulen (to appear) for further discussion.

followed by a case marker allows a floating quantifier, while an NP followed by a postposition disallows it (Miyagawa, 1989). (21) demonstrates that *de* is indeed a postposition and that the adjunct *ga*-phrase is not simply a nominative NP, since no floating quantifier is permitted.

(21)*_{[NP (ano) mise]-de/ga 2tu gakusee-ga hon-o yoku kau.}
 that shop-at/GA 2-CI student-GA book-Acc often buy
 'It is at (those) two shops that students often buy books.'

(cf. _{[NP (ano) 2tu-no mise]-de/ga gakusee-ga hon-o yoku kau.}
 that 2-CI-Gen shop-at/GA student-GA book-Acc often buy

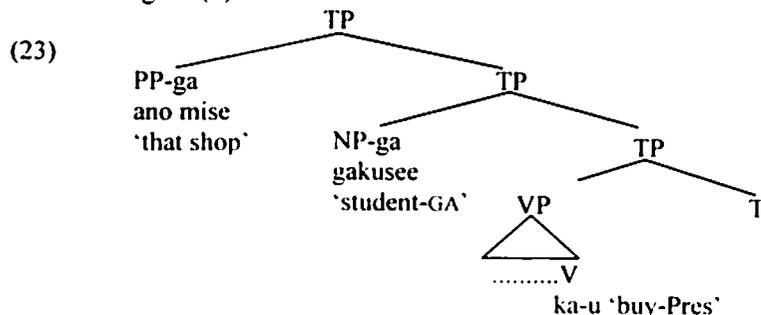
I conclude from the data in (20) and (21) that the adjunct *ga*-phrase in (2) is a PP followed by *ga* with the postposition being optionally deleted.

Note that a possessive *ga*-phrase can host a floating quantifier, indicating that it is a nominative NP.

(22) John-ga tomodati-ga 2ri se-ga takai.
 John-GA friends-GA 2-CI height-GA tall-Pres
 'It is John whose two friends are tall.'

3.2 The structure of the adjunct multiple nominative construction

The conclusion that an adjunct *ga*-phrase can be a PP followed by *ga* strongly supports the claim that *ga* attached to an adjunct is not motivated by case requirements, since PPs do not require case. The sole motivation for its presence must therefore be to focus the adjunct. In order for *ga* to be interpreted as a focus marker, it must be licensed in the configuration described by the focus generalisation in (4). This has the effect that an adjunct *ga*-phrase must appear as the highest *ga*-phrase in TP, yielding a structure like the following for (2).



This approach explains the ungrammaticality of the order subject-*ga* adjunct-*ga*. In principle, it is possible to base-generate the subject in a position higher than the adjunct *ga*-phrase, as shown below.

(24) *_{[TP subject-ga [TP adjunct-ga [TP VP T]]]}

However, *ga* on the adjunct cannot be interpreted in this position. It cannot function as a case marker or be identified as a focus marker by the focus generalisation. Its presence thus violates the principle of Full Interpretation, rendering the derivation ungrammatical.

3.3 Predictions

I consider in this section three predictions made by the proposed analysis. Firstly, an adjunct *ga*-phrase, unlike a possessive *ga*-phrase, should not have a subject-predicate relation with the clause to its right, since no predication is involved in deriving this construction. For independent reasons, however, the subjecthood tests listed in section 2.3 are not applicable to an adjunct *ga*-phrase. For the ECM/control type of constructions, the embedded predicate must be either an adjective or of the form 'nominal + copula' (Kuno, 1973). It is difficult to obtain an example with such a predicate with an adjunct being the focus of the sentence. The difficulty with applying the remaining subjecthood tests is that they require the phrase in question to refer to a person. Such an example is again hard to obtain, since adjuncts do not usually refer to a person.

On the other hand, the two predicate-hood tests can be applied. Firstly, if the clause in question were a predicate, it should be possible to conjoin it with another predicate with the predicate coordinator *katu* 'and'. This results in ungrammaticality, as shown below, suggesting that it is not a predicate.

(25) **ano mise-ga*
 that shop-GA
 [totemo ookiku] katu [gakusee-ga hon-o yoku kau]
 very big and student-GA book-Acc often buy
 Intended: 'It is that shop which is very big and [it is at that shop that] students often buy books.'

Secondly, although predicates can usually be modified by a degree adverb, the clause in question cannot be.

- (26)*ano ziko-ga hidoku [takusan-no hito-ga asi-o otta].
 that accident-GA badly many-Gen people-GA leg-Acc broke
 'It was in that accident where many people broke their leg badly.'
 (cf.: Ano ziko-ga takusan-no hito-ga hidoku [asi-o otta].)

Although the subjecthood tests cannot be applied to an adjunct *ga*-phrase, the fact that the clause to its right does not behave like a predicate suffices to show that an adjunct *ga*-phrase is not licensed by predication.

Secondly, Saito (1985) and Takezawa (1987) argue that PP-*pro* is not available in island contexts in Japanese. Accordingly, if the adjunct *ga*-phrase in (2) is indeed a PP followed by *ga*, moving it out of an island in violation of the CED should result in ungrammaticality and no overt *pro* corresponding to the adjunct should be allowed. These predictions are borne out. (27) illustrates that a *pro* associated with an adjunct *ga*-phrase cannot be realised. (28) shows that extracting an adjunct *ga*-phrase out of a relative clause results in ungrammaticality.

- (27)ano mise-ga kyonen (*soko-de) gakusee-ga (*soko-de) hon-o
 that shop-GA last.year there-at student-GA there-at book-Acc
 yoku katta.
 often bought
 'It was at that shop that students often bought books last year.'
- (28)*ano mise-ga [TP John-ga [NP \emptyset_i [VP e_i t_j hon-o
 that shop-GA John-GA book-Acc
 yoku kau] gakusee_i]-nituite hanasita.
 often buy student-about talked
 'John was talking about a student who often buys books at that shop.'

Finally, a clause should not be able to contain more than one adjunct *ga*-phrase. Placing an adjunct *ga*-phrase above another renders the *ga* attached to the lower adjunct uninterpretable. It cannot function as a case marker or be interpreted as a focus marker in such a position. (29a) illustrates that the prediction is correct. The sentence becomes grammatical, if *ga* attached to one of the adjuncts is replaced by an appropriate postposition, as shown by (29b) and (29c).

- (29)a. *ano mise-ga ohiru zikan-ga gakusee-ga hon-o yoku kau.
 that shop-GA lunch hour-GA student-GA book-Acc often buy
 'It is at that shop and during lunch hour that students often buy books.'
- b. ano mise-ga gakusee-ga ohiru-zikan-ni hon-o yoku kau.
 that shop-GA student-GA lunch-hour-in book-Acc often buy

- c. ohiru-zikan-ga gakusee-ga ano mise-da hon-o yoku kau.
 lunch-hour-GA student-GA that shop-at book-Acc often buy

4 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have attempted to show that the two types of multiple nominative constructions must be distinguished, in contrast to the standard analysis, which treats all *ga*-phrases as nominative NPs or DPs. I have proposed that a possessive *ga*-phrase is a nominative NP, while *ga* attached to an adjunct *ga*-phrase is interpreted as a focus marker. The particle *ga* functions as a case marker whenever it marks an NP bearing a θ -role. However, it is also interpreted as a focus marker, if the constituent to which it is attached appears as the first *ga*-phrase in a sequence of multiple *ga*-phrases. The proposed analysis can capture various observed properties of the two constructions, which are difficult to capture on the standard approach. In particular:

- (i) A possessive *ga*-phrase can be construed as an argument of the following *ga*-phrase, but an adjunct *ga*-phrase cannot;
- (ii) the first *ga*-phrase in both constructions is obligatorily focused;
- (iii) a possessive *ga*-phrase can host a floating quantifier but an adjunct *ga*-phrase cannot;
- (iv) *pro* associated with a possessive *ga*-phrase can be overtly realised, but *pro* associated with an adjunct *ga*-phrase cannot;
- (v) a possessive *ga*-phrase has a subject-predicate relation with the clause to its immediate right, but an adjunct *ga*-phrase does not;
- (vi) there can be an indefinitely large number of possessive *ga*-phrases, but only one adjunct *ga*-phrase in a clause;
- (vii) the word order among *ga*-phrases is fixed in both constructions.

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